



September 14 2023

# The Winners

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**W**hat a year it's been. So many projects coming to fruition, so many new trains coming on stream, a thriving freight sector, great plans for the future, and a vibrancy and optimism that we are making the railways better for our customers.

Yes, there have been a few problems along the way, but these are far outweighed by all of the successes: fantastic companies and amazing people making a real difference to our industry.

And that's what our own Oscars - the National Rail Awards - are all about. A chance to recognise and celebrate those achievements, meet with colleagues, forge new business relationships, and to build a bigger and better railway.

This year our two most recent categories, Environmental Excellence and Outstanding Contribution to Society, attracted a large number of entries, reflecting the increasing importance of our railways to the wider community. Great to see and rather wonderful that it's reflected in projects on the ground. Siemens' new complex in Goole will come on stream very soon and will transform the region with new jobs, new technology, a host of nature projects and huge involvement with the local community. It will be brilliant.

This year, our judges visited the 144 stations that were entered and they just get better and better. All visits are unannounced and we were amazed at the improvements that we are seeing. There's a real focus on not only passengers but also becoming a hub for the local communities - it's so good to see.

My local station (Newark Northgate) just seems to get better and better and, although they didn't enter the awards, they are really delivering an excellent service. They don't know me from Adam, but recently the train



dispatcher gave me a cheery "good morning" as I walked past him on the platform. It's not part of his contract, but it got my day off to a good start - "thank you" and well done!

Innovation is the lifeblood of any industry and it certainly thrives on the railways. A massive entry list in this category is both exciting and reassuring - we are definitely not standing still. I wish we could give everyone an award but sadly that's not possible. The days and weeks that the judging panels spend

debating, and yes arguing, are exhilarating - what can be more rewarding than seeing how good our industry can be? We have 30 judges, including the rising stars in our industry - the Young Rail Professionals - and each is committed to finding the best of the best. We don't always agree and it's fair to say the debate can become a bit feisty, but we try really hard and normally manage to stay friends.

This year is the 24th year of the National Rail Awards which means that next year will be our 'Silver Jubilee'. That sounds like a great name for a locomotive! If anyone is planning a naming ceremony next year, give it a thought!

I always look forward to our awards night at the *Grosvenor House Hotel*. I missed it in 2022 because, although I had almost no symptoms, I did test positive for COVID so had to stay at home.

I always want to meet as many people as possible on the night, share with the celebrations of the winners, join in with the commiserations of those who didn't quite make it onto the stage but most of all, I like to be part of our annual night out! It's a fabulous industry that we are involved with and I feel so privileged to be part of it.

**Clive Nicholls**



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## The Judges

### Clive Nicholls (Chairman)

Charles Belcher  
 Abi Broadley  
 Ian Brown CBE  
 Paul Case  
 Michael Chung (YRP)  
 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  
 Dr Malcolm Reed CBE  
 Anthony Smith  
 Iryna Terlecky  
 Richard Wallace MA, FCILT  
 Natasha Hanson  
 Rita Williams  
 Bill Free  
 Fiona Westcough (YRP)  
 Laura Smith (YRP)  
 Ian Hurst

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## Winner

### Innovation of the Year

#### Network Rail (The Flow Footbridge)

The judges were wowed by this bridge which “has the potential to revolutionise the way footbridges are built and replaced on the rail network, reducing costs and improving safety and sustainability. The collaborative approach employed could also set a new pattern for approaching complex technical problems that require supply chain engagement”.

The Flow Footbridge was created by Network Rail during the pandemic period as a Research & Development project. It soon snowballed and gained eight private sector partners.

At its heart, this is a modular yet adaptable design of lightweight footbridge, where the main structure is made from fibre-reinforced polymer.

It’s a hugely innovative structure. Firstly, making it from polymer (a world first) reduces the weight by about half when compared to a more traditional bridge. The deck relies on gravity to keep it in place and the whole structure is driven into the ground using



tubes made from recycled aluminium.

Installation is simple and doesn’t require any complex groundwork, thus minimising disruption. In-built sensors continually monitor the structure’s condition and the stresses that it faces. It also doesn’t require expensive maintenance and inspections but can be easily repaired if damaged. There is also the scope to develop a version for stations where a much smaller footprint is desired.

The judges appreciated that while the cost of the materials is working out broadly similar to traditional ‘steel with foundations’, the installation cost of the Flow Footbridge is “vastly lower”.

The first production Flow Footbridge was

installed at Winstanlow, in Shropshire, in just three week-nights. It has glazed panels to improve its aesthetics.

Network Rail has highlighted 37 new sites that could use the Flow Bridge and six will be installed in 2024. The judges added: “Implementation has deliberately been slowed down by the need to create a production capability at scale in order to obtain the economies of scale desired.”

■ **Highly Commended:** Network Rail (Cost-efficient electrification), Tended (Lifesaving geo fencing technology), Geobear (Embankment stabilisation using geopolymer).



## Winner

### Infrastructure Achievement of the Year

#### Network Rail NW&C (Liverpool Central Tunnel Repairs)

What happens if more than 100 metres of tunnel, deep under a city centre, has deteriorated to the point that urgent action is required? Close the line to all traffic and subject rail users to months of delays and inconvenience? Or deliver an engineering solution so clever that railway staff don’t even know that work is underway?

When parts of the High Neck tunnel roof, a deep tunnel that runs from Liverpool Central to Brunswick station, required urgent attention, Network Rail turned to the latter. It created a temporary working deck high above the running lines so that the significant repair and overhaul work could be carried out safely and without interruption to Merseyrail services running below.

From this structure, engineers made improvements to the water proofing as well



as installing arched steel mesh. The mesh reinforced the masonry before being sprayed with concrete. In order to give the engineers access to the tunnel that didn’t involve waiting on the gaps between trains, a work

access was created through a vent shaft.

