

A NEW HOME FOR WEST COAST LOCOMOTIVES

Although "One" still uses locomotives cascaded from the West Coast Main Line following the arrival of the Pendolinos, and a couple of trains between London and the Midlands operated behind class 87s until the timetable change in December 2006, many class 86 and 87 machines are now surplus to requirements. During the last week of the old timetable the 1651 Euston to Wolverhampton and its return working were the last locomotive hauled passenger trains on the West Coast route, being handled usually by 87002 "The AC Locomotive Group" resplendent in refreshed Porterbrook livery. On 30th November 2006 four 86s (86234, 86245, 86247 and 86260) were dragged ignominiously into Long Marston Military Depot for long-term storage and a very

uncertain future. However all hope for these locomotives is not lost. Owner Porterbrook has been in active discussion with Romanian Railways for the sale of some of the 86s to that nation's State Railway. The class 86s are around 40 years old but have proved to be reliable over the years and may well help the Romanian system start to upgrade its services at an acceptable cost. Some of the newer class 87s are finding a new home in Bulgaria with an agreement sealed to sell eleven to the emerging nation where modernisation of the railways is seen as a vital next step. A further nine of the 87s may follow if further discussions prove successful.

Observer

trams in a few heavily used corridors. The financial centre.

BERLIN HAUPTBAHNHOF DISPUTE

Berlin's magnificent new station designed by Meinhard von Gerkan and built at a cost of €700m has been a source of disappointment for the 71 year old architect. German Railways made two massive changes to the design without the designer's permission. They lopped 100m off the length of the arched roof on one side of the central towers, spoiling the symmetry of the design and causing comment from ex-Chancellor Gerhard Schroder whose office overlooks the station. Much more seriously the railways mutilated the design by replacing the high cathedral-like vaulted ceiling over the station with a lower flat metal design by another architect to save €40m. Von Gerkan claims that his station has been ruined and defaced. The matter went before the Courts in November 2006 and the judges have ruled that the station is

not a functional building whose design is of small importance but rather is a work of art that was a new landmark in a city already renowned for its magnificent structures. The architect's complaints have been upheld and the correct ceiling should now be installed although this may take three years to complete. The lower ceiling trapped noises and made the place like a public market whereas the higher ceiling would have allowed the station noises to escape. German Railways is appealing against this ruling but there has been widespread support for von Gerkan and many of the 300,000 daily users of the station indicate that they would appreciate the correct architectural aesthetics.

I.D.O.F.