

# Engineers complete major upgrades in Anglia, Shropshire and the Western region

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As well as work in areas such as [Manchester](#) and [Leeds](#), engineers were working across the country over the festive period to modernise our railways.

Here are some more projects which were completed over Christmas and New Year.



## Western region

Teams of rail engineers have been working across the Christmas and New Year break to successfully finish £22 million of improvements between Paddington and Penzance.

This included work between London Paddington and Slough, where engineers replaced old signalling equipment, a railway bridge replacement in Stroud over the canal at the Ocean in Stonehouse – allowing boats to pass through for the first time since 1968, laying 1 kilometre of new track either side of Bristol Parkway station, and the installation of tactile paving at Bristol Temple Meads.

Mike Gallop, Network Rail Western route and strategic operations director, said: “I’m really pleased with the upgrades our engineers have completed over the festive period. These upgrades will help ensure we continue to run a safe and reliable railway for years to come, not forgetting also enabling boats to pass through the canal at the Ocean in Stonehouse for the first time since 1968.”

“Undertaking this work over the festive period when there are fewest people travelling – particularly with no trains on Christmas Day and very few on Boxing Day – ensured the number of passengers disrupted were kept to a minimum. However, we are grateful to passengers and local residents living near to our work sites for their patience and understanding while we have undertaken these upgrades.

“The festive period is a really critical time for us to make vital upgrades to the railway and completing

