

# In The News | 17th January 2023 | Latest Rail News

January 17, 2023



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HS2 minister Huw Merriman has become the first person to officially walk on top of the UK's longest railway bridge, which is under construction at an HS2 site just outside London.

The first 480m of the Colne Valley Viaduct – which will eventually stretch for more than two miles (3.4km) across a series of lakes and waterways outside Hillingdon – have been built over the last seven months using an enormous 700 tonne 'bridge-building machine'.

Rail Minister Huw Merriman said: “This is an extraordinary feat of engineering and architecture, designed to enable spectacular views across a beautiful part of our British countryside which is being preserved and protected by this project.”

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Fox Group has begun its expansion into rail with the opening of its railhead in Leyland.

An article on Insider Media Limited says the railhead sidings, which were initially built in 1953, were relayed in 2018 and utilised by Network Rail for storage during the Blackpool electrification scheme.

The takeover and opening of the railhead by Fox Group has been in the works for more than two years, with the teams working closely with Lancashire County Council to get the railhead back to its intended purposes.

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Under-fire Avanti West Coast has reported a ‘huge increase in capacity’, with 93 trains per day now said to be leaving north and south from Manchester.

An article on the Manchester Evening News the operator’s timetable alterations in December were described by a senior manager as ‘the biggest improvement and change to the timetable on the West Coast Mainline since 2008’ – and he said there was ‘no reason’ why the current three trains per hour service from Manchester Piccadilly to London Euston would change.

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Network Rail has donated £10 million worth of bridging material to Ukraine to help rebuild critical infrastructure that has been damaged in the war.

An article on New Civil Engineer says the revelation comes in the board minutes from October, which have just been released publicly.

The minutes say that HM Treasury and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office authorised Network Rail to provide a £10 million aid package to Ukraine consisting of bridging material. It also adds that: “It was noted that the package represented more than 10 per cent of the UK’s civilian aid to Ukraine.”

*Photo credit: HS2 Ltd*