



“TRAIN operators had their busiest year in 2008, carrying the highest number of passengers in 60 years. And National Rail Enquiries had a record year, too. We handled 155 million contacts of all kinds – an increase of almost 30 per cent over 2007 and 15 million more than expected.

Our two contact centres recorded their highest-ever customer satisfaction with not a hair's breadth of difference between the ratings of our teams in South Yorkshire and Mumbai, who handled 17 million calls between them – all answered within an average of just eight seconds.

The person-to-person service has also become more advice-based, with contact centre staff now offering assistance to plan each step of a journey. As a result, contact centre performances are at an all time high for quality and quantity and customer recommendation has soared to 91 per cent.

As we move forward into 2009, our primary focus continues to be supporting the train operating

Last year we handled 155 million contacts of all kinds – an increase of almost 30 per cent over 2007 and 15 million more than expected.

companies, their staff and their passengers through making rail information as accurate, consistent, timely, relevant and accessible as possible.

The TOCs are now taking 175 of our services, mainly to communicate information to the public, and discovering the benefits of many more – including those that are available for their customer-facing staff.

Finally, in looking back on the past year and NRE's links with Mumbai, I would like to acknowledge the bravery of the Indian Railway staff at CST station who captured alive the one terrorist who survived the terrible attacks on 26 November. ”

Chris Scoggins
Chief Executive
chris.scoggins@atoc.org



Personal touch takes customer satisfaction to all-time high

NRE centres set record for speed, quality and accuracy

National Rail Enquiries has moved into 2009 on a wave of success, with performance at both its contact centres – in South Yorkshire, England, and Mumbai, India – at a record high.

Independently-conducted surveys recorded customer satisfaction at 86 per cent for both locations in the last eight weeks of 2008.

The high rating for the Intelenet team in India is particularly striking, as the period surveyed coincided with the terrorist attacks on Mumbai.

Tejpal Singh, NRE's Head of Contact Centres who was also in Mumbai at the time, is proud to report that staff calmly worked on through the city's days of terror.

He adds: "We ended 2008 with customer satisfaction at its highest level ever and in the final month of the year, which included introduction of the new Great Britain Timetable – including major changes on some routes, such as the West Coast Main Line – we answered 98 per cent of all calls offered at an average speed of only eight seconds."

Another record was the number of callers surveyed who said they would recommend National Rail Enquiries to others – 91 per cent said they would be happy to do so.

As a result, customer dissatisfaction was at its lowest-ever level.

"It is very heartening to be able to report our performance has never been better," says Tejpal.

"Even more heartening is that customer satisfaction is at the same high level for the service offered by both teams – Dearne Valley in South



Customer satisfaction: recommendation & figures

Calls answered	96.4%
Contact centre accuracy	99.3%
Speed to answer	13 secs
Recommendation level	91%

Yorkshire and Mumbai."

The number of calls handled by the two contact centres in 2008 was 17 million, down from 22 million the year before, representing just 11 per cent of all 155 million contacts – another record – who used NRE's wide range of services last year.

"Paradoxically, the call centres are becoming more important in our service," explains Tejpal Singh, pointing out that despite the decline in the number of telephone enquiries, NRE continues to maintain a total of 500 full-time posts at the two contact centres.

"It is significant that both locations are increasingly serving people who do not have Internet access, and those who require more varied or in-depth assistance.

"So, as the variety of calls increases, our service becomes more advice-based, with time given to planning an individual journey. Five years ago the average length of a call was 90 seconds. Now it is two minutes."

The advice that call centres can give to potential rail customers is being aided in 2009 with a new journey-planning system available to travel advisers. Integrated with real-time journey details, it includes access to information about availability of fares and the ability to transfer callers to train operating companies to make bookings and purchase tickets.

Adds Tejpal: "We can also provide prompt help for those seeking alternative routes to disrupted services – and quote on best-value tickets and whether they are available or not."

Sign up for mobile travel alerts tailored to your journey, whether it is for a single journey or your regular commute.



CREATE AN SMS ALERT

Travel info on the move makes uncertainty a thing of the past

THE customer support Travel Alerts service provided by National Rail Enquiries has seen an eight-fold increase since it was re-launched last autumn, and more than 2,000 subscribers are signing up every week.

This very useful service sends SMS text messages – based on preferences set up by each individual customer – which give up-to-the-minute information about pre-planned journeys.

