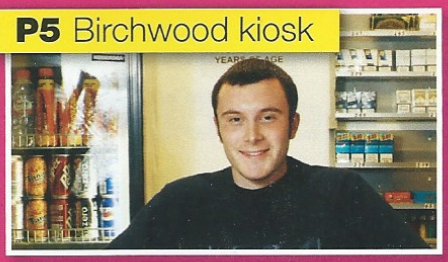
P5 Birchwood kiosk



P8 Meet the manager



P10 Stott property



The express - all your news and views at your fingertips

FEBRUARY 2007

The express

The staff magazine

'Our job is all about helping people...'



win!

An iPod nano, a digital camera and a terrific TPE goodie bag

SIGN OF THE TIMES: Why Angie Hunte's bright idea means a better service for the deaf

PLUS The last 175, Loo of the Year winner, communications champions, competitions and all your news, letters and celebrations!

TransPennine news



Gone, but not forgotten: the 175

A fond farewell

The last TransPennine Class 175 made its final journey on 8 December when it left Blackpool at 23.14 and arrived into Manchester Airport at 00.53.

"It's the end of an era," said conductor Joshua Taylor, "and I know they'll be sorely missed, but we're looking forward to the complete roll-out of the Pennine Class 185."

Happy birthday to us

We're celebrating a very important occasion this month: TransPennine Express' third birthday!

In honour of this, and the roll-out of the Class 185s, we will be producing commemorative books, so please look out for those. And, as we look forward to a happy and prosperous fourth year, it's good to look back on some of the proud achievements of 2006, including the roll-out of the 185s; the refurbishments at Huddersfield, Warrington and Windermere; the training department winning the North West training award; 19 stations winning Secure Stations status; the introduction of STAR and Avantix systems; and reaching our performance target of 80 per cent of our trains arriving no more than four minutes late.

We can't wait to see what 2007 will bring!

DOUG HOUGHTON, RAILPHOTOLIBRARY.COM. COVER PHOTO AND ALL STAFF PHOTOS: STEVE MORGAN

Editor's letter



Welcome to the first issue of *The express* for 2007 and, as you can see, we've made a few changes. Not only has it a fresher look but we've given it more of a focus on the people who work across our network.

We'd love to see each issue packed not only with interesting TransPennine Express news but also with great stories about you. So, if you have anything to say, or you know of a colleague with an interesting story to tell or you just want to drop us a line, then please feel free.

You can write to me, Claire Wright, communications officer, 7th Floor, Bridgewater House, 60 Whitworth Street, Manchester M1 6LT. You can also call me on 0161 228 8475 or get in touch with any of the other *The express* contacts – their details can be found on page 11.

Do enjoy the magazine and we hope to hear from you soon.

Claire Wright, communications officer

TPE serves Scotland

As of December 2007, TransPennine Express should be operating trains between Manchester and Scotland.

Services running on the North West route will be extended to run up to Glasgow and Edinburgh, which means an increase in direct services, plus new direct links to Manchester Airport from stations north of Oxenholme.



185s are go!

Great news! The full roll-out of our fantastic, new Pennine Class 185 fleet is now complete.

Passengers across our network can now benefit from a 51-strong fleet of purpose-built trains, which represents some £250m investment in rail travel for the North.

The managing director of TransPennine Express, Vernon Barker, said: "Passengers will be travelling aboard modern, more spacious and reliable trains built to modern-day standards."



A touch of class: the TransPennine 185

Cool centre

Look out for a new NVQ centre, coming soon. Not only will it offer the current Railway Passenger Service NVQ but also a brand-new Customer Service NVQ. The centre should be up and running by April but we already have six people piloting the new course!

Worth exploring

Your new-look *The express* isn't the only revamped TPE magazine to come out this month. Look out for *Explorer*, our brand-new customer magazine, which should be available on our trains now.

Formerly *tpexpressions*, *Explorer* is a bigger, bolder and brighter magazine for all our network travellers, and is packed full of interesting news, fun features, essential information, city guides, puzzles, competitions and much, much more.

Pick up your copy at TPE stations, on trains or look out for promo staff handing them out.





Sue and Antony receive the awards

Flushed with pride

It was "good loos" for Windermere station when it scooped five stars in the Railway Stations category for the Loo of the Year Awards at the end of 2006.