What impressed the judges was not just the commitment to avoiding passenger disruption but the attention to detail in order to completely fix the issue, which has plagued the 130-year-old tunnel for years. Handheld LiDAR surveying equipment enabled a 3D map of the tunnel to be made and, from this, the temporary overhead deck was constructed so that it perfectly fitted the tunnel’s irregular profile.

The work took six months to complete at a cost of £3.5m. It complements work carried out in 2017 so that the whole tunnel now has a reinforced concrete roof, which will reduce the amount of maintenance the tunnel requires for decades to come.

“That some train staff did not realise work was carrying on until three weeks after it started,” the judges said, “is testimony to the ‘invisible engineering’ the North West & Central Capital Delivery team achieved.”

■ **Highly Commended:** Barhale (Finsbury Park Access for All), Buckingham Group/Nexus (Metro Flow).









## Winner

### Outstanding Teamwork

#### AmcoGiffen & Network Rail (Eastern Asset Maintenance Response Team)

Network Rail AmcoGiffen employs 144 people to cover the NR contract and, in 2022, those people attended 1,441 Network Rail jobs. Of these, 407 were emergency call-outs. Clearly this situation was not sustainable.

Both organisations developed a new 'one team' way of working. This required a multi-disciplinary approach while building a collaborative team in order to allow work to be delivered efficiently. They had to respond quickly and be creative, for example, in resolving issues during the Christmas break.

Although a small team, all parties made a proactive effort to establish positive, constructive working relationships. The team members said that this was aided significantly by making the effort to listen to each other and work in an environment of trust, where they were to open to challenge and constructive feedback. There was a constant



touch-base and communication process in place throughout, including a WhatsApp group and they were very focused on the right people doing the right task.

The judges were impressed by the team's approach, which allows work to be carried out quickly and efficiently due to the high level of trust throughout the team as well as the commitment to putting passengers first. The judges also praised the zero accident frequency rate and the way that pragmatic solutions to problems are agreed quickly and implemented in time spans that are far quicker than is seen when more conventional

working arrangements are in place.

This new approach allowed some impressive feats of engineering to take place. When a retaining wall collapsed at Kentish Town on December 31 2022, Amco were able to mobilise a team quickly to stabilise it, including moving a 40 ton excavator through London. And when a lorry struck a bridge near Stamford, Network Rail and Amco were able to re-open the railway after just 17 days.

■ **Highly Commended:** Merseyrail (New Class 777 train fleet), Transport for Wales (Operational Readiness Team).



## Winner

### Freight & Logistics Achievement of the Year

#### Highland Spring Group (Blackford rail freight facility)

Highland Spring is one of the UK's leading bottled water brands. It has taken its responsibilities to be a more sustainable and environmentally friendly business seriously. It introduced a recyclable and recycled bottle in 2018 and followed this with the Eco Bottle in 2019. But its biggest commitment to helping the environment is the construction of a dedicated rail freight terminal on the Stirling-Perth main line.

This facility, adjacent to Highland Spring's bottling plant at Blackford, is the realisation of a ten year dream. It was officially opened in August 2022 and became fully operational in January 2023. It has already enabled 40% of the firm's output to be despatched by rail, achieving an annual reduction in road transport emission in excess of 3,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> and a saving of 8,000 lorry movements each year.



The judges were particularly impressed with Highland Spring's engagement with the local community and the care that it took in minimising the noise and other environmental impacts of developing a major rail terminal on an extremely constrained site.

They also appreciated Highland Spring's honesty about its journey and the difficulties that it faced in becoming a new user of rail freight but they praised its willingness to share information with other businesses, including competitors, to 'de-mystify' the process of changing to rail. This has extended to showing a rival firm round the site.

Highland Spring are also keen to allow other rail freight users access to the terminal. It has already started supplying Tesco directly from their site and are keen to work with suppliers to enable inbound materials to be delivered by rail.

The judges were unanimous in their view that this was an outstanding entry, intelligently presented with clear reference to the category criteria and with demonstrable evidence of early success and future growth potential.

■ **Highly Commended:** GB Railfreight (HS2 project).



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## Winner

### Major Project of the Year

#### Buckingham Group/Nexus (Metro Flow)

Nexus, operator of the Tyne & Wear Metro, wanted to improve the frequency of its service. It looked across the whole of its network and highlighted the single line section just beyond Pelaw Junction to a point just before Bede station as a problem. It caused frequent delays, which had led to huge repercussions across the rest of the network.

However, there were actually two lines between Pelaw and Bede. Nexus only had use of one, while the other was Network Rail's. This line hosted one freight train a day to and from an oil terminal, which operated a couple of times a week. This is in stark contrast to Nexus, which operated 200 trains a day through this section everyday apart from Christmas Day.

After many conversations between the two organisations, the solution was comparatively simple: Nexus would buy the line from Network Rail and host the freight trains itself.

From a 'paperwork' point of view, Nexus had to negotiate with not only Network Rail



but the Office of Rail & Road, the Department for Transport and also five freight operating

■ **Highly Commended:** Network Rail (Victoria re-signalling).

companies. Taking control of the 5km of line involved three network changes, two connection contracts and five access contracts. Nexus had to agree a regulatory structure and agree and consult on the network licence, which involved using a piece of the Railways Act 1993 that had never been used before.

Organising the physical work was a challenge too as the line had to remain open and connected to enable the freight train to pass. This involved standing 300 people down for a two-hour window each day and clearing the trackbed of all plant and machinery. Metro Flow also included working with Network Rail to create a shared boundary system to enable both organisations safe access to critical infrastructure in order to carry out maintenance.



## Winner

### Environmental Excellence

#### BAM Nuttall (SMD Framework)

BAM Nuttall recognises that the construction industry is a big contributor to carbon emissions and climate change. The industry is responsible for 39% of all global carbon emissions and just under 40% of all energy use.

BAM's publicity literature says: "At BAM, we know that we're part of the problem. But that means we can be part of the solution too."

