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The Winners

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Welcome to the National Rail Awards 2022 - and what an amazing year it has been.

Huge projects coming to fruition, passengers returning to the railways, the encouraging growth in freight, and investments paying off. It's such an exciting time for our vibrant, and yes, sometimes challenging, industry.

The NRA shares in your success. Entries are breaking records year on year, but it's not just about numbers, it's the quality of entries that takes your breath away.

We have companies and individuals that are changing the way we work, sometimes in a dramatic way, sometimes in a thousand smaller increments, but the result is a seismic shift in the way we run our railways. Better, faster, cleaner, greener - it's a privilege to be involved in such a progressive industry.

The awards this year have included changes that reflect the progress towards a more environmentally friendly railway. Two new classes - Outstanding Contribution to Society and Environmental Excellence - recognise both the railway's contribution to the life of the nation and the move towards decarbonisation and sustainability. There were so many entries, most of them spectacularly good, which suggest that railways are at the cutting edge in the move towards net zero.

The judges have had a tough job this year, with so many people doing so much more than could be expected. I've been lucky enough to meet some of those entered in the Outstanding Personal Contribution category - and what a humbling experience that has been!

Seemingly ordinary people doing extraordinary jobs. Yes, they all have got talent and commitment, but there's something extra: a real passion to want to do a better job, care that bit more, and make the railways a better and safer place for customers and staff alike.

In one emotional encounter, I remember closing the interview with the words "I normally know what to say, but I don't know



what to say!" I was speechless, and that's just the way it was. And yes, he's here tonight.

The 'Railway Oscars', as we've become known, celebrate and recognise the achievements of our industry and give us the chance to meet in person with our colleagues and forge partnerships that are not only good for business, but benefit our customers as well.

We need passengers to enjoy the railway. We need freight hauliers to transfer from road to rail. When I see customers such as Tesco showing real commitment to rail, I am genuinely thrilled. It just makes so much sense. I think we're on the threshold of real change!

I know that sometimes politics can throw us a curve ball. But as an industry, you're doing an exceptional job and tonight's celebration of those achievements is richly deserved. Enjoy the evening, the bar is open till late, and I hope to meet as many of you as possible.

Have a great night.

Clive Nicholls

Contents

- 61** Outstanding Teamwork
- 61** Infrastructure Achievement
- 62** Innovation of the Year
- 62** Freight & Logistics Achievement of the Year
- 63** Major Project of the Year
- 63** Safety Achievement
- 64** Environmental Excellence
- 64** Fleet Achievement
- 65** Customer Service Excellence
- 65** Great Place to Work
- 67** Outstanding Contribution to Society
- 67** Passenger Operator
- 68** Stations of the Year
- 70** Outstanding Personal Contributions
- 72** Lifesaver Awards
- 74** Special Honorary Award
- 76** Advertisement features

The Judges

Clive Nicholls (Chairman)

Charles Belcher

Abi Broadley

Ian Brown CBE

Paul Case (YRP)

Michael Chung (YRP)

Jim Cornell CEng, FREng, FICE, FCILT, FCMI

Superintendent Gill Murray

Dick Fearn

Debbie Francis OBE

Shamit Gaiger

Chris Green MA

Carolyn Griffiths

Sir Michael Holden

Stephen Joseph OBE

Denise Lennox

Nina Lockwood

Andrew McNaughton

Heidi Mottram OBE

Cliff Perry MBE

Lucy Prior MBE

Becky Radford (YRP)

Dr Malcolm Reed CBE

Nicola Shaw CBE

Anthony Smith

Iryna Terlecky

Richard Wallace MA, FCILT

Natasha Hanson

Adam Webster (YRP)

Rita Williams (YRP)

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finalists and winners at the
2022 National Rail Awards



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Winner

Outstanding Teamwork

Network Rail (Reopening the Dartmoor Line)

On November 20 2021, Okehampton in Devon was finally reconnected to the national network, following the resumption of regular passenger services for the first time in almost 50 years.

Although the line had been retained for freight use, upgrading it to support a full seven-day passenger operation represented a significant challenge to Network Rail and its cross-industry team of 400 people.

By applying Project SPEED principles, the delivery timescale was impressively condensed to just 18 months - comprising nine months for planning, two months for crew training, and just seven months for construction.

This included fitting 11 miles of new track and 24,000 sleepers, laying 29,000 tonnes of ballast, GSMR installation, and station reopening, plus the purchase of the line and all the legal processes for access and safety approval.

The result was the line reopening a mere



nine months after the confirmation of £40 million in government funding. Meanwhile, the final delivery cost came in some £10m under budget.

To deliver these savings, NR and its supply chain were required to work closely as part of a 'hub and spoke' delivery strategy, utilising framework contracts and the NR Works Delivery team to push efficiencies.

NR added: "Cross-industry relationships are easy to boast about but can be hard to achieve. But none of the challenges faced along the way would have been easily negotiated had it not been for the way the project group rallied and worked together.

"The teamwork and co-operation shown

throughout the Okehampton project enabled cost and time savings which were forecast within the business case for the project. Without these savings it may not have passed the conception stage."

The judges agreed that "the scale of the project and the breadth of team effort required was notable", drawing on the enthusiasm of a well-established and motivated local delivery team and the considerable enthusiasm of local authorities and environmental bodies.

■ **Highly Commended:** Network Rail System Operator (Crew and Stock Integration), East West Rail Alliance (Charbridge Lane).



Winner

Infrastructure Achievement of the Year

Network Rail and Alstom (Paddington Train Detection)

Installed in the early 1990s, the track layout between London Paddington and West Drayton was becoming increasingly unreliable with higher numbers of track circuit and train detection failures.

Key stakeholders - including Heathrow Airport, MTR Elizabeth Line and HS2 - had grown concerned that their access demands, critical interfaces and the progressive migration to European Train Control System (ETCS) technology would not be met.

To mitigate these problems, some 777 new design axle counters were installed over the 2021 Christmas period, with Alstom's Smartlock 400GP interlocking equipment together with Fraucher's R2 Axle Counter System being used.

This was successfully delivered and commissioned across 12 miles of railway in just 52 hours.



This on-time installation has since been credited with achieving a significantly more reliable railway, and a substantial reduction in delay minutes from 2,000+ to just 85 within the first four weeks.

The cost effectiveness of the project has also been demonstrated by reducing Network Rail Schedule 8 payments to train operators by up to £230,000 per (monthly) period - equating to a total saving of £158 million over the next 35 years.

Alstom and NR say the installation is already expected to exceed its 14½-year system reliability target by the end of 2022 - some 13½ years early.

Stuart Calvert, capital delivery director at NR's Western Region, explained: "This project has given us the reliability to provide a

much better service. By improving reliability, safety and capacity, it provides a much better core signalling system for the future."

The judges were also impressed by other benefits, including an 80% reduction in 'boots on ballast' activity to attend track circuit failures. Further savings were noted in power consumption and waste materials.

They added: "Despite a one-off blip in Period 11 due to a simple and avoidable mechanical failure at Southall (from which lessons have been learned), this is a highly successful piece of work with proven benefits that can be introduced to other parts of the network."

■ **Highly Commended:** Network Rail (Barmouth Viaduct), East West Rail Alliance (Bletchley Flyover).



Winner

Innovation of the Year

Network Rail (Overlay Miniature Stop Light Level Crossings)

User-worked and footpath crossings represent one of the largest unmitigated safety risks remaining on the network.

To tackle this problem, Network Rail has devised an overlay system that vastly reduces the complexity of signalling alterations required to fit Miniature Signal Light (MSL) controls at such locations.

The Overlay MSL concept is to provide train detection to initiate the warning at the crossing, by overlaying axle counters on top of the existing signalling system.

The traditional alternative would be to integrate the crossing within the existing signalling system, but this would involve complex alterations generating a high cost and lengthy timescales.

By reducing average costs from £850,000 to just £150,000 per installation, it is now possible for NR to convert many more crossings within a fixed budget - and therefore reduce the level of ongoing risk



more than would otherwise be the case.

Almost 200 have been installed in the last five years, with many more planned as budgets permit.

“We felt that this is a great example of what can be achieved by challenging conventional signal engineering thinking, to produce something so very much cheaper that it enables a substantial safety improvement to be made across the network,” said the judges.

“Because of the scale of innovation and the level of effort required to successfully challenge the status quo in the signalling world, as well as the scope for significant safety improvement from a national rollout,

this entry deserved to be placed higher than any other.”

To provide power so that this new approach can be deployed at remote sites, an off-grid power system has been designed and developed using solar panels and hydrogen fuel cells, to provide reliable, year-round power.

The installations are accompanied by new signage, designed and tested to overcome known defects in previous versions and where text-based messages are reduced in favour of pictograms to aid understanding.