The awards are a far from bog-standard affair as they recognise the finer qualities of more than 150 different categories of toilet from up and down the country.

TPE had four entries in the running for the Best Railway Toilets category, namely Birchwood, Huddersfield and Scarborough (which picked up four stars each) and the five-star winner, Windermere, while Carlisle Cleaning also entered Middlesbrough and Scunthorpe station toilets on our behalf, both of which were awarded four stars.

Customer service standards manager Antony Belchem and cleaning manager Sue McLaughlin (pictured above), as well as the service quality team, were on hand to collect the awards.

"It was a really good day and a surprisingly plush venue. We had a lot of fun," said Sue.

Improved security

Our programme of customer information systems (CIS) and CCTV upgrades, representing a £6m investment, should be completed by the end of next month. Already successfully trialled at Scunthorpe, Northallerton, Windermere and Kendal, the upgrades will significantly improve safety and security. Look out for more on this next issue.

Staff news



Movie mental: Paul Bristow

Movie-mad Paul Bristow, retail supervisor at Hull, has amassed an amazing 1,900 DVD film titles since he first began collecting them around 10 years ago.

"I just loved all the new technology," he said. "Especially the sound and picture quality."

Although an Asian cinema aficionado, pride of place in his collection goes to both the original *Star Wars* trilogy and the Middle Earth-tastic *Lord of the Rings* trilogy.

But his most valuable item is a US-import *ET: The Extra-Terrestrial* box set worth around £50 which comes complete with screenplay, soundtrack and both the original version and 2002 special edition.

You'd be forgiven for thinking that DVDs take up most of Paul's spare time, but no. "I go to the cinema as much as I can," he said.

We love you long time

Congratulations go out to the following, who all received their Long Service Awards on 24 January:

40 years

Conductors Roger Bramall and David Preston; drivers Les Craig and Stephen Hickman; RO2, Michael Garrity; and booking office, Ken Smith.

25 years

Conductors Russ Bramall, Anthony Hewitt and Mark Adams; driver, Darran Roles; driver manager, Paul Russell; depot manager, David Lane; RO2, Stephen Whitham; RSD, Stuart White and technical inspector, Steve Jackson.

New NVQs

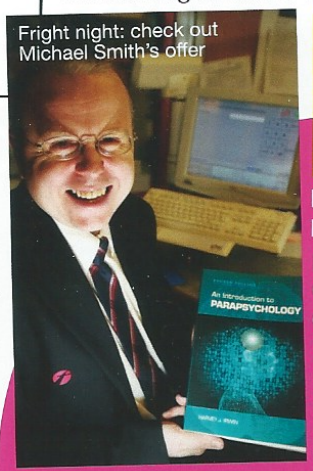
The latest NVQ award ceremony was held on 19 December for the following staff: Lee Brompton, Janet Taylor, Mark Simpson, Andy Driscoll, Rebecca Jones, Helen Davies, Richard Howard, Gary Cleworth, Pete Mills, Justian Gray, Rob Wedekind, Jackie Brookes, Derrick Cooke, Joe Tolomeo, Jane Stewart, John Humberstone, Dave Leigh, Raymond Bage, Ray Gilchrist and John Moore (Railway Passenger Service NVQ). Paul Gabbay and Chris Hewitt (First Into Management NVQ).

Your TPE Needs You!

TransPennine Express is actively recruiting communications champions from Barrow-in-Furness, Blackpool, Manchester Piccadilly, Manchester Airport, Cleethorpes, York, Scarborough, Middlesbrough, Newcastle, Sheffield and Warrington.

A comms champion's duties will include sourcing stories for *The express* magazine and ensuring that company communications are clearly displayed at stations and depots up and down the TPE network.

If you fancy volunteering, please contact either Claire Wright or Gilly White at TransPennine Express, 7th Floor, Bridgewater House, 60 Whitworth Street, Manchester M1 6LT or email them at claire.wright@firstgroup.com and gilly.white@firstgroup.com respectively.



Fright night: check out Michael Smith's offer

Super scary savers

Hull station's Michael Smith, parapsychologist extraordinaire, is offering all TPE staff a 10 per cent discount on Ghostchasers merchandise and ticketed events, such as tours around York Castle Museum (24 February) and Wigan's Haigh Hall (13 April). Visit www.ghostchasers.co.uk/transpennine_offer.htm or call 07903 452462 for more information.