The judges were bowled over by BAM's commitment to ensure that these are not hollow promises but that the company is actually doing something meaningful. This ranges from reducing diesel fuel consumption on its rail operations by 766,000 litres to actually planting trees in Scotland when it can't carbon offset in other ways. "Real trees," the judges said, "that can be seen growing and not digital ones."

One of the most significant changes that BAM Nuttall instigated was during the £5.8m upgrade to install new lifts at Chatham



station. Part of the work included infilling a redundant cellar and BAM Nuttall challenged NR to allow the use of cement-free concrete.

The judges said: "NR standards challenge should be particularly commended here given the bureaucracy which had to be navigated to initiate this scheme. BAM Nuttall intends to add further breadth to this initiative in CP7, which the judges said is highly encouraging and should be able to be replicated beyond NR's Southern Region."

They concluded: "The presentation was given with utter passion and commitment.

It was a technical presentation but one that couldn't disguise BAM's total commitment to carbon reduction. It was inspiring. Their profits may have taken a hit, but they genuinely believe in what they are doing and are not going to be diverted from the cause. Very impressive and the figures back up the story - BAM Nuttall is making a real difference and it is a worthy winner."

■ **Highly Commended:** Colas Rail (Energy-efficient Heat Mats), Network Rail (River Eden Scour Protection).





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***September 12 2024***

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## Winner

### Fleet Achievement of the Year

#### Porterbrook/Southern (Project Aurora) & Avanti West Coast/Alstom (Pendolino upgrade)

The judges made no bones about awarding this category to both Porterbrook/Southern and Avanti West Coast/Alstom. They said: "Two really excellent and similar projects both focused on passengers and sustaining what are basically good trains."

Project Aurora was a £100 million scheme to extend the life of Southern's Class 377s and '387s'. This is the largest train fleet in Britain and the initiative not only prevents it from becoming obsolescent but also eliminates differences between the various sub-classes.

What impressed the judges the most was that impetus (and, more importantly, funding) for the project came from leasing company Porterbrook. Another innovation was that the work was carried out by Southern at its Selhurst maintenance depot. The time saved by not sending vehicles away to a main workshop meant that one unit could



be dealt with per week, which had a huge impact on availability.

The improvements help both operator and passenger alike. The former benefits from the likes of onboard data recorders, CCTV and an innovative 'Purple Network' for train critical systems, while passengers can enjoy an upgraded information service, new lighting and more USB ports.

The judges said: "An excellent initiative. It required a massive investment by

Porterbrook, to the benefit of the huge numbers of passengers who use these trains. Funding was not loaded onto the train operator but put against a much higher residual value of the large fleet."

The refurbishment of the entire Pendolino fleet was one of the biggest and most comprehensive ever. The cost of refurbishing the 22 nine- and 35 11-car sets was valued at over £100m.

The work was carried out at Alstom's Widnes workshops on a production line basis week on week, so minimising loss of train availability. Each car is completely gutted inside and some of the statistics regarding the project are impressive: there are 1,372 tasks to carry out; 25,000 new Standard Class seats were required along with 4,900 new tables and 11.5km of new carpet.

The judges said: "These are also very good trains but the interior, particularly in Standard Class, has become well worn."

The judges have now experienced the new-look 'Pendos'. They reported that the new seats are comfortable and the whole atmosphere is "bright and far less oppressive than 'Virgin red'."

They concluded: "A passenger-focused project, very well executed as a partnership with Alstom. Excellent in delivery and budget terms."



## Winner

### Safety Achievement of the Year

#### Porterbrook (Safer Switches and Crossings)

This train-borne monitoring system, which uses video and thermal imaging technology, is transforming the safety management of Network Rail's key safety critical assets. A cross-industry team developed the concept and introduced it into service in just six months. This includes modifying rolling stock, modifying the technology, and training and engaging the workforce.

It has rapidly resulted in a 50% reduction in on-track inspection, mostly during high-risk night hours, a reduction in track faults, and an increase in productivity. It has eliminated the need for dual inspections. The data is stored in the Cloud for engineers to examine in the safety of an office environment.

Detailed resolution down to 5cm enables items as small as a missing bolt to be detected. It is presently being used on two routes with a roll out taking place elsewhere with a network-wide potential to reduce patrols by 91,000 per year.

The judges said: "It shows what the industry can do, when it puts its mind to it."

■ **Highly Commended:** Colas Rail UK (Fair Culture Tool).







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## Winner

### Customer Service Excellence

#### Southeastern Railway (Customer Information)

Southeastern carries more than 400,000 passengers per day to and from Kent and East Sussex to five major London termini. That's a lot of people to keep informed.

Recognising that giving passengers timely and accurate information can improve satisfaction levels, Southeastern has joined forces with various partners to develop and deploy numerous ground-breaking, industry-leading enhancements. Its Worldline Customer Information System (CIS) drives CIS displays and automated PA announcements. These have not only benefited passengers but have had a much wider benefit to the whole rail industry.

Southeastern has developed three separate but linked new information systems: a dynamic route map showing real-time status on every route and station; an information management system which allows much better identification of priority trains and travellers, especially during disruption; and an improved customer information system.



Other improvements include more informative announcements, with a personal touch, prior notice about how busy a particular train is and advertising if passenger facilities (lifts or toilets for example) are out of action.

Southeastern's Service Quality Regime monitors the service that it provides on board its trains and stations, through a mixture of mystery shopping and auditing. These measure key aspects of facilities and customer service. Southeastern's weekly audits show that four in five passengers score the operator highly for its customer service.

The judges said: "These systems give much better and additional information for passengers and for staff to provide

information to passengers. This is particularly important and useful during disruption.

"There is now good information on where trains are and where there are gaps, and alternative bus routes where scheduled. This is about making better use of the information already available to the railway and finding new applications for it.

"We liked the collaborative approach with suppliers and the fact this is already being rolled out elsewhere. A clear winner."