■ **Highly Commended:** Network Rail (Voltage Controlled Clearances).



Winner

Freight & Logistics Achievement of the Year

Direct Rail Services and Tesco (A Cool Move for Freight)

In December 2021, Tesco and Direct Rail Services partnered to introduce the supermarket giant’s first ever refrigerated rail service.

Hauled by DRS’s fleet of Class 88 bi-modes, the trains run the 415-mile route from Tilbury to Coatbridge twice a day, seven days a week.

The new service has been estimated to take at least 17,000 containers off the road each year, saving 7.3 million road miles and nearly 9,000 tonnes of CO₂e. Each train negates the need to use around 40 lorries, also reducing large amounts of tyre wear road particles and microplastics from being released into the environment.

Tesco CEO Ken Murphy has argued that if other large companies choose to follow Tesco’s example by making rail part of their supply chain, that would lead to more railheads at distribution centres, and rail



access could begin to usurp the traditional prioritisation of road logistics.

“This is a fantastic story from a sustainability point of view, but it has really come into its own helping our supply chain resilience,” he added.

Tesco, which invested £2.7 million in purpose-built refrigerated containers and has increased its delivery of containers by more than a third in the last year, claims that it wants to continue increasing its use of rail as part of a commitment to reach net-zero emissions in its operations by 2035.

Network Rail will also be key to achieving that goal, having played a crucial role in planning these services and developing a mutual understanding of the requirements

and constraints of supplying supermarkets with refrigerated goods, which are more time-sensitive than groceries transported at ambient temperatures.

The judges concluded: “We consider this to be the winner not simply because of the direct and measurable benefits of the new refrigerated service, but because of the evident strength of the operator/customer relationship behind it and the way Network Rail has supported the process.”

■ **Highly Commended:** DB Cargo UK/ Groupe CAT/Toyota (Toyota lets the train take the strain); GB Railfreight (2021 Business Growth); VTG Rail UK (Ecofret 2: the intermodal wagon).

Winner

Major Project of the Year

Network Rail (Bristol East Junction Remodelling)

This multi-disciplinary project beat off stiff competition by being delivered on time, under budget, and with an excellent safety record - all during the logistical challenges posed by the Coronavirus pandemic.

With its scope to renew and modernise this key junction near Bristol Temple Meads, to improve reliability, capacity and capability for future rail growth, the main works were delivered during an eight-week blockade in summer 2021.

It was initially planned for 12 weeks, but the project team were able to cut the access request by a third by utilising a detailed staging strategy and an innovative Modular Plus S&C installation technique.

More than £30 million in efficiency gains (from an authorised budget of £132m) were achieved and handed back to the public purse.

To minimise disruption to passenger and freight services during the blockade, Bristol Temple Meads was kept operational, with reduced platform usage.



Great Western Railway's St Phillips Marsh traincare depot was used to provide through paths for some services, while a temporary depot was created to enable CrossCountry to maintain a national service.

Among the operational benefits secured from the project was the recovery of 58 life-expired point ends that had required regular inspection and maintenance.

Non-standard and difficult-to-maintain switches and crossings have been replaced with modern standard units, while an enhanced layout enables services to use all platforms at Bristol Temple Meads.

Operational flexibility and sufficient capacity have also been provided to meet

the needs of the expected introduction of MetroWest services and future long-term growth to 2043.

"This is a relatively straightforward project, but very well carried out," said the judges.

"We were impressed with the approach and attitude of the team to challenge both the budget and the methodology of the project up front. This resulted in cost savings, reduced timescales and benefits to the interim and long-term rail services. Teamwork and governance were tight with a strong and impressive wellbeing culture."

■ **Highly Commended:** Network Rail (King's Cross Remodelling).

Winner

Safety Achievement of the Year

Network Rail, Signalling Innovations Group and One Big Circle (Thermal Hot Spot Detection on Third Rail)

This close collaboration between Network Rail's Signalling Innovations Group and technology provider One Big Circle has been described by the NRA judges as a "game changer" in third rail monitoring and inspection.

In simple terms, it works by removable train-mounted cameras and sensors providing real-time data and video footage via the Cloud. Most importantly, thermal measurement mapping and imaging is generated to identify component and electrical equipment failures.

The data can also indicate future points of failure by identifying areas of concern where heat threshold levels are being exceeded.

In only its first week of operation on Network Rail's Southern Region, more than 100 hotspots were flagged and targeted for



action. This equates to a 13-times improvement in detection frequency, because such faults are rarely obvious to the naked eye.

It has also yielded safety benefits by taking inspection 'boots off the ballast' and eliminating the need for trackworkers to use handheld thermal measurement equipment.

It means that not only is the obvious risk of being struck by a train dramatically cut, but also the major safety risks posed by fire and exposure to live electrical currents.

Service disruption is also kept to a minimum, giving the detection system the distinction of providing safety improvements to track workers and rail users simultaneously.

Following its successful pilot, it is now being

rolled out across the entire third-rail network.

It is said to also have potential use on overhead line equipment and for cold spot identification and low-adhesion monitoring.

"The productivity gains are clear, with inspections that currently take 12 days being undertaken in half a day," the judges added.

"In addition, performance benefits of avoiding disruptive possessions for repair are being gained.

"Overall, this is a relatively simple concept employing state-of-the-art digital technology which has achieved a wide range of benefits."

■ **Highly Commended:** GTR, Top 2% and ResponSec (Operation Safeguard).



Winner



Environmental Excellence

Amey (*Decarbonising the Railway at Kentish Town*)

The Kentish Town Track Stabilisation project may at first glance look like a routine asset renewal and replacement work package on this concrete slab track section at the London end of the Midland Main Line.

But, before completing the works during a ten-day Christmas blockade in 2021-22, Amey Rail and its integrated design capability (Amey Consulting) ensured that carbon reduction would be taken to impressive levels.

Appointed as lead designer to deliver GRIP stages three to five, and then as principal contractor to deliver GRIP stages six to eight, Amey worked closely with Network Rail and its supply chain to introduce a total of 14 carbon interventions.

They were made by using the Rail Safety and Standards Board's Rail Carbon Tool to undertake carbon assessments across all design and construction phases.

The scope of the assessment included calculating the carbon in materials needed for the project, as well as waste, plant and equipment, and employee travel to site.

These led to interventions including the identification of staff who should be staying overnight near the site, connecting welfare

facilities to electric mains instead of generators, undertaking the 'dig in' to the slab track in a single stage instead of two separate stages, and using MSF wagons to unload materials from engineering trains.

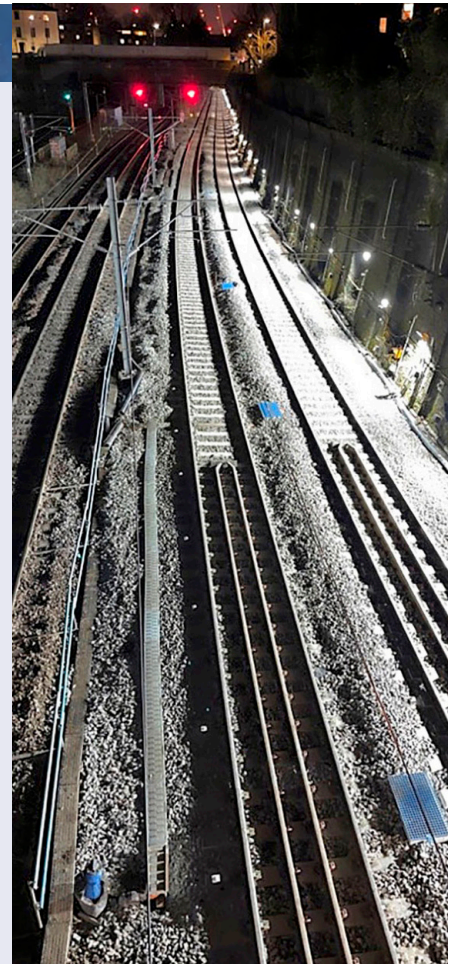
By making these changes, it was calculated that 89 tonnes of CO₂e were saved, representing a 32.36% saving against the initial design and scope of the works. It also comfortably exceeded Amey's own target to achieve a 20% emissions reduction.

A welcome by-product of working more efficiently also meant reductions in time and cost for the project, with an estimated £160,000 saved directly from the carbon reductions.

"We unanimously agreed that this entry is the standout winner," said the NRA judges.

"We are particularly excited by the promising potential for scaling up this initiative across other infrastructure projects on the network, and Amey is currently working with RSSB and other industry groups to share best practice and lessons learned."

■ **Highly Commended:** Network Rail (Biodiversity measurement for the benefit of all).