New lease of life

Budding entrepreneur and full-time student Chris Jones has injected new life into a disused kiosk over at Birchwood station.

Chris, who's studying for a building surveying degree, took it over in August.

"A lot of people have said it's been a long time coming and has really brightened the place up," he said.

He gave the kiosk, which was abandoned five years ago, a lick of paint and a roller shutter and now he sells newspapers, magazines and cigarettes.



ITV's *Dead Clever* features a scene on a TPE train

Film fun

One of our trains had a starring role in the Manchester-based ITV drama *Dead Clever*, starring Suranne Jones and Helen Baxendale. Various scenes were filmed aboard a Pennine Class 185. Plus, those doyennes of makeover TV, Trinny and Susannah, were recently filmed at Hull station.

Go Panthers!

TPE has sponsored new kit for the Beverley Panthers, an under-18s football team that plays in the Hull Sunday League.

Acting station manager, North Yorkshire, Mick Brown, who helps out with training and whose son Tim plays for the Panthers, said: "The club nearly wrapped up this season, but some of the parents kept it going and we are grateful to TransPennine as the previous kit was getting really tatty. The new stuff has really given the boys a confidence boost. They finished second in their league last season."

TPE donated £500 towards the kit, which includes all-weather coats and the company logo on the strip.



Sporty and son: Mick Brown, left, with son Tim

Fore-well!

Hull station co-ordinator Brian Olley stepped down as chairman of the Paragon Golfing Society at the end of last year.

Made up of TPE and Northern staff, the golfing society was formed six years ago and meets up five or six times a year.



Good golf: Brian Olley

"It's really been very entertaining and a very good laugh," said Brian, "but the time had come to hand things over to someone else."

Roving reporter

The express has a new writer, Daniel Fryer, who'll be travelling up and down the network over the next few months, introducing himself and looking for news.

So if you've got an interesting story to tell, or a birth, marriage or anniversary you'd like to see mentioned, or if your colleagues have interesting hobbies or do a lot for charity, then Daniel would love to hear from you. Stop him at your station if you see him, or email him at tpexpress@firstgroup.com



Report to me: new reporter Daniel Fryer

Staff feature

A sign of the times

Congratulations to 11 dedicated TransPennine Express staff who picked up their British Sign Language (BSL) certificates at the end of 2006.

Training co-ordinator Gillian Wright was put in touch with tutor Barry Higgins, from Dewsbury, who teaches several subjects, including Stage 1 sign language at Huddersfield College.

That conversation resulted in a voluntary 15-week course taught by himself and his wife Mary.

"He is such a lovely chap," said Gillian, "they were both lovely and made the course into something that was really interesting."

Initially intended to be taught at Huddersfield only, when the course was first announced, it generated so much interest that a second night was added at Manchester.

Barry conducted the lessons while Mary, who is profoundly deaf, assisted, ensuring that people were picking up on his hand signals and instructions.

"The staff who volunteered for the course had to attend at least 80 per cent of the workshops to receive their certificates," said Gillian. "Everybody stayed with it and thoroughly enjoyed it."

BSL is used by over 250,000 people on a daily basis and there are around 6,000 different signs in all.

As it would take around five years to learn all these – and TPE staff only had 15 weeks – the course mainly covered basic greetings, travel information and of course, railway signs.



Training co-ordinator Gillian Wright and duty operations manager Chris Thorpe take a hands-on approach to signing



Bright idea

The TPE British Sign Language course was the brainchild of Huddersfield station supervisor Angie Hunte. We asked her what sparked off her big idea.

"I just thought a big train operating company like ours, where the job is all about helping people, should have a service for deaf people," she said. "They can read our information screens but if something goes wrong they just get an announcement, which isn't much help."

Although she's a bit rusty now, Angie has studied sign language before. She has a deaf sister who can lip read very well, but it just made Angie aware of the issues deaf people face.

A few months back, when Huddersfield had engineering works, two deaf passengers were having trouble with the information on the screens and, luckily, Angie was on hand to help out as best she could.

"They were happy with my efforts," she said, "and that's what made me think."