■ **Highly Commended:** East Midlands Railway (Nottingham customer experience improvements), Nexus (Tyne & Wear Metro Employees for the Great North Run).



## Winner

### Great Place to Work

#### Southeastern Railway

Southeastern might employ 4,500 people but it views itself as one team. It prides itself on being a great place to work and it's committed to the health, happiness, success and motivation of its employees.

It has recognised the benefits of a diverse and inclusive team and nearly 30% of new hires are women while BAME employees comprised 39% of new hires in Q4 of 2022 alone. Employment surveys demonstrate that its diversity and inclusion initiatives are making a difference. However, Southeastern has concentrated on areas beyond the more 'obvious' issues, such as D&I.

It has launched a 'Menopause Awareness' e-learning course for line managers, its 'Cognassist' tool to support neurodiverse colleagues, launched the 'Colleague Mental Health Advocate' programme to help deal with traumatic incidents that they might have experienced at work and its mental health training for line managers to better understand and support their team's mental wellbeing. Southeastern's mental health advocate programme has provided more

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- Real-time status
- Disruption
- Engineering work
- Live times

**Information Management**

- Service gap alerts
- Priority train alerts
- Stranded train alerts
- Auto-reporting

**Customer Information (CIS)**

- 30 improvements including...
- Live train location
- Step-free information
- Crowding levels

than 1,563 interventions, which equates to a 32% uptake by employees. Southeastern has also undertaken a lot of work to improve the physical health of its workforce, from regular health checks to fitness competitions and exercise classes.

This has resulted in Southeastern making it onto the *Financial Times* Diversity Leaders ranking for 2023 which comprises 850 companies from across Europe, named in *The Sun's* Top 8 menopause-friendly employers and achieved the National Equality Standard from Ernst Young accreditation in 2022.

The judges said: "Southeastern has

achieved improvements in employee scores despite the strike environment. It has shown industry leadership, especially in the area of mental health, where it has devised and implemented the Trauma Risk Management system. Its Equality, Diversity and inclusion work was good and their presentation brought an impressive range of staff from different backgrounds with testimony on how the operator had supported, helped and empowered them."

■ **Highly Commended:** Atkins, GB Railfreight.





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## Winner

### Outstanding Contribution to Society

#### South Western Railway (Hampshire Community Rail Partnership)

Hampshire Community Rail Partnership, nominated by South Western Railway, was voted this year's worthy winner of Outstanding Contribution to Society, "because they've done something different and really showcase the power of volunteering and the difference it can make to people's everyday lives".

Formed in 2008 as Three Rivers CRP, the Hampshire CRP covers 50 stations including 28 station adoptions. Since becoming fully funded, it has grown to three part-time directors, two full-time rail officers, approximately 100 volunteers and some 400 steering group and stakeholder members.

But it wasn't just scale that impressed the judges. They added: "We were struck by the sheer ambition and dedication of the volunteer team. This entry really demonstrates the integral role the railway and its public spaces



can have within a community."

Examples of initiatives include the Travel with Confidence project, aimed at providing information and supporting people with non-visible disabilities and neuro-diverse needs to enjoy travelling by public transport.

The CRP also uses redundant space at stations for the benefit of communities including free shops, history rooms, gardens, tourism hubs, rehearsal space and meeting rooms.

Most recently, a disused Victorian waiting room and ticket office at Shawford was regenerated after 40 years of neglect.

It now hosts a coffee shop and galateria, employing six local people and situated within a community space that is available for

local groups to use.

It works on behalf of three other CRPs to administer funding, employment and leasing of buildings and has two community licenses from Network Rail.

The judges concluded: "This is a very much grassroots organisation and its work is much more meaningful to the community under the current cost-of-living climate. It has the potential for much wider reach too, through its campaign for more confident travel among passengers with neuro-diverse needs."

■ **Highly Commended:** Siemens Mobility (At the heart of the community in Goole), West Midlands Trains (Commitment to Communities).



## Winner

### Passenger Operator of the Year

#### MTR Elizabeth line

The judges said they had "no difficulty in agreeing" on this year's top passenger operator given how MTR Elizabeth line and colleagues from Transport for London have quickly overcome a series of challenges to run what is now Britain's busiest railway.

Following the commencement of operations through the core section of the route beneath central London in May 2022, the judges were impressed by "how the service has settled in so smoothly and with such a high degree of reliability".

With further timetable uplifts and the introduction of additional through-running following in November 2022 and then earlier this year in May, footfall has now reached 600,000 journeys a day.

In February, TfL announced that 100 million journeys had been made in the previous nine months on the Elizabeth line's fleet of 70 nine-car Class 345s.

The Elizabeth line can also boast industry-leading punctuality. Between April-June 2022



it recorded 88.1% on-time running, making it one of only three operators to feature performance in the high 80s.

Up to 24 trains per hour now run between Paddington and Whitechapel in the peak with 16tph off-peak.

The judges added: "Given the complexity of the three signalling interfaces involved [between the core and the EL's eastern and western sections], it is a very powerful reflection on MTR Elizabeth line's management approach. Getting the railway

up and running so well right from the beginning is a major success, as is the effort that has been put into making the customer experience the way it is.

"The response from Londoners and the wider south-east hinterland has been astonishing. Demand has grown faster than anyone expected making the Elizabeth line the UK's most used railway within just a year of opening through the core."

■ **Highly Commended:** Greater Anglia.