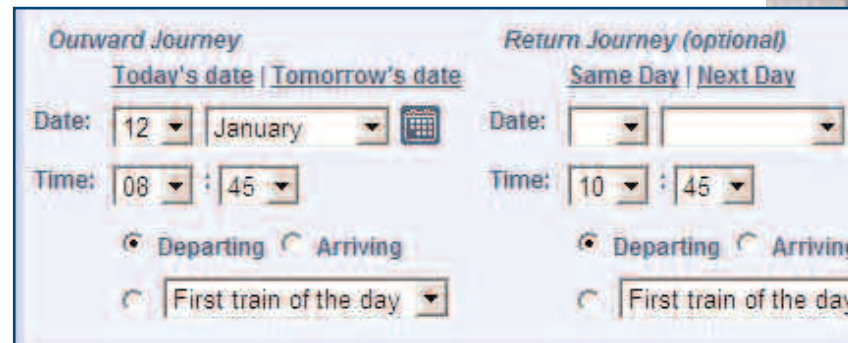
The information supplied provides advance warning of any changes or delays, thereby avoiding either a pointless rush or frustrating time-wasting waiting on a station platform.

Information about a particular train can be provided regularly for up to 12 weeks, after which NRE's system will automatically send an email prompting the customer to continue with the current alerts or to inform National Rail Enquiries of changed preferences.

And there is no need to register – passengers need only validate their mobile phone number to set up the service.

You can set up Travel Alerts via a PC, there is also now an easy set-up wizard available on NRE's website home page – <http://nationalrail.co.uk/>.

And, like all other NRE services, Travel Alerts is not standing still. From February 2009, the service is



being expanded to enable customers to receive information about multiple journeys and return trips.

In addition, NRE is now finalising development of its alerting software so that train operators can provide the same alert information through

their own systems.

Jason Webb, NRE's Head of Online Services, explains: "This means a train operating company can still use its own customer interface, but with the proven technology of our 'alerting engine' –

thereby reducing its own development costs considerably."

Train companies interested in accessing the travel alert system should contact the National Rail Enquiries team for details and technical documentation.

Ask Lisa

Need help with our website? Need information about travelling by train? Just 'Ask Lisa', our new virtual assistant.

ASK

Planning a journey? Ask the 'woman' who knows

MEET Lisa – National Rail Enquiries' most popular member of staff.

Lisa, whose smiling face appears on the home page of NRE's web site, is asked around 40,000 questions about rail services by customers every week. And she is able to answer over 90 per cent of them straight away.

In fact, Lisa is a 'virtual' employee, known to database controllers as a website interactive search tool. Her name is actually an acronym of Linguabot Interactive Sales Assistant.

Lisa is linked to NRE's 'knowledge base' – a database managed from NRE's HQ in London and updated frequently by both the National Rail Communication Centre in Doncaster and individual train operating companies.

A call centre version of Lisa is now being tested, which will also be available for use by train operating companies.

Soon to be showing in a hostelry near you...



DETAILS of train departures and arrivals at British stations can now be displayed in non-railway locations using a new system developed by National Rail Enquiries.

Already, trial systems are operating in Wetherspoons bar at Victoria Station in London and in the Prince of Wales pub near Didcot Parkway station in Oxfordshire, as well as in Northern Rail's HQ in York.

Known as Public CIS (customer information system), it is driven from NRE's Live Departure Boards, and links with station information systems that list platform numbers and train arrival and departure times.

The CIS 'big screen' system now being trialed displays similar comprehensive information to that provided by Live Departures on the National Rail website, and includes such details as the stopping patterns of trains and expected arrival times at intermediate stations.

Public CIS is a development from CIS Connections – the work programme that links station customer information systems to NRE, so that information displayed about train movements on NRE's website, in TrainTracker texts and by the



Victoria station's information above, is now in Wetherspoons bar, left.

Alerting service is identical to information showing on station screens.

Stations used by 50 per cent of all passengers are already connected by CIS Connections – but NRE plans to add many more.

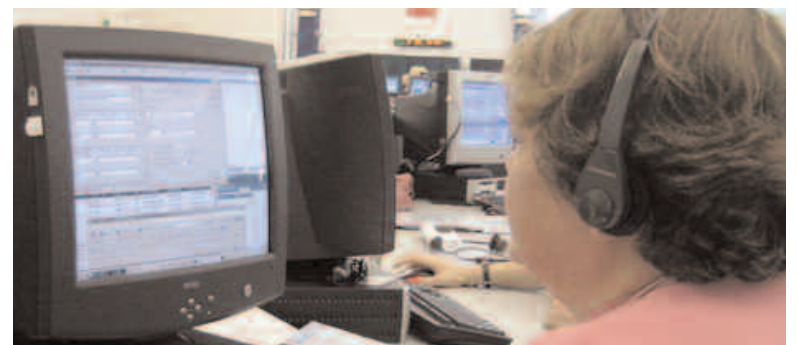
In recent months, the list has been extended to those operated by First Capital Connect (Great Northern Route) and all stations managed by National Express East Coast. And during February and March, London King's Cross, Leeds City, Glasgow Central and Edinburgh Waverley are likely to be added.