Angie contacted customer services director Edith Rodgers, who passed on the idea to training. Angie already knew a sign language tutor, Barry Higgins, as he's a regular at Huddersfield station. "He thought it was a great idea and it just went from there," she said.

A second BSL course is currently under way and Angie hopes that more follow, as sign language is such a useful thing for TPE staff to know.

"It's a totally different language from the English that we use every day and takes a lot of commitment, but it's well worth it," she said.



Angie Hunte is A-OK

TPE sponsors disability awards



Looking sharp: Elliot Course and Claire Wright



Likewise: Dave Connolly and Amanda Connolly



TPE staff and their partners, from left to right: John and Angie Hunt, Elliot Course, Dave and Amanda Connolly, Charlotte Evans, Gilly White and Lynne and Marc Dillnutt

TPE was one of the proud sponsors of a glitzy awards dinner held by Disability Sport Events (a division of the English Federation of Disability Sport).

Hosted by the Lancashire County Cricket Club in Manchester on 7 December, the black tie event celebrated the proud achievements of sports men, women and children with disabilities who have excelled in their respective fields.

TPE invited staff who have helped people with disabilities via charity work or undertaking courses to attend the awards, and a fine time was had by all.

"It was a great night," said communications officer Claire Wright. "Manchester City's Danny Mills was there, as were other famous sports personalities, and TransPennine was called up to accept a glass trophy in recognition of its support over the past two years."

Disability Sport Events organises 12 national championships as well as the Flora London Wheelchair Marathon.



And the 11 people to pick up their sign language certificates are...

Operations standards manager Denver Clinch; revenue protection assistant Katrina Joyce; training co-ordinator Gillian Wright; RSA Marie Gatenby; Manchester Airport conductor Marc Dillnut; training officer Richard Holliday; reception administrator Katie Moss; CO1/2 Christine Walsh; duty operations manager Chris Thorpe; duty operations manager Jane Stephenson and route performance manager Carl Phillips.

Are you aware?

Speaking of courses, a new one-day disability awareness workshop is planned for the near future.

Covering all the issues that disabled TPE customers face on a daily basis, the course is designed to give staff more insight and to enable them to help disabled people.

Disabled guest speakers will be on hand to give personal accounts of how train travel affects them.

"All train operating companies run disability awareness courses," said training co-ordinator Gillian Wright, "and it's something we've been keen to do for some time. For instance, we'll be covering how busy trains affect wheelchair users and how to help deaf people become aware of train and station announcements."

Details on the course, which is being planned at the moment, will be announced shortly. Watch this space!

Meet the manager



David Mallender is PR manager for TransPennine Express. Based in York, he's been with us since December 2003 and brings with him 27 years of rail experience. Before TPE, he was a press officer for GNER, where he was tested by the Hatfield and Selby rail disasters...

I am the first point of call for the press, TV and radio in the north of England and also look after our relationships with opinion-formers such as MPs, local authorities and anyone else who has an interest in our activities.

On the media side, I handle press enquiries about anything from late-running trains and incidents on the line to promoting news about station developments or bigger projects such as the introduction of the new train fleet – getting positive press coverage for the 51 new TransPennine trains – and publicising the good things that TransPennine are doing.

Also, I am the company spokesman in the event that anything does go wrong. Touch wood, we've had a pretty successful few years and haven't had anything too bad happen. We had a derailment at Lancaster a couple of years ago, a few delays due to problems on the network but, by and large, our train performance hasn't generated any bad press.



One of the quirkiest stories I've had to deal with was the introduction of scented headrests to help smarten up our train interiors. They had a spring freshness about them and we had a lot of fun with the press coverage over that.

Rail incidents, however, can cover anything from a suicide on the line to blocked lines, delays and animals on the line as lots of our lines go through rural areas and farmland.

I love the variety in my job and get to travel over a big network, learning things every day. I may have been in rail for 27 years but there isn't a day goes by when I don't find out something new and interesting about the way the industry works.



I was with GNER for seven years before working at TPE and that was different again: we had the Hatfield accident in 2000 and then the Selby rail crash the following year. Obviously, they were major incidents of international media interest so they were particularly testing and the fact that they were fatal was quite a shock to deal with.

I live eight miles outside York, in a village called Stamford Bridge, just like the Chelsea football ground. I'm married to Kate and have two children, Max and Eliza. I'm very keen on cycling and most weekends you'll find me out in the countryside on my mountain bike, getting some exercise and fresh air.