# TransPennine Express: Our commitment to accessibility

## TransPennine Express

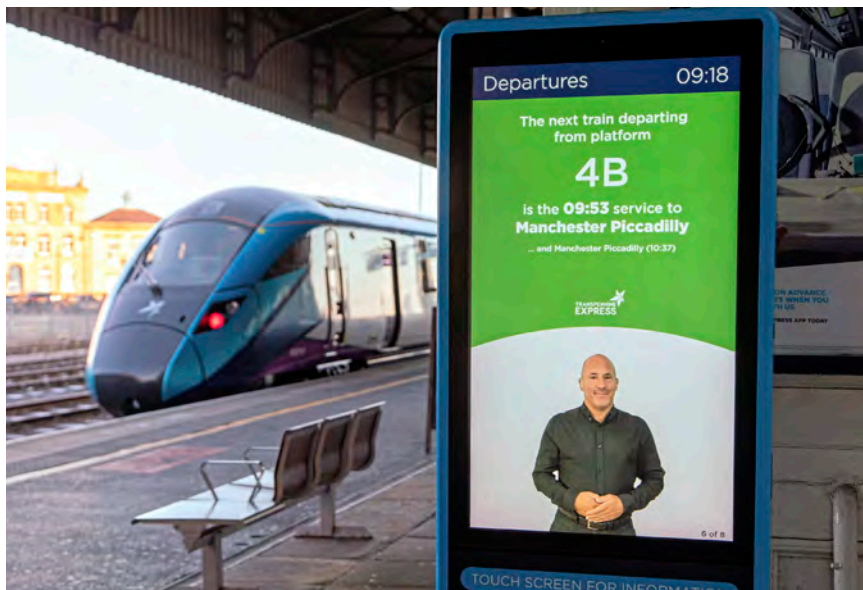
At TransPennine Express (TPE), we are committed to enhancing accessibility to ensure our customers always feel confident when travelling with us.

Customers are at the heart of everything TPE does, and we are doing all we can to make our network as inclusive and accessible as possible.

This past year, TPE has thrown itself into innovations that will improve rail travel for customers who have disabilities, with two key innovations being launched: British Sign Language (BSL) Message Boards and My Station View.

TPE became the first train operator in the North to install BSL Message Boards that now feature in most of our managed stations. The innovative technology sees live departure information and station messaging communicated with customers via BSL, meaning users can access service information without having to rely on spoken announcements or written departure screens. We also offer live BSL interpretation using tablets available from station staff.

In 2022, BSL became a recognised language in the UK and the innovative technology at TPE stations will mean BSL users can access service information without having to rely on spoken



announcements or written departure screens.

Many deaf people, particularly BSL users, find it difficult to process written text because it's technically a whole different language to BSL, therefore the introduction of these boards is a necessity for those who communicate via BSL.

The second innovation, My Station View, is a pre-departure tool that allows customers to take a 360-degree virtual tour of any TPE managed station they are

visiting before they leave home. The website allows customers to explore the station, enabling them to plan a route from the entrance of the station all the way to the required platform, viewing points of interest and facilities along the way, giving them more confidence to travel.

The innovative technology is available at all of TPE's 19 managed stations and provides a 360-degree view of the station that will also benefit customers with mobility issues as they will be able view the route from the entrance of the station all the way to the required platform, viewing points of interest and facilities along the way ensuring that key areas are accessible to them. My Station View also allows passengers to explore the interior of TPE's trains to help them locate priority seats and other on-board facilities.

A key feature of the development was the principle of 'guided navigation' whereby the user could choose 'A' to 'B' routes of their choice. In addition, customers could input details of a specific journey, so that the tool would take the user to the likely platform that their train will be departing from. Flexibility was also included into the guided navigation, whereby the user could pause the navigation at any stage and from there view self-guided 360-degree images.

It goes without saying that these accessibility innovations have significantly improved travel for customers who are deaf, hard of hearing, visually impaired, neurodivergent or anxious. ■

Find out more about TPE's commitment to accessibility here: [tpexpress.co.uk/help/accessibility](https://tpexpress.co.uk/help/accessibility).







## Winner

### Major Station of the Year

#### Glasgow Central (Network Rail)

"Glasgow Central is a superb station," said the NRA judges.

Highly commended in the same category in 2022, the Grade A Listed station won high praise for providing "thoughtful amenities", including a multi-faith room and ample seating.

The judges added: "The staff at this station keep trying [to impress] and succeed very well. They understand its significance and responsibility in the life of Glasgow and manage to make using trains easy through excellent communication, signage, ticketing and customer service."

The station was opened by the Caledonian Railway in August 1879 before undergoing a major rebuild to increase capacity between 1901-05.

The overground (High Level) station boasted 13 platforms served by an additional bridge over the River Clyde while a smaller underground (Low Level) station had also been added as part of the new subterranean



Glasgow Central Railway.

As the northern terminus of the West Coast Main Line and suburban lines to Greater Glasgow and the Ayrshire and Clyde coasts, Glasgow Central is currently the fourth busiest station in Britain outside London and the busiest in Scotland.

Although only 15.3 million entries and exits were recorded in 2021-22, this is substantially lower than the 38 million people which were using it per annum before the pandemic.

Glasgow Central is frequently described as an 'iconic landmark' and even an 'inspiring spectacle of craftsmanship' owing to its famous architectural features. They include the large glass-walled bridge (nicknamed the Highlandman's Umbrella) that takes the

station over Argyle Street and the Robert Rowand Anderson-designed Central Hotel that provides the frontage on Gordon Street.

Since 2014, 90-minute tours have been available of 'behind the scenes' areas of the station including the roof, railway vaults and disused platforms from the low-level station.

Served by ScotRail, Avanti West Coast, CrossCountry, TransPennine Express, LNER and Caledonian Sleeper services, Glasgow Central was ranked the highest in the UK for customer satisfaction in 2017 with a rating of 95.2%.

■ **Highly Commended:** London Bridge (Network Rail), Glasgow Queen Street (ScotRail).



## Winner

### Large Station of the Year

#### Derby (East Midlands Railway)

The award for Large Station of the Year remains in the East Midlands having switched to Derby from last year's winner and regional rival Nottingham.

The judges said the station has been "transformed into a benchmark for large stations", having undergone a significant upgrade and remodelling in 2018.

They added: "The entire station experience has been improved to create a unified travel experience. It has modern ticket halls on each side of the station, supported by extensive car parking, bus services and taxis.