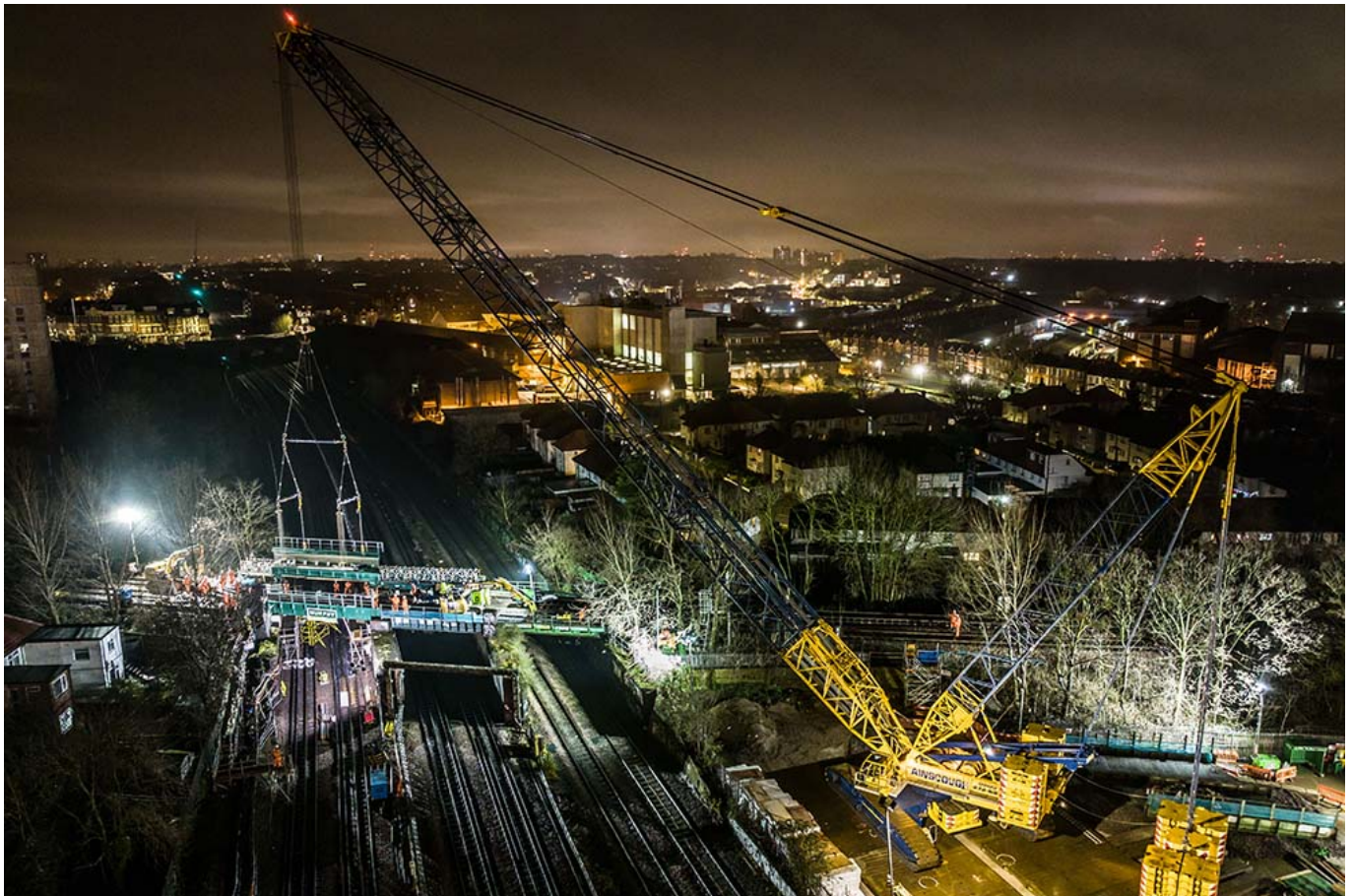


£22m of engineering work is no mean feat so I'd also like to thank the many men and women from Network Rail who gave up their festive periods so we can complete these upgrades for the benefit of our passengers."

Mark Hopwood, GWR managing director, said: "We always work closely with Network Rail to make sure essential track and signalling improvements can take place when fewer people are travelling, and this Christmas and New Year was no exception.

"These upgrades are important to ensure we can continue to provide safe and reliable services, and I'm grateful to our customers for the patience they have shown during this time.

"I'd like to thank the project teams for their hard work and dedication over the festive period, and I'd also remind customers to continue to check their journeys into the new year due to the impact of Covid and associated staff availability."



## Anglia

Meanwhile, work was carried out over the festive period on lines in north London, Essex and Norfolk. This included:

- Replacing the overhead wires at Stratford to prevent delays caused by sagging wires when the weather gets hot.
- Preparation works for the renewal of the roof at London Liverpool Street station to maintain safety and improve passenger experience
- Replacing a set of points at Norwich and Liverpool St stations, enabling the smooth running of services at two of the busiest stations on the route
- Replacement of wheel timbers, sleepers and rails and strengthening work at Camden bridge in north London to maintain safe and reliable services.
- Replacement of a life-expired bridge in Neasden, London which carries freight lines over London underground lines. The new bridge is expected to last 120 years, reducing the need for further repair works.
- Bridge replacements at Christian Street and Morris Street near Shadwell station to maintain safety and reliability and prevent the need for speed restrictions that cause delays.
- Supporting the highways authority in Essex in works to remove a bridge at Generals Lane near Chelmsford.

Ellie Burrows, Network Rail's route director for Anglia, said: "While Santa was delivering presents, our engineering teams did their bit to sprinkle a bit of festive magic over the railway by improving our tracks, stations and bridges so that we can continue to run a reliable railway for passengers and freight users. We know the railway provides an essential service for many, and completing these works means we can continue to do this for years to come."



## Shropshire

In North Shropshire, engineers used Boxing Day to replace a bridge between Shrewsbury and Crewe. An old bridge, which had been in place more than 100 years, was removed and replaced using a “self-propelled modular transporter”. This meant minimal road closures – with a roundabout only needing to be shut for one hour.

Once in place, engineers and contractors worked both night and day to backfill and compact the foundations for the new track bed, install the new track panels and rail and compress the ballast underneath the track.

Three days later, rail services had resumed.

Lee Robinson, development director Mid, North and Rural Wales at Transport for Wales, added: “Part of what makes our rail network unique is its history and heritage. This also means that parts of our network are old and need updating and modernising to meet the needs of our customers now and in the future.

“The upgrade to the bridge at Wem is a perfect example, and thank you to all our customers who have been so understanding as this work was carried out. May this upgrade work last another 100 years!”