Winner

Fleet Achievement of the Year

Northern Ireland Railways (*Additional Train Capacity*)

Following the introduction of the Class 3000 fleet in 2005, Northern Ireland's railway system has undergone a transformation.

There were 81% more passengers in 2014-15 than in 2004-05, putting increased pressure on the network to cater for this demand.

To provide additional capacity, a contract was signed in December 2018 for CAF to supply 21 Class 4000 intermediate carriages. The Spanish manufacturer had previously supplied 20 Class 4000 three-car diesel multiple units in 2011-12.

The intention was to integrate three of the new intermediate carriages into each of the existing Class 4000 sets, creating seven 'walk-through' six-car trains to provide an additional 1,600 seats each day.

NI Railways would also refurbish the existing stock, with cosmetic and technical improvements including USB charging, enhanced WiFi connectivity, and new carpets and LED lighting, so that there would be no discernible difference to passengers between



the old and new carriages.

But ensuring that the newly lengthened units could be presented as 'one train' presented several engineering challenges.

They included ensuring identical technical specifications for the manufacture of new carriages in Zaragoza (Spain), while existing stock was modified in the NI Railways workshop in Belfast.

Integration would also need to be achieved between older and newer traction power supplies, five- and six-speed transmissions, and differing electrical systems.

A further challenge was then encountered in February 2020, when the start of the Coronavirus pandemic forced the temporary closure of CAF's Zaragoza facility.

On resumption of work, production rates decreased, and the new carriages were

transferred to CAF's Beasain facility owing to a bottleneck at the finishing shop in Zaragoza.

Despite these setbacks, the programme remained on target to meet its £64 million budget.

The first lengthened unit was accepted on September 20 2021 (approximately six weeks ahead of contractual requirements), while the final lengthened unit was accepted in July.

"Nobody on the mainland does this sort of thing, on account of the systems integration issues between new and ten-year-old vehicles," said the judges. "This is a major achievement working with CAF on delivery of new vehicles and reworking the old."

■ **Highly Commended:** CAF Rail UK (Class 331), GB Railfreight (Class 69 Conversion Programme).



Winner

Customer Service Excellence

East Midlands Railway (EMR Connect)

When East Midlands Railway launched its EMR Connect half-hourly service between St Pancras International and Corby in May 2021, it was determined to deliver a service that comfortably exceeded passengers' expectations.

Not only would a newly transferred fleet of eight-car Class 360s be introduced on the operator's first electric route, to deliver a 77% cut in carbon emissions and a 35% increase in capacity, it would also be a punctual service carrying satisfied customers.

To better understand passengers' priorities for the new route, an extensive customer insight programme took place before its launch.

Some 16,000 post-travel surveys were analysed, while further data and research was collected from varied sources - including customer focus groups and an EMR Inclusivity Panel comprising experts who all have a lived experience of a disability.

Actions that were delivered, based on the



customer feedback, included automated announcements and the refurbishment of tannoy systems on trains, improved cleanliness and the appearance of Corby station, earlier and later trains to and from St Pancras, in-transit cleaners to keep toilets and carriages clean, and the introduction of a flexi-season ticket for commuters and business travellers.

As a result of these actions, overall satisfaction with Connect journeys averages 87%, which is 8% higher than the operator's overall average.

This has made it EMR's most successful route in terms of customer satisfaction, station satisfaction and punctuality, with 63% fewer complaints than on any other route it serves.

The future looks even brighter, with the

'360s' yet to undergo internal refurbishment since their transfer from Greater Anglia.

EMR's inclusivity panel and customer focus groups have already fed extensively into the final designs of that refurbishment project, which is due to be completed by December 2023.

The judges concluded: "What really stood out was the use of insight to drive service development. By taking information from the National Rail Passenger Survey, EMR customer surveys, inclusivity panel, complaints and other sources, the team has really honed the offer."

■ **Highly Commended:** Great Western Railway (Getting services and communications right).



Winner

Great Place to Work

Arriva Rail London

In the past year, Arriva Rail London (ARL) has faced a series of tough challenges, both in terms of continuing to run COVID-secure services on one of the UK's busiest networks at 100% of pre-pandemic levels, while also adapting the business to post-pandemic realities.

The operator's success in this category can be attributed to its policy of not focusing solely on its operations. It has also sought to invest in its people - not just as a resource, but as the heart and soul of everything it does.

It is ARL's firm belief that by following this path and building one team where there is open and honest communication, it will have a more engaged workforce and mutually supportive environment.

To build this kind of workplace and culture, action on engagement has included: the creation of new employee-led working groups on people issues, safety and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI); greater senior leadership and manager visibility; the launch of a new online colleague recognition scheme; and new mentoring and career development opportunities.

These measures have certainly paid dividends, with a recent employee engagement



survey (October 2021) revealing a best ever engagement score of 78%, representing a 15% uplift since 2019.

The operator has also achieved a best practice model for action on EDI in the industry, with the proportion of new starters from ethnically diverse backgrounds rising from 50% to 61% since 2020.

High engagement has also proved to be the foundation of improved performance, with ARL ranked as the second highest performing train operator (with a Moving Annual Average of 94%) for 13 consecutive

periods up to and including March 2022.

"ARL's engagement and employee satisfaction numbers are very good while its EDI improvements are quite striking," noted the judges.

"Its empowerment of employee interest groups feels genuine and impactful, while demonstrating how the culture of ownership and delivery is being changed in the organisation."

■ **Highly Commended:** Great Western Railway.



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Winner

Outstanding Contribution to Society

Network Rail (Reopening the Dartmoor Line)

Okehampton station rejoined the national network for the first time in nearly 50 years on November 20 2021, when Great Western Railway trains started running between the Devon town and Exeter.

This was the first of the Department for Transport's 'Restoring your railway' initiatives to bear fruit. Network Rail, Great Western Railway, Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership, Devon County Council and other stakeholders came together to form the Dartmoor Line Project Group, with its goal of returning regular services to Okehampton.

British Rail closed the remains of the Southern Region's 'Withered Arm' from Coleford Junction (on the Barnstaple-Exeter line) to Okehampton to passengers on June 5 1972. But the line remained open in order to serve Meldon quarry, an important source of track ballast.

Between 1997 and 2008, quarry traffic



shared the line with tourist trains operated by a community rail organisation. However, following the Government's commitments to level up the country, an announcement came in March 2021 that the line would reopen to regular passenger services by the end of the same year.

The nine-month project involved relaying more than 11 miles of track, replacing 24,000 concrete sleepers, and installing nearly 29,000 tonnes of ballast. Okehampton station was also reopened with modern features, while maintaining its heritage feel.

Best practice was learned from the successful Borders Railway reopening project, which provided the foundations on which the Dartmoor Line project would be built.

It was a task with many challenges, but it was delivered on time and safely. The team behind it say that while it started with the local community fighting for a railway, it is now a railway that will be fighting for them - boosting tourism, encouraging growth, and most importantly being the centre of the community.

NRA judges said: "The passion, enthusiasm, care and pride in what this team have achieved is palpable. This team wowed us with their deep, deep understanding of the outcomes they have achieved, and for the local communities in question."

Highly Commended: Network Rail (Sleeping Rough on the Rail).



Winner

Passenger Operator of the Year

Greater Anglia

After many years of entering and often being shortlisted, Greater Anglia has finally been crowned Passenger Operator of the Year.

Over the past year, the operator has achieved record-breaking performance of 95.03%, raising it from a mid-table player almost to the top of the performance league.

Owned (until recently) by Abellio, in a joint venture with Mitsui & Co, Greater Anglia operates the East Anglia franchise, which provides commuter and inter-city services from London Liverpool Street to Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire, as well as regional services in the east of England.

This year, the NRA judges were impressed not only by GA's best-ever performance, but also by its new Stadler fleet rollout programme, which is providing increased capacity, more comfortable seats, air conditioning, improved accessibility through low-floor access, and many more benefits to passengers.

A number of the stations served by GA have also been upgraded, often through joint schemes with local authorities. These include work at London Liverpool Street, Ipswich, Bishops



Stortford, Bury St Edmunds, Wickford and March, as well as a new station opening in Soham. Local community groups have adopted 90% of GA's stations, and its stakeholder engagement score has reached 87%.

In addition, judges noted the rollout of flexible season tickets and wider availability of ticket vending machines with real-time customer support - essentially creating 24-hour ticket offices. GA also achieved a very good safety performance across the year, with 20 consecutive periods without any RIDDOR accidents.

In sustainability terms, GA has continued

its proactive environmental strategy by reducing CO₂ emissions and committing land to Wild East and the Wildlife Trust biodiversity accreditation scheme for adopters.

Most significantly, the Department for Transport awarded GA the highest delivery score of any operator in the recent round of contract awards.

Overall, the judges felt that GA has achieved a great transformation over the past couple of years, making it a worthy winner of the category.