"The generous retailing in the ticket hall and platforms is supplemented by a delightful customer lounge. Meanwhile, smart and helpful staff assist passengers on their journeys, supported by extensive information systems."

The station opened in 1839 after the Midland Railway chose to base its headquarters in Derby.

Located 127 miles north of London St



Pancras, the city became a major rail centre with carriage and locomotive workshops as well as British Rail's Railway Technical Centre all located there.

Manufacturing continues at Alstom's Litchurch Lane factory while the city is due to host the HQ for the new Great British Railways public body.

With Derby's original trainshed suffering significant bomb damage in 1941, the station underwent an extensive rebuild using pre-stressed concrete between 1952-54.

The old Victorian frontage survived until 1985 before a new travel centre opened a year later.

As a key interchange between the Midland Main Line, cross-country routes to Birmingham and Leeds plus local lines to Matlock and Stoke-on-Trent, Derby had six platforms in use before a seventh was added in 2018. The largescale re-signalling and remodelling that year has helped reduce conflicting movements and increase line speeds through all the platforms.

More than four million passenger entries and exits were recorded in 2019/20.

■ **Highly Commended:** Manchester Victoria (Northern), Birmingham International (Avanti West Coast).





## Winner

### Medium Station of the Year

#### Staines (South Western Railway)

A new entrant to the National Rail Awards, Staines has gone straight to the top of this category after “exceeding the judges’ expectations”.

Located 19 miles down the line from Waterloo, the west of London station is located close to the junction between routes to Reading and Windsor & Eton Riverside.

Opened in August 1848, the two-platform station used to be one of three to serve the Surrey town, prior to the closure of Staines High Street and Staines West in the 1960s.

Served by a basic off-peak frequency of six trains per hour, it is a busy commuter station that (prior to the pandemic) recorded some 2.7 million entries and exits per annum.

A full refurbishment was completed in 2008 with ticket barriers installed on the platforms and a renovated ticket office. Accessibility improvements were also delivered including a new footbridge with lifts.

“Staines has been refurbished as a smart outer-suburban station with entrances on

South Western  
Railway



both sides and facilities helpfully duplicated to avoid congestion,” said the NRA judges.

“Both platforms have a ticket office, catering, toilets, information and disabled access.

“Helpful staff are present for customer support and a 24-hour taxi office is outside the main door.”

Local bus services connect the station with Isleworth, West Middlesex University Hospital and Twickenham.

The 950 Thorpe Park Express bus link also runs from the front of the station to the nearby Thorpe Park theme park.

Staines’ proximity to Heathrow Airport has led to the station’s inclusion in several recent (but so far abortive) rail proposals to create direct rail links between the airport and lines to the southwest of London.

■ **Highly Commended:** Nuneaton (West Midlands Trains), Barnham (Southern).



## Winner

### Small Station of the Year

#### Okehampton (Great Western Railway)

Okehampton is no stranger to the National Rail Awards after the project to reopen the station and the Dartmoor Line that serves it triumphed in both the Outstanding Teamwork and Outstanding Contribution to Society categories in 2022.

Originally opened in 1871, Okehampton re-joined the national network for the first time in nearly 50 years on November 20 2021, when Great Western Railway services commenced running between the Devon town and Exeter.

In what was the first of the Department for Transport’s ‘Restoring your Railway’ initiatives to bear fruit, the reopening reversed the closure by British Rail in 1972 of the remains of the Southern Region’s ‘Withered Arm’ route from Coleford Junction (on the Barnstaple-Exeter line) to Okehampton.

Over the next five decades, the line remained open to serve Meldon quarry (an important source of ballast) and the



occasional tourist train operated by a community rail organisation.

Then, in March 2021, a £40 million nine-month project began to relay more than 11 miles of track, replace 24,000 concrete sleepers and install 29,000 tonnes of ballast.

The reopened station has proved popular with 250,000 journeys recorded on the Dartmoor Line in its first year.

The timetable has since been stepped up from one train every two hours to an hourly service.

The judges added: “Okehampton punches

above its weight as a transport and tourist hub. The site hums with activity from the Dartmoor Information Hub, rail museum, youth hostel and centres for hiring cycles and hiking equipment.

“It is immaculately presented in Southern Railway Green and has a ticket office, buffet with hot meals, good car parking and an hourly bus service that helps integrate the station with the town centre and Tavistock.”

■ **Highly Commended:** Etchingham (Southeastern), Lowestoft (Greater Anglia).





## Winner

### Outstanding Personal Contribution (Management)

**Lee Woolcott-Ellis, Mental Health Lead Manager, Southeastern**

Lee was a High Speed Onboard Manager when he joined Southeastern in 2015. But he has since become a pioneer in mental health, founding the Railway Mental Health Charter (RMHC) and creating a health-aware culture where colleagues can speak about anything affecting them at work.

Lee told the judges that he had used his own experience of suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) following childhood trauma as a catalyst to make a difference to other people around him.

In 2020, he developed a peer-to-peer mental health advocate programme at the operator, to which 167 colleagues applied for the 20 places available. Sixteen people subsequently came through the training, which was accredited by the British Association of Counselling Practitioners, and these advocates went on to support more than 1,000 people during the pandemic.

Lee wanted to extend this focus on mental health to the entire rail industry and developed the idea of the RMHC with RSSB. 120 organisations have signed up to the charter to date, and there are plans for a refresh to empower members to continue to encourage their staff in this area.

Lee has also implemented the TRIM (Trauma Risk Incident Management) programme at Southeastern which is a peer-delivered risk assessment and ongoing support system for colleagues who have experienced trauma or a potentially traumatic event. Since launching in December 2022, the programme has supported more than 30 incidents, ten of which were fatalities.

“We feel that Lee has turned the dial from

reactive intervention to proactive action in terms of supporting colleagues with mental health,” said the judges.

“This is a growing area across society since the pandemic and with well-documented challenges for everyone in terms of the cost-of-living crisis.”