Love on the lines

With Valentine's Day just around the corner and romance in the air, we thought we'd have a chat with husband and wife Steve and Cath Johnston, who both work for TPE but who met on a different network.

"I've only been with TPE since September of last year," says Cath, "but Steve's been here since January 2004."

The couple met way back in July 1996, when Cath joined Network Rail which, at the time, was known as Railtrack.

"I joined Railtrack as a facilities assistant," says Cath, "and Steve was a duties facilities manager. We met on my first day but didn't actually get together until March 1997."

The catalyst for that was a works event which turned into a few drinks afterwards and the couple were married eight years ago, in August 1998. They have two children, Joshua and Louis.



"We're a floor apart at work, which is quite fortunate," says Cath. "At Network Rail, we sat just one desk apart. We do socialise at work but not every day. We might go and buy a sandwich together at lunchtime but we don't spend all day together."

And what does Cath think of Steve after all these years? "He's my soul mate," she says.



Tickets please: revenue protection in action

Protection pays off

We meet some of the faces behind the new revenue protection desk at Huddersfield. The desk opened in mid-November, initially for a six-month trial, but it has been so successful it will probably become a permanent fixture.

A new hope



New face Gareth Hope is a revenue protection assistant and started at the beginning of November.

"I'm really enjoying it," said Gareth, who lives in Levenshulme and gets up at five in the morning, arrives at the station for seven and works through until six in the evening.

"It's a long day, but I always get home in time for *Coronation Street*."

Before working for TPE, Gareth was studying computing at university.

Two 25ths



Revenue protection officer Roy Haley, who started working for TPE in January 2006, celebrated one 25th anniversary at the end of last year and will be commemorating another in a few months' time.

The first was with his wife, Sharon, on 18 December and the second will be for the Falklands War on 2 April.

Roy, who was in the Paras until he joined the police force, is a Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families' Association (SSAFA) caseworker in his spare time and helps ex-forces personnel who have fallen on hard times.

"If someone calls in," he said, "like a Second World War veteran, for example, who has bills he can't pay or who can't afford furniture for his home, I make a report and we contact other charities to help get them the support they need."

Staff comps



Caption competition

Think of a witty caption for this picture and you could win a jam-packed TransPennine Express goody bag.

Spotted!

Famous people passing through the TPE network recently...

Supermodel Elle Macpherson spotted at York; comedian Frank Carson spotted at Manchester Airport; weatherman Ian McCaskill spotted at Selby and Beautiful South frontman Paul Heaton spotted at Hull.

If you spot a celebrity at your station, then let us know at the address below left.



Sight for sore eyes: Elle Macpherson at York station

Sudoku

These fiendish Japanese puzzles are all the rage. Fill the grid so that the numbers 1 to 9, inclusive, are in every row, every column and every 3x3 square and you could pick yourself up a groovy iPod nano.



		6	5					4
	5	2		4	6	3	9	
	9	3		1	7			8
6	1		4					5
		8			9	1	2	
3		9	7		1		4	6
		1		3			5	
	6	4			5	7		3
2			6		8	4		

To be in with a chance of winning, send your competition entries to Claire Wright, TransPennine Express, 7th Floor, Bridgewater House, 60 Whitworth Street, Manchester, M1 6LT or email claire.wright@firstgroup.com. Closing date for entries is 30 March 2007.

Cover snaps

Spring break is not far off and in celebration our lovely communications assistant, Gilly White, had her photo taken with a copy of *The express* at Windermere station. Send us your holiday snaps (the more exotic the better) with a copy of *The express* clearly visible and you could win yourself a shiny digital camera!





GETTY IMAGES, REX FEATURES

Staff Q&A

Finder's keeper



Darren Stott joined us in the middle of October. A language-lover, he has already been shaking things up in the central lost property office at Huddersfield…



REX FEATURES

So, how's it going?
Very well. I've got to grips with all the systems and practices and reorganised the lost property office for better access to the items.

What were you doing before this?
I was at university studying the translation of Germanic and Scandinavian languages.

What attracted you to the job?
I've always wanted to work on the railways, plus my brother, Stephen, works here.