Highly Commended: Great Northern.



Winner

Major Station of the Year

St Pancras International (HS1 Ltd)

There are few stations more famous in the UK than London St Pancras - or St Pancras International as it has officially been known since it became home to cross-channel services operated by Eurostar in 2007.

Owned by HS1 Ltd and operated by Network Rail, the international terminus is a frequent contender at the National Rail Awards.

Having won a Judges Special Award in 2012, for its widely acclaimed £800 million refurbishment and the role it played in welcoming visitors to the London 2012 Olympics, it has once again beaten off stiff competition - this time from Reading and last year's Major Station finalist Glasgow Central.

"St Pancras International scored the highest marks for a major station as it emerged from the Coronavirus pandemic with its standards intact and all facilities and retail restored," said the NRA judges.

"We felt the station has all the facilities expected at an international terminus, and



this is supported by customer satisfaction scores which regularly hit 95%. This station provides a world-class gateway to London and the UK, and still looks as good as new."

The Grade 1 Listed gothic masterpiece is in fact 155 years old, having been opened by the Midland Railway in 1868.

Unlike the adjacent London King's Cross, the trainshed is elevated some five metres above street level to provide sufficient clearance over the Regent's Canal. The resulting undercroft provided storage for freight, with its columns and girders specifically spaced to handle beer barrels arriving from Burton-upon-Trent.

Designed by William Henry Barlow, the station's imposing 240ft-wide and 10ft-high single-span glass and iron trainshed was

the largest in the world.

It was built alongside extensive goods facilities, while the George Gilbert Scott-designed *Midland Grand Hotel* provided a dramatic frontage on Euston Road.

After it survived demolition attempts in the 1960s and subsequent neglect by a cash-strapped British Rail, work began in 2004 to restore, refurbish and rebuild St Pancras as the new terminal for HS1.

Also served by Thameslink, Southeastern, London Underground and East Midlands Railway, St Pancras International was voted one of *RAIL's* Seven Wonders of the Railway in 2018.

■ **Highly Commended:** Glasgow Central (Network Rail), Reading (Network Rail).



Winner

Large Station of the Year

Nottingham (East Midlands Railway)

"Nottingham has been transformed into an iconic large station which really 'wowed' us and now provides a striking entrance to the city," said the NRA judges.

Another previous winner (from 2016), the Grade 2 Listed station received high praise for its "beautifully restored facades" and for its ticket office that "blends into modern retail facilities and level access to the high-level tram interchange and large multi-storey car park".

The judges added: "Helpful staff were volunteering help to passengers throughout the station."

First built by the Midland Railway in 1848, the current station dates to 1904, when it was rebuilt in response to the opening of the magnificent Nottingham Victoria station by the rival Great Northern and Great Central Railways.

The two stations shared the same architect (Albert Edward Lambert), who was also responsible for designing Leicester Midland



in a similar Edwardian Baroque Revival style using terracotta bricks.

In September 1967, Nottingham Midland became the city's sole major station. It is served by express services to London St Pancras and local and inter-regional trains to Norwich, Cardiff, Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds, Derby, Leicester, Lincoln, Birmingham, Matlock, Skegness, Crewe and Worksop.

It is also a key interchange with the city's tram system, following its opening in 2004 and subsequent extension across the top of the station in 2014.

A £60 million redevelopment was also given the green light to pedestrianise the porte

cochère (which had been traffic-choked when used as a drop-off point by motorists), restore heritage features, and build a new southern concourse and car park.

These areas had sustained extensive damage following a fire in January 2018, but have since been fully repaired.

The station underwent major remodelling and resignalling in 2013, to increase the number of platforms to seven and to improve line speeds and reduce conflicting movements on its western approach. It was used by almost eight million passengers in 2019-20.

■ **Highly Commended:** Paddington (Elizabeth line), Cambridge (Greater Anglia).



Winner

Medium Station of the Year

Bolton (Northern)

Bolton station was said by the judges to have “delighted us with its total makeover into a modern transport interchange for the North West”.

The highlight of that makeover was described as “a new covered walkway to the bus station and an attractive forecourt with a taxi rank”.

Opened in 1838 at Bolton Trinity Street, the station now sits alongside a £48 million interchange that opened in September 2017.

Delivered by Transport for Greater Manchester and Bolton Council, the interchange replaced Bolton bus station, offering improved waiting areas, enhanced customer information, and a ‘sky bridge’ offering easy transfer between buses and trains.

A 48-space cycle hub was also built outside the main interchange building to offer secure storage for bikes.

Serving routes radiating to Blackburn, Preston, Wigan, Salford and Manchester, Bolton station currently has five platforms in use.



NORTHERN



An additional line to Rochdale was closed in October 1970, while the original main station building was demolished in 1987. However, the Victorian platform buildings all survive, and the station’s iconic clock tower (built in 1899) was dismantled and rebuilt alongside the current frontage.

Prior to the pandemic (2019-20), the station welcomed almost 3.3 million passengers per annum, representing an increase of some 425,000 on the previous 12 months.

Electric services commenced through Bolton in February 2019, following the delayed completion of Network Rail’s North West electrification programme.

At the same time, a £1m package of upgrades was announced by NR, Northern

and TransPennine Express to fit new signage and seating, revamp toilets and waiting rooms, install pigeon netting, and refurbish underused buildings on Platforms 4 and 5 for retail, enterprise and community use.

This includes the *P5 Platform Gallery*, which opened in July 2019 in the space formerly used as a general waiting room.

The judges added: “Modern facilities include an upgraded ticket hall, information displays featuring both trains and buses, level access, waiting rooms and retail, all managed by proactive staff.”

■ **Highly Commended:** Abbey Wood (Elizabeth line), Oxenholme (Avanti West Coast).



Winner

Small Station of the Year

Shanklin (South Western Railway)

A new entrant to the National Rail Awards, Shanklin has gone straight to the top of this category after being described by the judges as “a model small station”.

It is a key gateway for tourists to this busy seaside holiday destination, and the judging panel was impressed by how facilities “are attractively grouped around a single platform”.

These facilities include car and cycle parking, a regular bus shuttle service, and a retail outlet plus a ticket office “staffed by extremely helpful staff”.

Opened on August 23 1864, before its Grade 2 Listed building was then extended in 1881, Shanklin was originally a two-platform through station with services from Ryde continuing to Wroxall and Ventnor.

It became the southern terminus of the newly named Island Line in 1966, following the closure of much of the once-extensive rail network on the Isle of Wight.

The second platform at Shanklin is now in



South Western
Railway

use as a flower bed, while the former subway has been filled in.

In May, South Western Railway introduced a new timetable with two trains per hour running north at peak times and one tph during the off-peak. One of these peak services runs to Ryde Esplanade for connections with hovercraft services to Southsea, while the other runs all the way to Ryde Pier Head for ferry services to Portsmouth Harbour and onward connections on the mainland.

Local bus services connect Shanklin station to local towns and villages, including Sandown, Newport, Ventnor, Brading,

Godshill and Sibden Hill.

The NRA judges noted how the station “has been revitalised as part of a total route modernisation of the Island Line”, with other improvements from SWR including the introduction of Class 484 electric multiple units.

Rebuilt by Vivarail from converted former London Underground D78 stock, the arrival of five two-car units spelled the end for the ‘483s’ that were more than 80 years old by the time of their withdrawal.

■ **Highly Commended:** Buxton (Northern), Hatch End (Arriva Rail London).



Winner

Outstanding Personal Contribution (Senior)

Maggie Simpson OBE, Director General, Rail Freight Group

Few people in the rail freight community are more recognisable than Maggie Simpson.

Charged with promoting rail freight, influencing government policy, and representing and supporting the Rail Freight Group's members, she is a familiar face in conference halls, meeting rooms, events spaces, and at locations right across the rail network.

Her name is also well-known in print, owing to her prolific output when writing papers and articles, and responding to consultations and other correspondence from RFG's small central London office.

Originally from Stockport, Simpson initially went into safety and risk assessment consulting, after graduating from Loughborough University in 1992 with a BEng in mathematical engineering.

Although she had worked with clients from the rail sector, her first direct experience of the industry was in July 1998, when she joined the Office of Passenger Rail Franchising as a franchise manager.

Simpson then switched to the Strategic Rail Authority in January 2001, as head of freight grants, before joining the RFG as policy manager in November 2005.

She held that role for almost seven years, until being promoted to her current position as director general of the trade association and campaigning group in September 2012.

She said of her present job: "Coming from an engineering and maths background, I've always been comfortable with the policy environment. But I have had to learn much more about communications, PR, stakeholder management and political campaigning.

"Just because I understand some detail, it doesn't mean others do, so how do you persuade them of your case in terms that they can relate to? It's been about widening my thinking and approaches.