■ **Highly Commended:** Sarah Higgins (West Midlands Trains), Rachel Turner (East Midlands Railway).



## Winner

### Outstanding Personal Contribution (Frontline)

**Azaz Khan, Station Assistant, Arriva Rail London and Ray McDonagh, Station Assistant, Arriva Rail London**

Azaz and Ray were nominated individually for what, at first glance, looked like a project to transform wasteland at South Tottenham station into a community garden.

But on further examination, the judges quickly realised that the duo’s efforts extended far beyond “making the garden look nice”.

Azaz said that since working at the station for the past 14 years, he had concentrated on doing his job well. But with no experience or past interest in gardening, the opportunity arose in 2020 to get involved in making the area outside the station more presentable.

“I can’t change the whole of Tottenham, but I can change this small part,” was the mindset he adopted.

South Tottenham is a densely populated urban area afflicted by social problems including high levels of unemployment, anti-social behaviour and gang-related crime. And yet by transforming this wasteland into

a rare area of green space, there has been an increased sense of pride in the locale and a significant reduction in litter.

Azaz also described his own sense of satisfaction at seeing people pass by with a smile on their face when they see the plants and the warm, vibrant colours in the garden.

Both Azaz and fellow station assistant Ray McDonagh (who co-led the project) have also praised the involvement of other members of the local community, for example neighbours supplying plants and flowers. The garden has also resulted in engagement with local school children getting involved in competitions, art

projects and growing vegetables.

“This isn’t about gardening... it’s about changing the culture of the station and the area around it,” said the judges.

“We felt that the impact of their efforts is significant and well worthy of further recognition.”

■ **Highly Commended:** Mark Barron (Southeastern), Ian Watson (TranPennine Express).









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# Winner

## Outstanding Personal Contribution (Senior Management) Dyan Perry OBE, CEO, HS1 Ltd

Dyan Perry (Née Crowther) has become one of the most recognisable faces in the UK rail industry, having held some of the most challenging and high-profile operational roles it has to offer.

From joining British Rail as a graduate trainee in 1986, she climbed the ranks at BR and then Railtrack, prior to becoming the UK's first ever female managing director of a train operating company in 2002.

For the next two years she led the turnaround of Arriva Trains Northern after it had officially been ranked as the UK's worst performing TOC. She then joined Network Rail, where she became director of operations in 2010 and then route managing director for NR's largest route (London North Western) in 2012.

In June 2014, Dyan was appointed CEO of the UK's largest TOC (Govia Thameslink Railway), before commencing her current role as CEO of HS1 Ltd, the company with a 30-year concession to own and operate High Speed 1 and the stations along its route.

Having enjoyed more than three decades of uninterrupted service in the rail sector, Dyan told *RAIL* in 2018 that the industry's many structural changes had been part of its enduring appeal, as was the incredible growth in investment and patronage after

privatisation.

She said: "When I joined BR, sectorisation was happening which was an exciting chapter, and then came privatisation. Since then, we've seen much more investment, a doubling of passenger numbers, lots of new rolling stock and the construction of HS1, so it's a fabulous sector to be involved in."

"I've got the best job in rail. I've not just worked in operations either, but in personnel and retail management and strategic planning. Why would I have wanted to go anywhere else when there is so much opportunity here?"

Meanwhile, Dyan is also a member of the British Transport Police Authority, Chair of the National Skills Academy for Rail and a non-executive director for East West Railway.

She is a member of the advisory panel for the Great British Railways Transition Team, a board trustee of the Railway Children charity and a trustee of Women in Rail.

She also chairs the Railway Ball, which has raised more than £8 million for Railway Children and provided care for over 270,000 disadvantaged children since 2000.

It came as little surprise when Dyan was awarded an OBE in the Queen's Jubilee birthday honours in 2022 for her work in breaking barriers for female progression in rail.

Away from the day job, she is an assessor for the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and was a non-executive board member for the East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust from 2011-15.

She is a graduate in Geography from the University of Middlesex, holds a Masters in Transport and Logistics from Salford University and is a member of both the Chartered Institute for Marketing and Institute of Leadership and Management.

"Throughout her 30+ years' experience in the rail industry, Dyan has been a visible role model in encouraging greater gender diversity and has actively supported and championed women throughout the industry," said the judges.

"She has held some of the most senior positions within the industry and yet always finds time to help shape and influence the diversity agenda. Dyan has encouraged and mentored many women who today hold further senior roles."

They added: "Outside of these achievements, you will always find Dyan volunteering for charity events in the industry, mentoring individuals across the industry as well as giving her time generously outside of work to Girlguiding and the DoE scheme, among other things."





## Life Saver Award

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



### Winner

#### Monika Stepien, Customer Service Assistant, LNER

Shortly after 0100 on February 14 2023, LNER Customer Service Assistant Monika Stepien was working the night shift at Durham station.

Having noticed two workers checking points and track to the south of the station, she knew that significant upgrades had been carried out in the preceding weeks.

This meant that it was not unusual for blocks to be in place on different lines, ensuring that no trains came through on lines where staff were working.

But upon noticing the track workers, Monika checked her map screens that showed where blocks were in place. She quickly noticed that not only was there no block in place, but a southbound freight train was also rapidly moving along the track towards Durham and Darlington.

Monika subsequently approached the trackworkers and insisted they jump up

on to the platform and out of the way as a precaution.

A few minutes later, the freight train duly passed through the station, on the line the workers had been checking. The workers would have been working with their backs to the direction of the train, making it unlikely that they would see it or had sufficient time to get out of the way, had Monika not intervened.

Later that same day, an email to LNER praised Monika's quick thinking: "I believe your platform staff warned the team and then they moved clear before the train arrived. Early indication is that had they not been warned, the outcome may have been more serious."

Monika's line manager said that LNER was determined to learn from the potentially life-saving initiative that Monika showed.

