

1812 is final overture for Class 365 'Networker Express'

May 18, 2021



Train enthusiasts joined commuters on Friday (14 May) to ride the last Great Northern Class 365 train out of King's Cross, after 25 years of service.

The 18:12 farewell service, lengthened from eight to 12 carriages for the special journey, called at Stevenage, Biggleswade, St Neots and Huntingdon on its way to Peterborough.

It displayed a commemorative headboard with the Network South East "Networker Express" branding carried by the 365 fleet when introduced by British Rail in 1996.

The Class 365s entered service badged as 'Networker Express' trains from 9 December 1996 on the London King's Cross to Peterborough and King's Lynn routes. They have been used to carry the Her Majesty The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh to King's Lynn for Sandringham.

Since 2017, with the arrival of more modern 387s and 717s on Great Northern's routes, the 365s had been used only as 'peak-busters', providing extra capacity on limited-stop peak-time services.

Tom Moran, Managing Director for Great Northern and Thameslink, was on Friday's 'Network Express' to Peterborough.

"It was a real honour to be on the last Class 365 out of King's Cross. I'd like to thank every member of the team who's played a role in keeping them running so reliably for the last quarter of a century!

"You could see the affection our customers and colleagues have for these trains from the response we had as we set off from King's Cross and at each stop on the route."

Chief Operating Officer Steve White was also on board. He said: "Today marked another milestone in the progressive renewal of our fleet as we said goodbye to our Class 365s. When they were introduced 25 years ago, they were ahead of their time and they have served us well.

"With the introduction of our summer 2021 timetable, newer, air-conditioned, Class 387 trains will temporarily support the GN network. This will help our passenger recovery from COVID-19 and also reduce our costs ensuring better value for taxpayers."

Hornsey Engineering Technician Mark Pountain, accompanied the Class 365 fleet along its entire journey from the day he helped build the trains to its last run out of King's Cross on Friday (14 May).

An apprentice-trained vehicle body builder working at the former British Rail Engineering York Carriage Works in Holgate Road, Mark came to Hornsey in 1996 as product support, working with a warranty team, to maintain and improve the trains.

In 2008 he and the remaining team went in-house for the rail operator, providing technical backup to the exam, technical and procurement departments and right up until the last day he was still on hand to provide expertise.

The Class 365 regularly transported the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh to King's Lynn along with a member of the team, ready on hand to fix any problems.

One of the team recalls encountering Prince Phillip at King's Lynn. The First Class doors needed attention ("the usual sensors out of alignment") and he was still fixing them while he arrived. "He asked what I was doing and I squeaked a response about fixing doors and collecting my tools!"

Mark says he feels he represents everyone who was involved in the Class 365 project, "brilliant" people who still work at Hornsey and who joined in the early days. "On that last trip out of King's Cross on Friday I felt proud because I'd completed the journey of the 365s, which was the last train out of York – I'd done my bit."

The 60-year-old, who will this August have worked 44 years on the railway, is now passing his skills on to apprentices at Hornsey, "the next generation," he says. "Our apprentices are really smart and use a laptop like I use my spanners!"

"It's a good way to think about bringing my career to a close. There're a few people that were involved in

that project over the years and it was a fantastic journey. There were a few ups and downs, technical issues. Now it's time to hand over to the youngsters."

Photo credit: GTR