Real-time updates straight from the signal box

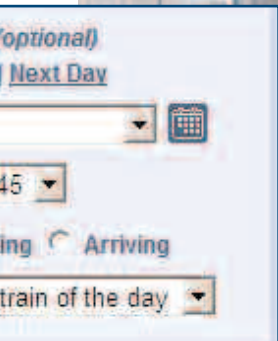
THE technology driving the National Real Time Database (NRTD) is being upgraded to provide even better information.

From February 2009, a new 'engine' will drive the NRTD to provide better information for use on all National Rail Enquiries services, including Journey Planner, TrainTracker Text and Travel Alerts – and for customer advisers at the contact centres in Dearne Valley and Mumbai.

The biggest improvement will come from linking the NRTD with feeds from train describers in signal boxes and control centres across the rail network, allowing the database to be updated within 1 - 2 minutes as events occur. This is already integrated with the real-time journey planning 'engine', so customers can be advised of any events that may affect their rail journeys – and how to get around resulting problems.



akes past



National Rail Enquiries

Our latest offer – tickets, trains AND bed and board

RAIL passengers planning journeys through the National Rail web site are now being offered the opportunity to book hotels at their destinations as a result of a new strategic partnership with online travel company lastminute.com.



Launched in January 2009, it means that the National Rail Enquiries' website can now also provide a great range of accommodation options in towns and cities across Britain.

websites in the UK offers travellers a fantastic service at the touch of a button. We aim to provide a convenient service, value for money and great ease of use."

Merchandising and hotel content information is provided throughout the web site – including within Journey Planner results (see below for example of hotels offered in London in January).

Vic Darvey, lastminute.com Vice President of Distribution, said: "We are absolutely delighted to be partnering with National Rail Enquiries.

Chris Scoggins, National Rail Enquiries' Chief Executive, said: "This strategic partnership with lastminute.com has added yet another dimension to the NRE journey planning facility.

"This is a significant opportunity to showcase our enhanced merchandising capabilities and extensive domestic content, including our market-leading 'Top Secret Hotels' proposition."

"Bringing together the capabilities of two of the most important



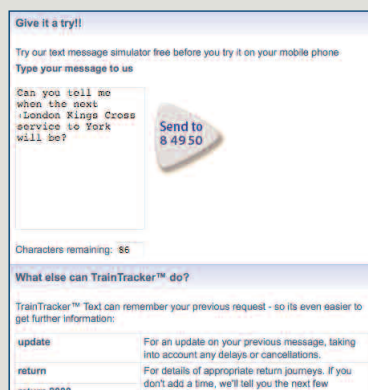
Text 8 49 50 and be sure to stay on track

WITH the growing popularity of the TrainTracker Text service, National Rail Enquiries is anxious for all callers to be advised of its new number.

Originally, TrainTracker Text was available by texting a request for a journey plan or for real-time train running information to 48 49 50 – but for technical reasons T-Mobile and Virgin mobiles could not connect to this number.

So an alternative five-digit number, 8 49 50, has been introduced and the original six-digit number will soon be disconnected.

Jason Webb, Head of Online Services, says 94 per cent of Train



Tracker Text users – there are around 3,500 of them every day – are now text the five-digit number but stresses that train operating

companies should make sure they quote 8 49 50 in all current publicity material.

TrainTracker Text enables full, real-time journey planning, with up-to-date train running information, including platform numbers where known, and arrival times for up to 21 hours ahead. A recent enhancement to the service means that customers can now update earlier information requested.

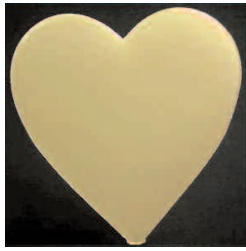
There is also a free TrainTracker simulator which allows you to try out the service available on www.traintrackertext.co.uk as well as a link to the full list of three-letter abbreviations used for every station

on the mainline network.

Enquiries sent to 8 49 50 cost the caller's standard network rate. The information supplied by NRE costs 25p including VAT.



DESTINATION	TIMETABLE	EXPECTED	OPERATOR	TRAIN DETAILS
Birmingham New Street	15:13	On time	Virgin Trains	Details
Bournemouth	15:14	On time	Cross Country	Details
Birmingham New Street	15:18	Starts here	London Midland	Details



Nasreen is our Heart of Gold

Intelenet Global Services is proud to name Nasreen Khan, an advisor who has worked on the National Rail Enquiries team for the past 3 years, as their Heart of Gold.

Nasreen is well known for her caring character and reputation for putting other people first. She regularly donates money earned through working overtime to various charitable organisations. Here are some of the organisations that have benefitted from Nasreen's kindness:

- Kripa Foundation (AIDS and heavy non-curable diseases)
- Home for the Aged (for elderly people)
- Remand Home – In-jail support (Supporting children who commit small crimes)
- Asha Dham (for the physically challenged)

She is also associated with the Rotary club and Bombay City Hospital.

