RailBusinessDaily

Magical moment as Caledonian Sleeper's future meets present

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Caledonian Sleeper's future met its present on Saturday morning (9th March) as testing continues on the new fleet of trains.

Six of the new carriages were out for winter testing over the weekend 9th-10th March, running between Polmadie in Glasgow and Fort William on the West Highland Line.

And for two fleeting minutes at Tulloch Station, the new carriages – on their way back to Glasgow – passed the current train as it neared the end of its overnight journey from London.

It comes as trial operations enter the final phase, with preparations being made for the new fleet to begin operating by the end of May 2019.

Ryan Flaherty, Serco's Managing Director at Caledonian Sleeper, said: "We only have a few weeks of testing left so it feels fitting that our current trains were able to sit alongside our new trains in the wild.

"It's particularly symbolic because 'old meets new' is something we really want to capture when we debut

our new carriages. We aim to offer a timeless experience and magical journey for guests, combining the nostalgic feeling of railway travel with modern facilities that travellers expect."

The fleet, built at a cost of over £100m and part funded by a capital grant from the Scottish Ministers of £60m, has been designed to accommodate the modern-day traveller and cater to both business and leisure travel guests. A range of accommodation options will be offered, including:

- Caledonian Double (double bed with en-suite)
- Club Rooms (solo or twin with en-suite)
- Classic Rooms (solo or twin)
- Comfort Seats
- Fully accessible rooms for guests with reduced mobility

Other new features will also be included, such as a hotel-style key card entry system, more accessible rooms, charging panels and WiFi throughout the train.

The trains will initially be introduced on the Lowlander route between Glasgow / Edinburgh and London before being rolled out onto the Highlander route which serves Fort William, Aberdeen and Inverness.