She added: "Monika has definitely gone above and beyond her normal duties. We now view it as best practice to check the mapping screen to make sure there's a block in place."



### Winner

#### Paul Myers, Driver, Southeastern



When Paul Myers spotted a young person on the tracks near Otford (Kent), he acted promptly by applying the emergency brake and then contacting the signaller to have the power shut off.

After stepping out of the cab and into the cess, he managed to calm the distressed schoolgirl - who had been forced onto the track by bullies - and reassure her enough to get her talking.

Paul was soon joined by an off-duty policeman who assisted him with getting the 12-year-old back on the train. Having built up trust and rapport, Paul took her through to Swanley to be reunited with a parent and to allow other passengers to swap services.

After the incident, the Ashford-based driver worked the train empty to London Victoria where he continued with the remainder of his shift.

Driver Manager Adrian Morley said: "Paul exhibited care to a vulnerable young person who needed assistance. His swift, professional actions and subsequent duty of care directly led to a safe outcome when this could easily have been a very traumatic incident."

"Due to his professional actions, he embodied our Southeastern objective of 'everyone home safe everyday'."



### Winner

#### Lewis Tait and Matt Mannery, P-way Staff, Network Rail



On February 17 2023, Lewis and Matt from Network Rail's Sussex route Three Bridges permanent way team were on their way to site on the Uckfield line.

After spotting a car that had been involved in an accident and was on its roof, they stopped and found a female who was trapped. Finding that the nearest doors were jammed shut, Lewis managed to get into the vehicle through the passenger side back door. After struggling to undo the seatbelt, he eventually managed to get the lady out the car, where the duo administered basic first aid and waited for emergency services to arrive on the scene.

In the meantime, when Matt called for an ambulance, he knocked on a few front doors to establish an exact location to direct them to. He also diverted some traffic until the fire service arrived on the scene.

Once the female was taken away by ambulance, Lewis and Matt carried on to site and continued with the rest of their shift.

Aaron Scudder, Sussex Infrastructure Director, said: "This is fantastic. What an incredible show of care and compassion in action from our team. Something to be very proud of."





**Winner**

**Nicky Aitkenhead,  
Platform Staff, Southeastern**

Nicky Aitkenhead was on the gateline at Sidcup station when she was approached by a woman suffering a miscarriage. Having called an ambulance and been told there would be a five-hour wait, Nicky reassured the woman, taking her to a quiet place and even speaking to her mum on the phone.

Instead of waiting, Nicky withdrew money from her own bank account and arranged a taxi to the nearest hospital in what Southeastern described as “an act of kindness and support where it was really needed”.

Once recovered, the woman returned to the station with flowers and chocolates. Nicky has also since met her mum, who lives in Ireland.



**Winner**

**Samprass Wanliss, Gateline Staff,  
Southeastern**

Samprass Wanliss was nominated by Southeastern for coming to the aid of a man who was experiencing a heart attack at New Cross station.

The operator, which also awarded Samprass with its own Lifesaver certificate, said that he showed “an outstanding level of care and stayed with him until the emergency services arrived”.

The grateful passenger also personally thanked Samprass by saying: “I truly believe that if it wasn’t for you, I wouldn’t still be alive today.”



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## Winner

### Judges' Special Award

#### The Elizabeth line

"It's true to say that the Elizabeth line rather zig-zagged its way to success, but that success has been spectacular and well worth waiting for."

That was the unanimous verdict of the NRA judges who, after receiving five incredibly strong entries for the mega-project across several categories, felt its "consistently very high standards of excellence and achievement" made it worthy of special recognition.

With entries varying from the delivery of infrastructure and rolling stock through to delighting customers and a new tool for managing train crew displacement, the judges added: "These joint entries for construction and operations all contributed to making the Elizabeth line such a memorable success."

"We are delighted to make this Special Award on behalf of the vast army of men and women who participated in its completion and subsequent opening and running, since it was launched as Crossrail more than a decade ago."

The start of through-running in the route's core section beneath central London in May 2022 marked the culmination of a 13-year delivery programme that had begun with the official start of construction at Canary Wharf in 2009.

After the completion of tunnelling in 2015, Europe's largest construction project then encountered well-documented delivery problems, pushing it outside of its funding envelope and delaying its completion from



December 2018.

But, after a lengthy period of trial running, and since finally opening last year, the Elizabeth line has been able to fulfil its potential as a truly transformative railway.

Opened by its namesake Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in May 2022, it has now carried more than 100 million passengers at a rate of some 600,000 journeys each day.

And having revolutionised east-west cross-London travel with direct services between Heathrow and Reading to Shenfield and Abbey Wood, the Elizabeth line has officially established itself as the UK's busiest railway, as well as being its most punctual.

For example, for the first time in the capital's history, Londoners and visitors can now depart by train to all four points of the compass from a single station - Farringdon.

A third and final timetable uplift in May this year means that up to 24 trains per hour now run through its tunnels at peak times.

As well as the sheer scale of construction, the judges were particularly impressed by the complexity of systems integration with the Elizabeth line's fleet of 70 Alstom Class 345s transitioning between three different signalling systems.

Other praise-worthy elements of the mega-project included the upgrade of stations on the eastern and western sections of the Elizabeth line plus the recovery of Bond Street, which opened six months after the rest of the line having at one point lagged 18 months behind schedule.

With passenger numbers and revenue comfortably exceeding Transport for London's forecasts, the judges said it was in no small part due to the effective management and high level of customer service offered by MTR Elizabeth line, which they also named Passenger Operator of the Year.

The judges concluded: "Now, this transformational railway under central London is open and working well, notwithstanding the technical challenge of the new trains having to interface with no fewer than three different signalling systems."

"The Elizabeth line was one of the most complex infrastructure projects ever undertaken in the UK. Now, like other controversial-during-construction infrastructure projects before it - the Jubilee Line extension, Edinburgh Trams, the M25 - everyone is wondering how we ever managed without it!"





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