"My role is quite far-reaching - dealing with politicians, businesses and others in the sector, but always making the case for rail freight."

Given Simpson's profile in the industry, she has deservedly gone on to be recognised as one of Women in Rail's 20 most inspirational women in the rail sector.

She was also awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2020, for services to the rail freight sector.



Simpson frequently describes how it is a "real privilege" to be working in a sector which represents such a fundamental part of the wider business framework in the UK.

When asked about her proudest moments, she usually points to major developments such as the Strategic Rail Freight Interchange at East Midlands Gateway, which opened in 2019.

It is, of course, highly symbolic of the multi-billion-pound private funding that has been invested in ports, terminals and rolling stock in the last 20 to 30 years.

Simpson is also pleased to see the extent of the network which is now gauge cleared for standard containers, having started work on that project in 2001 when there were no available routes at all.

But she allows no room for complacency, and acknowledges that there is still much work required to set out the case for rail freight and to champion the work of RFG's members.

"Freight is a small part of our industry, and we have to shout quite loudly to make our

voices heard," she adds.

"This can be quite frustrating and challenging - and I am constantly surprised by how little people still know about the sector. But it is really rewarding when you feel you've made a difference and when you hear others talking about freight as part of their narratives."

The NRA judges added: "We are always amazed and highly impressed by what Maggie and her team manage to achieve with limited budget and resources.

"She works with people and organisations using persuasion and empathy, to ensure she gets a great outcome for rail freight and for those she is working with. Freight is often seen as the poor relation in the rail industry, so it desperately needs this promotional support.

"Her drive is always to do the right thing for her team, for the industry, and for all rail users. As a result, she gets a high level of engagement, and her influence reaches all levels of industry through to the corridors and halls of Westminster."



Winner

Outstanding Personal Contribution (Management)

Louise Mendham, Production Director, Hull Trains

The severe challenges posed by the Coronavirus pandemic were felt by all train operating companies. But perhaps none more existentially than open access operators, including Hull Trains.

By not being given the same level of government financial assistance as the franchised operators, Hull Trains had little choice but to hibernate its fleet on three separate occasions.

Meanwhile, with little or no farebox revenue, staff had to be made redundant, furloughed, or seconded elsewhere.

With difficult decisions to be made in terms of employees and the service itself, Louise Mendham (or Lou as she is affectionately known by those in the industry) found herself in the thick of it.

She is credited with performing this unenviable task while being equipped with a “relentlessly positive attitude and consistently high energy level” to ensure that the operator survived.

Mendham was eventually seconded to South Western Railway, but maintained strong engagement with the workforce at Hull Trains, which faced an uncertain future.

This was at the same time as carrying the heavy burden of her other responsibilities to lead the reintroduction of services at both operators.

“The fleet was hibernated at Hull Trains three times, but Lou maintained her belief that the operator would survive and worked tirelessly to achieve that end,” said the judges.

“She believes that ‘everything is possible’ and is very driven to succeed, even against the odds, and is quite clearly totally committed to ensuring that Hull Trains’ customers are at the centre of every decision which is made.”

Hull Trains described how she had



“progressed through dedication, commitment, tenacity and a flair for creative problem solving” since first joining its operations support team in 2004.

Her achievements before the pandemic include leading the introduction of Hull Trains’ new Hitachi Class 802 bi-mode fleet in 2019, and the hire of two HST sets to provide additional resilience to the previous fleet.

Under her direction, in December 2021 Hull Trains began operating the highest number of weekly services in its history.

■ **Highly Commended:** Chris Buckley (East Midlands Railway).



Winner

Outstanding Personal Contribution (Frontline)

Mike Roberts, Railway Chaplain (North West & Central Region), Railway Mission

Mike Roberts was described by the NRA judges as being “omnipresent” in his role to offer independent, confidential and impartial pastoral care for members of the railway community at the eight train operating companies and six police stations he serves.

Despite technically being a ‘man of the cloth’, and working for a Christian faith-based charity, Mike is said to approach his role in a very secular fashion, being able to adapt his approach to match the individual needs of the people he is supporting.

Judges were impressed by his self-confessed general outlook on life that “there is nothing that’s not my job”.

It is therefore not unusual to find him supporting passengers as well as staff on stations, and promoting the railways and other associated group’s activities - for example, the British Transport Police, Community Rail and Samaritans.

When travelling, he will assist train caterers, go out on patrol with BTP officers,

and will ask for cab rides to ask questions and learn more about the industry.

During the pandemic, he volunteered to do shifts with train operating companies to better understand the frontline challenges that were being faced, and to ‘walk the walk’ with thousands of staff members.

This is all in addition to his ‘day job’ duties (which are, in fact, often in the middle of the night if a fatality occurs) of supporting individuals working on the network.

“Like the emergency services who run towards danger and not away from it, our chaplains run headfirst into the darkness of people’s lives, when most would rather stay in the light,” said his colleagues.

“It is a sacrifice which takes its toll, and one



they do without complaint. We already expect too much of our chaplains and offer thanks too seldom.”

The judges added: “We were impressed by Mike’s humility, his attitude towards his colleagues, and his clear pride in working on the railway. This is expressed through his involvement in many different campaigns, as well as day-to-day activities and his ability to support individuals who need it most.”

■ **Highly Commended:** Susan Temple (ScotRail).

Life Saver Award

This year there were nine submissions for rail employees who had saved someone's life. The judges felt these Life Saver awards should be made to properly recognise these incredible acts of human bravery by members of staff who went above and beyond their everyday duties.

Winner



Lorna Bathgate and Charlie Algeo, Ticket Officer and Train Dispatcher, ScotRail

Lorna and Charlie have been praised for their life-saving actions when another rail worker collapsed on the footbridge at Inverkeithing station.

Alerted to the incident by members of the public, Lorna quickly realised that the person wasn't breathing and began to administer chest compressions, while Charlie retrieved the station's Automated External Defibrillator.

While on the phone to emergency services, Lorna began to use the defibrillator to resuscitate the colleague, with assistance from Charlie and

members of the public.

Fortunately, the person was breathing again when paramedics arrived, and is now recovering well with no signs of permanent damage.

"What started as a normal day heading into work for one person quickly turned into a horrible nightmare which, thankfully, has had a positive ending," said ScotRail Safety, Engineering and Sustainability Director David Lister.

"The railway is often described as a family. And while they may not have known it at the time, Lorna and Charlie's actions helped to keep that family together.

"They are a credit to ScotRail, and I couldn't be prouder of them."



Winner



Lauren McQuillan and Victoria Sweeney, Revenue Protection Officers, Southeastern

Lauren was called into action when a colleague sent a jumbled text message saying he thought he'd had a stroke.

After calling 999 and then going straight to his house, Lauren drove him straight to the Accident & Emergency department, arriving before the ambulance.

Thanks to her swift response, medics advised that he would hopefully make a recovery.

Victoria supported Lauren throughout the ordeal, sending her money to buy their colleague essential supplies for his stay in hospital.

The pair then continued to support him, helping him to attend medical appointments and providing everyday necessities for many months.

Steve Clements, Southeastern revenue protection manager, said: "If they hadn't got to him when they did, his prognosis may not have been good. They saved his life. Their compassion and support during a colleague's time of need is commendable and is what the railway family is all about."



Winner



Saad Mulla, Customer Service Assistance, Network Rail

In the run-up to Christmas 2021, London Paddington-based customer service assistant Saad Mulla was on duty at 0200 when he spotted a distressed and unsteady man travelling the wrong way on the escalator on Platform 12.

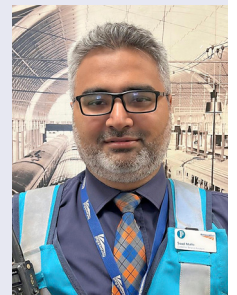
Clearly intoxicated, the man tried to run up the escalator. Saad switched it off to prevent him from falling and coming to serious harm.

Unfortunately, as Saad led him away to the safety of a nearby bench, the man began using broken glass from a smashed bottle to cut himself.

The man became abusive, but Saad kept talking to him, calmed him down, and called for help.

Network Rail Head of Stations Susan Evans said: "Saad's shift manager on the night said his response was up there with some of the best things he's ever seen people do at stations.

"It must have been a shocking incident to deal with and is not what people expect to face when they come into work. But he reassured the customer, kept them safe, and made sure they came to no serious harm."



Winner



Vincent O'Brien, Train Presentation Operative, Northern

Since joining Northern in January 2018, Vincent O'Brien has been based at Barrow depot.

On March 21 2022, while Vincent was carrying out train cleaning duties at Southport, the station's Merseyrail manager was advised of an incident in the female toilets.