What do you think of it so far?
It's very good – it's not just lost property but also customer information, times and tickets, stations, working at reception, handling the post and so on, so it's very varied.

What do you like best?
Seeing the look of relief on a customer's face when you give them back a lost item.

How does lost property end up at Huddersfield?
This is the central lost property office for the TransPennine network, so everything comes here. Lost items are sent on a weekly basis and are logged on our database.

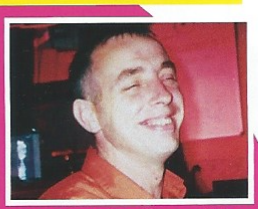
What happens after that?
Things are stored here for three months and, during that time, there are three ways a passenger can collect their property: they can collect it themselves or, if it is small, we can post it and if it is a large item they can arrange a courier. Most stuff, if it isn't collected, goes to charity.

What's the weirdest item that's been left behind?
We found a gas mask the other week and someone left their crutches behind once. We've also had bongo drums, a curtain rail, an ironing board and a massive bag of condoms!

What do you do in your spare time?
I love travelling and other cultures. I've been all over Europe, including the Czech Republic, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Spain, Portugal and Italy. I lived in Sweden for a year and Switzerland for three months. I also love linguistics, reading and the cinema.

Lookalike corner





It's been said that York revenue protection officer Geoff Feetenby bears an uncanny resemblance to crooner George Formby. If you think a workmate looks like a celebrity, then let us know! Drop a line to any of the contact managers listed opposite or email claire.wright@firstgroup.com

Your shout

To kick this issue off, we've included some letters of praise from contented customers but, in future, we'd love to hear from you. So, if you have any questions, comments or thoughts, please drop Claire Wright a line at TransPennine Express, 7th Floor, Bridgewater House, 60 Whitworth Street, Manchester, M1 6LT…

Dear ladies and gentlemen,
I'd like to say thank you for the courtesy you showed when I booked my ticket to Nottingham, and for the help you gave me with parking my car. I came away feeling good about the way the station is conducted.
Best wishes, JB

Dear sirs,
I'm writing to compliment staff at Thornaby station ticket office. They're always courteous, friendly and professional, although they're often under pressure from a queue of important people. They give excellent service.
Yours, JL

Dear Nigel,
You are a saint! In this day of customer service/relations becoming insensitive and uncaring, it is fantastic to find a genuine employee who likes to find a resolution to the task he is given as opposed to just passing the buck. I compliment you on your professional telephone manner – you are an asset to your department.
Yours sincerely, ST

Noticeboard

Baby girl

Congratulations to Vernon's PA, Julie Kensett, who gave birth to Bethany at 1.37am in January. Bethany weighed in at 7lb 11oz!

Bye, bye

We say goodbye to senior management trainee Andy Sharp, over at Manchester, who joined TPE in September 2005. He was offered a job with First Capital Connect as an accessibility and inclusion manager and started in London in January. He is also getting married in May.

Proud pop

Congratulations go to Selby customer service assistant Mick Jones who became a granddad for the first time when granddaughter Abigail Knott was born in September, weighing in at 9lb 11oz.

It's a bouncing baby boy!

Congratulations are due to Huddersfield station announcer, Dave Whitley and his wife Leah, as they now have a bouncing 6lb 9oz baby boy, Spencer, born 10 January. The proud parents were recently married too, four days before, on 6 January.

Long train

Steve Adshead, diagramming manager, celebrates 19 years of railway service on 21 March. Well done Steve!

Keep in touch

Have you got an announcement you want seen on the noticeboard, such as a birth, marriage, anniversary, award or any other kind of fun snippet? Just let us know via any of the contact managers (details below) or by email on tpexpress@firstgroup.com.

Have you got news for us?

If you have any stories for *The express*, please contact:

Manchester Bridgewater House:
Claire Wright
communications officer
0161 228 8475

Manchester Airport:
Tom McLaughlan
07841 726 769

Manchester Piccadilly:
Sharon Small
07736 088 221

York:
David Pierce
07736 088 144

Barrow:
George Thomas
07841 727 955

Cleethorpes:
Paul Cunningham
07764 795 908

Huddersfield:
Paul Jackson
07736 088 160

Middlesbrough:
Nick Wood
07921 491 288

Hull:
Dean Lancaster
07736 796 856

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07736 088 163