Nasreen, you have a heart of gold and we all are very proud of you!

Two teams become one to help a colleague in need

A key member of NRE's customer contact team in Mumbai still remains very poorly after being injured in a motorbike accident in September.

Gordon D'souza was left in a coma and on a ventilator fighting for his life. With no equivalent of the National Health Service in India, the cost of treatment for his severe injuries was extremely expensive – well beyond the amount covered by his personal insurance.

In the true spirit of team work, both NRE customer contact teams in England and India sprang into action to raise the funds needed to meet the cost of Gordon's on-going care.

Tejpal Singh, Head of Contact Centres at NRE, says: "I cannot believe how people have rallied to help raise money for a person many may not have known."

"I am very proud of the way the teams came together and really put



Gordon and Olive on their engagement day in July 2008

'NRE has given Gordon a re-birth, a new life, and it's a miracle'

Olive, Gordon's fiancée, writes to express her thanks:

"On behalf of Gordon's family, especially his parents, his brother and myself, we would like to convey a very big and special thanks to the NRE team and all the people involved across the UK and India. It would have been impossible to get him back to a stable condition without the financial and emotional support from all of you. By the Grace of God almighty he is improving each day.

"We thank you as well for all your prayers and blessings during this difficult time."

themselves out.

"There were all sorts of fund raising activities going on across the two countries - everything from dress down days to generous personal and corporate contributions.

"The same passion that drives the outstanding performance levels at both NRE contact centres was employed to raise thousands of pounds to assist in paying for

Gordon's critical care."

Tejpal adds: "It's not just about what we do, it's also about the individuals involved - that's what make the NRE contact centres special."

Gordon is now at home and, although still very ill, is making steady progress, Kaizad S. Sidhwa, NRE Operations Manager at Intelenet Global Services, tells Enquirer.

'It's not just about what we do, it's also about the individuals involved - that's what make the NRE contact centres special.'



Tejpal Singh, Head of Contact Centres

It's the big 3 for NRCC



THE National Rail Communication Centre has just celebrated its third birthday – and that means three years of non-stop service.

Based in Doncaster, NRCC – which employs 17 people, including three on duty at all times to staff up the real-time disruption desk – continually provides information and updates on more than 20,000 trains operating on the national network every day.

Last year the National Rail web site was used by 120 million 'unique visitors' – up to 400,000 a day at the busiest times.

The NRCC is operated in a joint venture between DB Schenker (formerly EWS), and Thales, which will continue until 2010.



"We are now some way into 2009, so a belated New Year Wish to everyone from Railway Children.

In the last edition of Enquirer we expressed our thanks to everyone in the rail industry for helping us reach over 25,000 children last year. I hope you will agree that together we manage to make a remarkable difference in the lives of children across the world.

But it is important to understand how we make that difference, and how our work helps rebuild the lives of street children.

It is a sad fact that in any society the most vulnerable are often excluded from the policies and provisions created to protect the majority. At Railway Children we understand this and know there are many vulnerable groups of people who are in need. Our charity has chosen to focus our help on children who are alone, living on the streets or on railway platforms and subject to abuse and exploitation.

For them, we have created what we call our change agenda – one that will, we hope, improve the lives



Received with thanks: A street child shows Terina Keene her appreciation

of all children in the future.

We ensure that each child has their immediate needs – food, shelter, protection – taken care of by reaching out to a child as soon as they come onto the streets.

We look to influence local people's perceptions of the children, persuading them to see the children as having value and not as commodities to be sold or used. One example of this is the extensive work we do with the Railway Protection Force in India, sensitising railway officials to look out for children alone on the platforms and bring them along to one of our shelters where they are safe

for Runaways' launched last summer at Downing Street, which will hold local authorities responsible for adequate service provision for young runaways across the UK.

These three important elements of our work address the issue at both local level and nationally, but with a single purpose – that for the children who arrive today and tomorrow, (in India a new child arrives every six minutes) there is hope of better future.

All that we do is made possible only by your continuing support, for which I extend our grateful thanks.

I hope this small window into our work will inspire you to again choose Railway Children as your charity throughout 2009."

**Terina Keene
Railway Children Chief Executive**

from potential abusers.

We aim to change national government policies, to ensure that provision is made for street children in their future plans and budgets. This has resulted in the first 'Action Plan

Dearne Valley's £800 gift of hope

STAFF at the National Rail Enquiries' contact centre in the Dearne Valley, South Yorkshire, raised over £800 during the 12 days of Christmas for the Railway Children charity, which helps save and support children living on the streets.

Says Andrew Halstead, Operations Manager for Ventura, which manages the call centre for NRE: "Everybody was involved and really got behind this worthwhile campaign."

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