On arrival at the scene, he found Vincent already in attendance, administering first aid to a young lady who had sadly attempted to take her own life.

Vincent worked with Merseyrail staff to keep the female calm, while they administered what treatment they could before the paramedics arrived.

She was then taken to hospital to receive further medical and mental health treatment.

Vincent was commended for remaining calm, confident, and "handling the situation impeccably in a very tragic environment".

The Merseyrail manager added: "A simple thank you to Vincent seems inappropriate for all his dedication and good humour during this incident. I'm sure Northern is as proud to employ this exceptional individual as I am to know him."



Winner

GWR

Lucy Lount and Matt Doyle, Customer Host and Revenue Protection Inspector, GWR

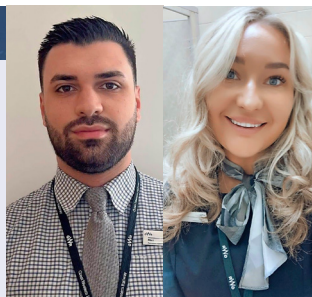
When a passenger pulled a woman away from the platform edge as a train was arriving at Worle station, little could Lucy Lount and Matt Doyle have known what chain of events would follow.

They stayed with the female in a platform shelter for more than 30 minutes, while

emergency services were called, before events then took another terrible twist.

The female unexpectedly slid off the seat and collapsed on the floor, foaming from the mouth.

Matt, who was on a rest day but had gone to the station to meet his girlfriend, helped Lucy to move the female into the recovery position, so that she



wouldn't choke.

After the woman's body became limp and her eyes rolled into the back of her head, Doyle sprinted to fetch a defibrillator.

The duo then made steps to use it before paramedics arrived and were able to revive the female from what was later established to be a drugs overdose.

Winner

c2c

Donna Illet-Vidhi, Station Controller, c2c

On May 29 2021, Donna's abilities as a station controller at Barking station were put to the test when a male collapsed on the concourse.

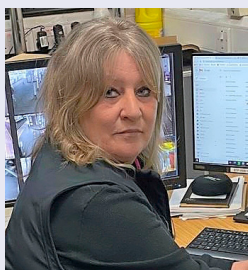
After raising the alarm and calling emergency services, she immediately took charge of the situation by performing basic life support techniques that she had learned in training many years previously.

With the male unconscious and unresponsive, a decision was made to use a defibrillator. After the pads were placed on the man's chest, the defibrillator did the rest automatically and made several shocks before indicating that the male had become stable.

All the while that medical treatment was being administered, crowds of onlookers had to be dealt with and moved on.

The ambulance service then arrived and took over management of the patient.

Their feedback was clear that the actions of Donna and her team had undoubtedly saved the man's life.



Winner

LNER

Ashley Brown, Driver, LNER

On March 8 2022, while travelling on a train from Newcastle to Edinburgh, Ashley Brown was made aware by the onboard team that a passenger was suffering from breathing difficulties and chest pain.

Ashley offered her services and was soon with the elderly woman, offering comfort and reassurance to her for more than 40 minutes while the train made its way to its destination, where paramedics had been requested to attend.

Onboard team members praised Ashley for staying with the woman during a very worrying time, easing their commitments and ensuring the rest of the passengers were looked after.

Ashley modestly played down the incident and insisted that she "only did what anyone else would". But this humility was said by LNER to only amplify her values to put others first.

It later transpired that the elderly woman had suffered a heart attack. She has since had a stent fitted and is now making a full recovery. She was extremely keen for Ashley's efforts to be properly recognised.



Winner

EMR

Dawn Bennett, Driver, East Midlands Railway

Lincoln-based driver Dawn Bennett was on a routine turn when she brought her train to a stand at a signal protecting Holton le Moor.

After waiting a short while for a proceed aspect, she attempted to contact the signaller via GSM-R, but had no luck.

Concerned for his welfare, Dawn decided to walk up the track to the signal box, where she

found the signaller laying on the floor mid-cardiac arrest.

She stayed with the signaller, giving him support and care as best she could, until paramedics arrived to give emergency CPR.

After satisfying herself that she was in a fit mental state to drive, Dawn remarkably then returned to her cab to complete the rest of her shift, without fault.

Although she insisted that she had done nothing special, Dawn's management team

rightly disagreed.

They said: "What she did was above and beyond, and has heavily contributed to the signaller still being with us. He is making steady progress and will hopefully make a full recovery to be able to enjoy his retirement."



Winner

SOUTHERN

Paul Black, Customer Service Assistant, Southern Railway

When a fatality occurred at Preston Park on April 21 2021, Paul Black found that he was the only member of station staff on duty.

Paul's immediate reaction was to check on the welfare of those around him, and he



rapidly went to the aid of a female passenger who had witnessed the traumatic events on the platform.

She explains: "I was almost entirely alone on the platform and witnessed the sound of what happened as well as the aftermath. I couldn't breathe or move. All I could do was scream.

"Paul tried his best to console me, calm me down, and ushered me out the station. He

was totally amazing, and I don't know what I'd have done without him to get out of the station safely."

Paul's manager also described him as "an exceptional human being" who evacuated the station very quickly while assisting the distressed passenger and awaiting the arrival of emergency services.

She added: "He remained calm and proactive throughout and is a real credit to the Brighton area team."



Winner

Special Honorary Award

Ukrainian Railway Men and Women

We have all been horrified by the brutal war in Ukraine, which has brought so many tragic scenes of human suffering to our television screens.

But we've also seen heroism on an incredible scale, with ordinary men and women stepping up to support the people of Ukraine, often regardless of the risk to themselves.

There is, of course, a long and proud history of the role of railways in war - carrying troops, taking people to safety, and moving essential supplies. And it has been no different in Ukraine, where Ukrainian Railways and its workers have continued to provide vital transport links despite relentless shelling and bombardment.

The network has been kept functioning, regardless of the hardships.

Train planning was done on the move and onboard trains, so that planning capability couldn't easily be targeted by the invading Russian army.

A flat decision structure was introduced, so that local management could make decisions quickly.

Rail infrastructure has been specifically targeted, but repairs to track and signalling have been completed at incredible pace - on occasion, with the trains running again within a matter of hours.

Since February, around three million people have been evacuated by train for free to safer locations in adjoining countries, such as

Prague in the Czech Republic and Krakow and Katowice in Poland.

With more than 100,000 people pouring onto trains to flee the fighting each day, stations in western Ukraine (including Lviv-Holovnyi) became some of the biggest transit points in the largest European migration since the Second World War.

Railway staff were aided by volunteers and charities to provide hot meals, clothing and medical supplies.

And on the return journey, the railway has carried thousands of tonnes of humanitarian aid and emergency supplies back into the heart of Ukraine.

Trains have run from a host of European counties (including the UK), hauling containers carrying donated equipment, goods, food and water.

In conjunction with the Ukrainian Red Cross, the railway has moved seriously ill people to safe hospitals and has even converted some carriages to become mobile hospitals.

Ukrainian Railways is now at the forefront of carrying grain, metals and other supplies that would normally have gone by sea.

It is regarded as the frontline of Ukrainian resistance, with rail workers described by former Prime Minister Boris Johnson as the "iron people" of Ukrainian Railways.

Speaking after travelling by train from the Polish border to Kyiv on April 9, to meet

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky, Johnson added: "I gather you are called the men and women of iron. I think that also reflects that you are showing the spirit of Ukraine in standing up to the appalling aggression that we are seeing."

Sadly, as trains, infrastructure and stations have become military targets, more than 1,000 Ukrainian railway workers have lost their lives. Fifty-two people were killed in just one missile attack at Kramatorsk station, as they waited for a train.

As a part of the international railway family, we mourn the loss of colleagues and comrades, and stand shoulder to shoulder in solidarity with the men and women of Ukrainian Railways.

"There are a whole load of railway men and women who are doing extraordinary things, at great personal risk," said NRA judge and Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain board member Iryna Terlecky.

"Everyone has been looking at refugees, at bombings, at sanctions. But bravery is being shown elsewhere, too, including keeping the railways running.

"A lot of the infrastructure in the east of Ukraine is being destroyed, but elsewhere the trains are still running. Ukrainian Railways has transported thousands and thousands of people over the border and worked as much as they could to repair damage, so the railways could get people to safety."

Refugees wait to board a train from Lviv-Holovnyi (in western Ukraine) to Poland on February 26. At the start of the conflict, an estimated 100,000 Ukrainians were thought to be transiting through there each day. ALAMY.





