

In The News | 27th April 2021 | Latest Rail News

April 27, 2021



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As many as two million fewer people a day will be taking trains for years to come as office staff abandon commuting in favour of home working.

That's according to an article in the Daily Star that says the rail industry carried 1.7 billion passengers a year before the pandemic struck.

But the outlooks prepared for Network Rail by the industry's COVID forecasting group show the new numbers may be around 60 per cent of pre-COVID levels for the next four years.

Openreach, Virgin Media and international infrastructure providers are to be invited to submit bids worth up to £1 billion to lay a nationwide fibre-optic network alongside Britain's 10,000 miles of railway track.

The article in The Times says the upgrade in Network Rail's communications network is aimed at enabling trains to operate better and more safely as the country's rail infrastructure continues its journey to digitalisation.

Avanti West Coast has named one of its Pendolino trains 'Railway Benefit Fund' to mark the start of the charity's week of fundraising.

The charity's president and record producer Pete Waterman, a long-time supporter of the railway, joined a small number of invited guests including attendees from Network Rail, Alstom (who maintain Avanti West Coast's fleet) and other train operating companies at a ceremony at Liverpool Lime Street station.

They unveiled the new name as part of the drive to kickstart Railway Family Week which is hoped will raise £50,000 for good causes.

[Click here for more details.](#)

Finally, London North Eastern Railway (LNER) is celebrating an historic milestone that will lead to even faster, smoother train journeys to more destinations.

After 40 years lying dormant, London King's Cross station's third tunnel has reopened and seen the first LNER Azuma passenger service to arrive into Platform 0 at 07:01 on Monday morning.

The reopening of the Eastern Gasworks Tunnel on the approach to the station is a major part of the East Coast Upgrade, which will provide two additional tracks, reducing congestion while making it easier for trains to arrive and depart the station.

Photo credit: Avanti West Coast