

# SET runs last 'slammer'

SOUTH Eastern Trains ran its last scheduled slam-door train on October 7.

Carrying a headboard, the 18.04 Cannon Street-Ashford was formed of three VEP units, Nos. 3565, 3545 and 3568.

SET has been gradually phasing out its Mk1 EMUs ahead of the national deadline at the end of the year, and now uses a mix of Class 375, 376, 465 and 466 units.

Southern is now the last ex-SR operator running Mk 1 EMUs but is expected to finish with them in November.

Leading unit No. 3565 is seen ready for departure at Cannon Street on the 7th.  
Picture: BRIAN MORRISON



# Started last, finished first...

## SWT completes Mk 1 replacement

Stagecoach's South West Trains franchise ran its last train of Mk 1 stock in a ceremonial trip from Waterloo to Weymouth on 26 May 2005, six months ahead of the legal deadline for getting rid of the old trains. This makes it the first of the south-of-Thames train operating companies (TOCs) to get out of Mk 1s – an achievement made all the more remarkable by the fact that this was the last of the three southern TOCs to begin the process of acquiring new trains.

SWT, in conjunction with leasing company Angel Trains, ordered a new fleet of Desiro trains from Siemens in Germany in April 2001. This was just the beginning. The task ahead encompassed:

- building the fleet of Desiros
- making depots suitable for the new trains
- modifying the infrastructure to accommodate the Desiros
- introduction of simulators, plus training of 950 SWT drivers for the new stock
- factory and test track testing of the new trains in Germany
- commissioning of the new trains in the UK
- introduction into service.

The accomplishment of this task was a massive team effort by the railway industry and its suppliers, from Network Rail upgrading the power supply to Siemens building the trains. If any of the elements was not delivered, the whole programme could fail – and it was this that made the co-ordination role played by the end user, Stagecoach/SWT, crucial to the project.

### Tumultuous

Complicating the job has been the fact that the four years since the Desiros were ordered have been some of the most tumultuous in the history of the British railway industry. Not

only was there the financial administration of Railtrack and its replacement by Network Rail, but there have also been significant policy shifts at the Strategic Rail Authority and its successor, the Department for Transport.

The story of the South West Trains Desiros begins five years ago, when the first-round SWT franchise was in its final stages and it was plain that replacement of carriages of Mk 1 design would be needed in the next franchise period. SWT's parent company, Stagecoach, got ahead of the game by preparing an order for new trains while it was still negotiating with the SRA for a second-round franchise. On 2 April 2001 Stagecoach was appointed preferred bidder for the new SWT franchise, and the contract for the new trains was signed with Siemens just three weeks later on 23 April 2001.

SWT's order was enormous: at 785 vehicles, it was one of the largest orders for new trains in the world. It was the largest single order ever received for new trains by Siemens, and at £640million for manufacture (plus more for maintenance) was the biggest order received by the whole Siemens AG for the previous two decades.

The number of vehicles bound for SWT shrank a little. A policy shift on the part of the SRA meant that 120 of the new vehicles, which had been earmarked to accommodate growth on the SWT network, were diverted to perform regional services on the West Coast main line instead.

Nevertheless, with 665 vehicles to plan for and introduce, Stagecoach had a big enough task on its hands – but one that it pulled off successfully. 'We have introduced an average of over one unit per week for the last year and nine months' said Allison Ingram, Major Projects Director with Stagecoach Group, in June 2005.

'Stagecoach has assembled an excellent team of project engineers, with all of the experience necessary to do a new train procurement and introduction,' said Stagecoach Rail's New Trains Director, Matthew Hinchcliffe. He added: 'Having done this once, we are anxious to use our skills on another franchise.'

The fact that the Mk 1 replacement programme on South West Trains has gone so smoothly, with six months in

### A HECTIC FOUR YEARS

- April 2001:**  
Contract signed with Siemens
- October 2001:**  
Railtrack placed in financial administration
- April 2002:**  
First Class 450 (No 001) on the Wildenrath test track carrying journalists
- December 2002:**  
First Class 444 (No 001) at Wildenrath
- January 2003:**  
Class 450 UK safety case testing starts
- August 2003:**  
Class 450 non-passenger safety case achieved
- September 2003:**  
Class 450 passenger safety case granted
- October 2003:**  
First six Class 450 units in traffic
- December 2003:**  
UK safety case testing on Class 444
- March 2004:**  
Non-passenger safety case for Class 444
- April 2004:**  
Passenger safety case for Class 444
- May 2004:**  
First four Class 444s in service
- July 2005:**  
45 Class 444s, 109 Class 450s in traffic\*

\* The last Class 450, No 450101, was damaged in track in Belgium and is under repair.



Stagecoach has assembled a 25-strong team that has been successful in introducing new trains and infrastructure on SWT and is ready to do so again on any other franchises the group may win.

hand on the legal deadline for withdrawal, is a tribute to all involved. 'The Stagecoach major projects team has shown its professionalism and commitment to this huge undertaking' commented Stagecoach Rail Director Graham Eccles. 'The Desiro fleet has been introduced successfully and the challenges that inevitably presented themselves were dealt with swiftly and efficiently behind the scenes and went largely unnoticed by the travelling public. Major Projects Director Allison Ingram and her team have done themselves proud.'



Allison Ingram, Stagecoach Group's Major Projects Director, was responsible for the introduction of SWT's new train fleet.

### SWT'S DESIRO ORDER

110 x 4-car Class 450	=	440 cars
45 x 5-car Class 444	=	225 cars