▶ [WALL]
HOOK

ASSET
IMPROVEMENT:
PROTOTYPE
NEW DESIGNS

PRODUCTION OF NEW COMPONENTS
ACROSS MANY MANUFACTURING
ENVIRONMENTS
PRODUCTION OF NEW
COMPONENTS
ACROSS MANY MANUFACTURING
ENVIRONMENTS

▶ [ARM]
REST

OPTIMISATION:
NEW LIGHTER
WEIGHT PARTS

▶ [CHAIR]
HOOK

PRODUCTION:
LOW COST,
REDUCED
LEAD TIMES

At Angel Trains, we have invested in digital manufacturing and Additive Manufacturing to enable the quick replacement and prototyping of a variety of parts at lower costs, with significantly reduced lead times.

angel ^{Trains}
www.angeltrains.co.uk

Putting our people at the heart of our business

Heathrow Express

By far Heathrow Express' biggest achievement over the last couple of years is the confirmation that 80% of those working for the operator think that it is a great place to work, something the company is incredibly proud of.

Heathrow Express' employees are critical to its success and with such a talented and dedicated workforce in place, the company will no doubt continue to go from strength to strength in its post-COVID recovery, ready to face any further challenges that may come its way after what has been a difficult few years for the industry.

The challenges faced:

The COVID-19 pandemic was difficult for rail operators across the UK and beyond, but as an open access operator, Heathrow Express faced additional challenges to those experienced by franchised operators.

With far-reaching financial implications and no specific government support to speak of, the start of 2021 was still to prove difficult, with challenges, such as the upcoming launch of the Elizabeth line, unstable travel markets and the decision by some to continue working from home still ahead. However, with the country setting about on its path to recovery, Heathrow Express remained committed to the people that work there and providing them with

the best possible working environment.

The measures taken:

Of course, employee satisfaction is not measured by money alone, and so Heathrow Express worked with its union to review and implement a new roster pattern, and then set about relaunching its employee experience, to help staff feel empowered in their jobs and to continue to offer the high levels of customer service that Heathrow Express is known for.

This involved making improvements in three key areas:

■ **Learning and development:** Heathrow Express designed and implemented a Digital Employee Engagement initiative to revolutionise training and development, using avatar customers, video content and gamification. As a result, refresher training now happens more frequently and is more responsive to individual needs. Assessments and coaching on a 1-2-1 basis are building confidence in employees' abilities, and a programme of development discussions has been implemented to help them plan for their futures.

■ **Communications and support:** Colleague mentors have been introduced to help new starters, and all employees are invited to attend weekly company-wide calls with the senior leadership team. Everyone is encouraged to ask questions, make suggestions, and share feedback.

■ **Safety and wellbeing:** Wellbeing and

Safety volunteers from the frontline staff now meet with the senior leadership team on a monthly basis.

Other important steps for employee wellbeing were the availability of clear masks for all employees, so that customers can see their smiles and lip-read for those who need it, plus, all paper-based activities were made digital, addressing any concerns around cleanliness.

Key achievements:

These initiatives have had an extremely positive impact on Heathrow Express' company culture: there has been an 11% reduction in leavers from pre-pandemic records; sickness absence is at its lowest rate in four years; 13% of frontline staff have moved to development opportunity roles; and the gender pay gap is balanced - an impressive result, especially given the difficulties that companies and staff have faced since 2020.

With this in mind, Heathrow Express is committed to carry on earning its staff's admiration throughout the rest of 2022 and beyond.

NRA 2022

Heathrow Express was an entrant in the 2022 National Rail Awards Great Place to Work category.



**Heathrow
Express**

Class 321 Swift Express Freight



Eversholt Rail

"Spearheading a change of culture in parcel delivery and showcasing the huge opportunity for modal shift to rail."

That is how Rail Freight Group Director General Maggie Simpson OBE describes Eversholt Rail's Class 321 Swift Express Freight Train - the cost-effective alternative to carrying parcels by road.

The prototype unit's story begins in 2019, when Eversholt Rail grasped an opportunity to repurpose Greater Anglia '321s' that were coming off lease.

Although the fleet is being replaced in passenger service, the units were by no means ready for retirement. Instead, Eversholt Rail envisaged a low-carbon solution for the ever-increasing demand for online deliveries that would be both cost-effective and contribute towards the UK's target of reaching net-zero emissions by 2050.

The timing couldn't have been better. Consumer demand for next-day deliveries has soared - it is no longer a brand differentiator, it has become expected of most retailers.

But, with rising fuel costs and a shortage of lorry drivers, meeting this demand by road has become increasingly problematic. Swift answers those problems with a high-speed electric rail solution for carrying up to 38.5 tonnes of light freight and parcels.

After two years of strategic and careful planning, work on the conversion of four-car 321334 began in April 2021 at Wabtec UK's facility in Doncaster, in partnership with consultant Ricardo, which assisted in the design.

Seats and other passenger features were removed from the unit, the floor was strengthened, and a retention system was installed. The heavier flooring was essential to ensure the train's gauging remains unchanged. Sidewall and floor fixing systems were also installed to accommodate roller cages, although freight operators will have the option to carry a range of other load types such as pallets.

Toilets and some seating have been retained on the demonstration unit, to show how staff amenities might work if operators wish to use the unit as a 'moving warehouse' to sort freight on the move.

The four-car prototype was completed in July 2021, although Swift's flexibility means that units can be coupled together to

make eight- or 12-car trains. It is intended for operation on electrified routes, but Eversholt Rail says it could also be hauled by a diesel locomotive, which would still offer considerable sustainability benefits over HGVs (with each Swift carriage taking one lorry off the road).

RAIL reported in July 2021 (RAIL 935) that Eversholt Rail is also working on providing a battery-based 'self-powered' '321' by 2023, which would enable the units to operate at low speeds for short distances away from the wires. This would avoid the need for diesel haulage or shunting in unelectrified freight yards and logistics hubs.

Under electric operation, the Swift can reach 100mph, meaning that delivery times could be cut in half from the equivalent road journey. For example, a Glasgow-London delivery would normally take 11 hours by road. It would take just five-and-a-half by Swift. Short-haul journeys such as between outer and central London also offer significant benefits, by losing LEZ charges and eliminating the problem of heavy traffic.

Eversholt Rail says there are numerous prospects currently in the pipeline expressing strong interest in using the Class 321 Swift Express Freight Train. GB Railfreight is the first operator to have one on lease, and it has been impressed with the train's accessibility and seamless access to city centres.

With the dual pressures of climate change and road transport becoming more and more complex and expensive, the Swift offers a sustainable solution to address a significant gap in the market.



NRA 2022

Eversholt Rail's Class 321 Swift Express Freight was an entrant in the 2022 National Rail Awards Freight & Logistics Achievement of the Year category.

Paul Watson, Operations Director



TransPennine Express

Few can say that they have worked in an industry for more than 45 years, but TransPennine Express Operations Director Paul Watson is one of those few.

He has dedicated his career to the railway. And he not only displays exceptional operational knowledge, he is also committed to positive relationships with trade unions and pursuing charitable endeavours.

Paul started his railway career in 1977 on the platform at London Waterloo station, working his way up to the role of guard and then driver, before moving into operational management.

In 1999, he was promoted into senior management and worked for West Anglia, Midland Mainline and First North Western. Paul also represented his peers as a trade union representative for more than 26 years.

But one of his biggest achievements is the leadership he provided during the tragic London bombings on July 7 2005, while he was working as a director for London Midland.

The situation called for challenging decisions to be made, all while providing reassurance to traincrew that it would be safe for them to travel in and out of London for work following the attacks, to ensure that essential rail services could continue to run.

Paul was based in Derby at the time, and he went above and beyond the call of duty, leading by example, and basing himself in London for several days to make sure the frontline teams were well supported.

Paul began his current role at TPE in 2009. He is responsible for the operator's 24/7 Control team, performance, and safety. He is also responsible for more than 500 train drivers across the north of England and over the border into Scotland.

Since taking on the role, he has used his extensive knowledge of trade union involvement to play a pivotal part in union management for TPE, providing engagement through consistent consultation, negotiation, and communication.

He has overseen recent improvements in both reliability and punctuality of trains for passengers across the North, helping to rebuild trust as the operator seeks to be the leading train operator for the region.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Paul also led TPE's response to events, and he was instrumental in ensuring the operator could provide a safe and reliable service for essential travellers, including key workers.



A vital part of this role was also ensuring that his colleagues were protected as much as possible, and that they felt safe and reassured through regular contact and collaboration with driver representatives.

Known as a true leader within TPE, Paul has an approachable and down-to-earth personality that provides inspiration to many on the railway.

Even away from work, Paul is still a committed railwayman, and in 2010 he climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in aid of the Railway Children charity, helping to raise

£180,000 as part of a team of three.

While he was in Tanzania, he visited a centre that is operated by the charity so that he could witness first-hand some of its important work. He has continued to support the charity ever since.

NRA 2022

Paul Watson was an entrant in the 2022 National Rail Awards Outstanding Personal Contribution category.

