

Train-spotting from home – how the hobby remains on track during the coronavirus outbreak

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A new dimension to the hobby of train-spotting has proved a bit hit during the coronavirus pandemic.

Since the lockdown was introduced the popular hobby of clocking up miles and miles travelling by rail and logging, photographing, or videoing different trains, has been temporarily paused.

But that hasn't stopped the train-spotting with Jamie Rowley from Railcam launching a social media campaign to share photographs and videos.

It's led to the internet being awash with rail-related content, with Tweets surrounding the campaign on Twitter alone having generated 2.7 million impressions over the past four weeks.

Jamie said: "The #SpottingFromHome idea came after I saw a news article circulating in the very early days of lockdown showing three young enthusiasts still out by the lineside taking photos.

"It occurred to me that we already have the cameras there, we have the enthusiast base already aware of what we do, so why not bring train-spotting indoors.

"Enthusiasts could use our cameras to take screen captures and share them with the wider railway family by simply including the hashtag #SpottingFromHome and tagging @railcamlive, so we could like and share some of our favourite captures throughout the day.

"I fully expected there to be a moderate amount of interest in this for a week or so, but it has gone from strength to strength, and shows no sign of slowing down.

"It has been great to see interaction from the TOC's social media teams, especially Northern, TransPennine Express and Transport for Wales, as well as industry professionals such as the British Transport police."

Train drivers, station staff and depot workers are regularly updating Railcam on what they are seeing passing through deserted stations or from the cab window, and also giving an insight into some of the areas of the railway you wouldn't usually get to see.

It's the latest success for Railcam that started broadcasting just over 10 years ago and now has 49 mainline cameras to view as well as 22 heritage, 2 guest and 26 international cameras available.

The site has over 32,000 registered users and there has been a huge increase in demand since lockdown began.

Railcam Director Adrian Bradshaw said: "We're amazed and delighted at the runaway success of the #SpottingFromHome and #SpottingFromWork initiative. It's great that we have been able to do our bit to keep rail enthusiasts safe and entertained during these strange and difficult times."

Visit railcam.uk for more details.