

Train class with royal connections given special preservation by Eversholt Rail

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Eversholt Rail has granted a Class 365 electric multiple unit with strong connections to The Queen a place in preservation.

Unit No. 365524 is considered to be in the best condition of the original fleet of 41 trains, and it is now headed for a special home on the East Kent Railway (EKR).

The initiative came from transport consultant and investor Howard Johnston, and the unit is intended for static display as a restaurant, exhibition area, and major events venue.

Paul Sutherland, client services director at Eversholt Rail, said: "We are delighted to mark The Queen's forthcoming Platinum Jubilee celebrations by donating 365524 a new career after travelling over a million miles in the 25 years since it entered service. Her Majesty was a frequent passenger aboard Class 365s as part of her journey from London to her winter home at Sandringham in Norfolk."

Howard said: "Although they only had a short life by railway standards, the Class 365s were universally popular with those who travelled on them regularly, including myself. I was determined to save one from

the scrapyards."

Matthew Plews, managing director of the EKR, said "We are grateful to Eversholt Rail and Howard Johnston for choosing us, and we will look after it well. Some of the Class 365s started their working lives in the South East, so the East Kent Railway is a most appropriate place for the last survivor."

The EKR, which is near to Dover and the nearest standard gauge heritage line to the French coast, offers a four-mile scenic ride through rolling countryside between the villages of Shepherdswell and Eythorne. Just eight miles north of Dover and close to Folkestone, it reminds many of the once-thriving East Kent coalfields. It also honours the pioneering engineering achievements of the late Colonel Holman F Stephens, its creator.