Dean Lancaster, Driver Manager (Cleethorpes)



TransPennine Express

Sixty-year-old Dean Lancaster spent 45 years - his entire career - working on the railway. But in April this year, it was finally time for him to 'hang up his boots' and retire.

However, such a long and dedicated service to the industry should not go without recognition, and this is Dean's story:

He joined British Rail in August 1977, as a clerk in the parcels office at Hull Paragon House. During his time there, he was responsible for rosters, administration and station announcements, before moving to work in the Customer Service Office and later being promoted to station supervisor at Hull Paragon in the late 1990s.

Continuing his station theme, in 2006 Dean became Station Manager at Hull, where he was involved in the development and rejuvenation of the station and Paragon Interchange. He also oversaw the conversion of the old parcels office into staff accommodation.

In addition to Hull, Dean was responsible for other stations in the area - including Brough, Selby, Scunthorpe, Grimsby and Cleethorpes.

Dean moved into his final role as Driver Manager at Cleethorpes in 2016, following a reorganisation at TPE.

Over the years, he received many accolades recognising his commitment to safety and his work. These included frontline manager of the year and awards for his stations.

"We wish Dean a long and happy retirement, having reached 45 years of service in the rail industry," said TPE Operations Director Paul Watson.

"I have enjoyed working with Dean for the past 13 of those years. During this time, he has always shown a clear passion to achieve the best outcomes for our customers and work colleagues in all situations, as well as being a good source of operational knowledge, and he has been a valued member of the management team."

Joe Anderson, Regional Head of Drivers (East) for TPE, said: "In the short time I've worked with Dean, his reputation for being incredibly knowledgeable, reliable, and professional couldn't have been more accurate!"

"It has been an absolute pleasure to work with Dean. He is utterly dependable and has consistently gone above and beyond for his colleagues, and the customers who depend on our service. I wish Dean the best for his well-earned retirement - he will be



sorely missed at TPE!"

Dean and his wife Alison have two children - Simon and Sophie.

Alison said: "Dean thrives on problem-solving and has assisted TPE throughout many challenges over the years, including the Hatfield landslide [February 2013, when the railway was closed for five months]."

"Whenever complimented, he will humbly say 'I'm just doing my job'. But he is proud of the contributions he has made for over 40 years of hard work and dedication to his career.

"He has always prided himself on the relationships he has with his staff and the support he gives them to fulfil their roles. He has also been devoted to his own family and is looking forward to joining me in retirement!"

NRA 2022

Dean Lancaster was an entrant in the 2022 National Rail Awards Outstanding Personal Contribution category.

Building confidence and reassurance: the '5 Pillars of Customer Excellence'

TransPennine Express

With the devastating impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on passenger numbers, giving people the confidence to return to the railway and encouraging new passengers was a major challenge. For TransPennine Express, the answer was the '5 Pillars of Customer Excellence':

- **Connecting** - listening and learning from customers and colleagues.
- **Consistency** - delivering consistency across customer experience delivery.
- **Communication** - engaging customers and providing proactive information.
- **Collaboration** - working with industry partners to deliver customer excellence.
- **Continuous Improvement** - always believing things could be done better.

The idea was to keep key workers, customers and staff safe, reassured and confident in TPE's services, with a strategy that would build on insight from those stakeholders and measure the operator's output and performance.

Connecting with customers and colleagues

TPE wanted to proactively gather as much information as possible from customers, to understand how they felt and experienced its services, and to gain insight into areas that could be improved.

The operator updated its Post-Trip Survey to include COVID-related questions around issues such as social distancing and mask wearing, enhanced the Mystery Shopper Programme to focus on cleanliness, and considered the results in these areas from other research bodies such as Transport Focus. TPE also hosted regular 'Meet the Manager' sessions for customers and forums specifically for disabled customer groups.

For staff, there were weekly calls for traincrew union representatives following the first lockdown in March 2020. And a new app (Arrakis) was launched to more than 500 staff members in February, to replace the huge volume of messages from the Control room. Instead, the app filters messaging based on location, traincrew diagram, current service, line of route, and other options to provide only those that are relevant to the individual.



Confidence through consistency

TPE wanted to ensure that customer experience services remained available for people, despite rising sickness levels among staff. It meant that all stations, trains and online services were staffed in order to provide visible, helpful and proactive customer-facing services. Twelve Customer Experience Ambassadors were also recruited to provide reassurance and assistance.

Confidence through communication

Industry 'Travel with Confidence' messages featured prominently on TPE's various digital platforms. And the operator developed proactive information for people with different travel needs, such as those with accessibility requirements.

Confidence through collaboration

Working with cleaning supplier MITIE, cleaning was ramped up across stations, offices and depots, providing a 70% increase on pre-COVID cleaning resources, with the creation of 50 new jobs.

Confidence through continuous improvement

A host of improvements were launched, including: STORM machines which

expedite the sanitation procedure, providing a much more hygienic way of sanitising than using a cloth; a new interactive timetable page online that allows customers to select travel dates to view engineering works; and QR codes at station Help Points to launch video assistance from the Control team.

The results of all these combined efforts (and many more) have exceeded all expectations. Independent rail industry customer satisfaction measure Wavelength returned an overall satisfaction score of 8.09 (beating the industry average by 0.28); 98% of customers said they felt safe or very safe when travelling with TPE; and the operator scored above average in a host of categories surveyed.

TPE's own insights from its Post-Trip Survey and Mystery Shopper Programme also revealed high satisfaction levels, giving the operator confidence that its customer service is regarded highly by passengers - a real achievement at a time of significant uncertainty.

NRA 2022

TransPennine Express was an entrant in the 2022 National Rail Awards Customer Service Excellence category.

The Rail Revival: bouncing back for a changing world

TransPennine Express

Operating inter-city services that link key cities and towns in the north of England and into Scotland, TransPennine Express is a major northern operator. TPE serves 83 stations (of which it manages 19) and carries around 350,000 passengers a week.

The operator employs roughly 1,500 staff members and has 11 traincrew depots, the largest of which are in York and Manchester (where the main headquarters is also situated).

In May 2021, TPE was awarded a National Rail Contract by the Department for Transport, taking the operation to May 2023 with an option to extend to 2025. The NRC was awarded after the expiry of the Emergency Recovery Measures Agreement which had been put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic.

TPE's path to recovery over the past 12 months from that financially devastating time has been a busy one, in which the operator's performance has soared and revenue is growing...

Performance had been disappointing for TPE over the past few years, owing to a number of significant challenges. The May 2018 timetable change led to late running, poor performance and congestion in Manchester, and December 2019 brought further problems. But May 2020 was the

beginning of a turnaround as the rollout of the new Nova trains improved reliability.

Of course, many argued that the more manageable timetable was the cause for many operators recording improved figures. But for TPE, the trend has continued despite the timetable uplift that came with the end of the lockdowns. TPE has emerged as the best-performing operator in the North and among inter-city operators. In December 2019, performance fell as low as 60%, but by 2021 it had risen and remains at over 90%... an enormous uplift.

Passenger numbers for TPE soared during the summer of 2021. Because the network attracts leisure travellers, many passengers used TPE to reach staycation destinations. In September 2021, passenger numbers had reached 73% of pre-COVID levels (at the start of the year, during the nationwide lockdown, numbers were at just 8% of pre-pandemic levels,).

Off-peak tickets have been particularly popular, with First Class incredibly reaching 40% higher than pre-COVID!

Collaboration with stakeholders has also been a key focus for TPE over the past year, with a whole host of projects being delivered as a result - including supporting the Big Ideas by The Sea Festival in July 2021, delivering a transformative upgrade to Malton station as part of a £170,000 investment, and installation of a new Changing Places toilet at Manchester Airport station as part of a £200,000

upgrade in August 2021. This toilet helps those with additional mobility needs who cannot use standard accessible toilets.

Another collaboration that has benefited passengers is an innovative project with Everdelta which enabled TPE to be the first UK train operator to introduce new Express Help Points and video calling at stations. These allow passengers to use their phones to instantly connect with a member of TPE staff (even at unstaffed stations), to quickly and easily reach information and assistance.

In December 2021, TPE introduced additional services between Newcastle and Edinburgh and new services in both directions for Edinburgh Waverley, Dunbar, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Alnmouth, Widdrington, Morpeth, Cramlington and Newcastle. Reston station was also added to the list when it opened in May 2022.

TPE has achieved so much in the past 12 months that it would never fit onto a single page. High performance levels, increasing passenger numbers and continuing focus on collaboration and customer service are all giving the operator a boost as it looks forward to the next 12 months... and maybe even beyond.

NRA 2022

TransPennine Express was an entrant in the 2022 National Rail Awards Passenger Operator of the Year category.

