

1. Introduction

Since new the class 90s have worked several charters, railtours, footex's and other excursion trains. This has involved several new lines and routes being explored for the very first time and for some never been repeated since. For example, 90137 performed a Pathfinder tour out of Stansted Airport in the 1990s to London Liverpool Street and 90049 went to Altrincham as new in top and tail mode with other AC electrics.

There are though still a handful of places that 90s could go to on a railtour or charter in the future, but there are limitations with a few of those listed below.

2. Future Destinations

As already suggested there are still a number of lines and routes that these loco's have NOT yet visited as a class 1 or 2 service - that said some have gone empty to the destinations listed below as empty stock. For example, 90018 went to Shoeburyness depot in the 1990s as empty stock in order to run the loco round and a few 90s have travelled over the line from Hitchin to Cambridge. Also a 90 has gone to and from Manchester Airport for run round purposes:

Current Lines & Routes

Great Eastern Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cambridge to Kings Lynn • Harwich and Braintree Branch lines • Walton-on-Naze Branch • Hertford East & Enfield Town Branch • Fenchurch Street & associated lines • Chingford & Southminster • Colchester Town Branch • Shoeburyness
East Coast Main Line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hitchin to Cambridge Branch • Leeds to Skipton via Keithley • Leeds to Ilkley Branch • Shipley Triangle • Leeds to Neville Hill depot
West Coast Main Line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watford Jcn to St. Albans • Stockport to Hazel Grove • Manchester Airport Triangle • Manchester to Glossop • Manchester to Trafford Park • Birmingham to Lichfield Trent Valley • Birmingham to Longbridge • Bescot Stadium to Walsall • Willesden Jcn High Level
Scottish Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various lines on the Glasgow suburban network • Edinburgh-Airdrie-Bathgate Line
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paddington to Heathrow • St. Pancras International

New Future Schemes

New Electrification Schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Midland Mainline to Sheffield• Great Western Mainline to Cardiff & Swansea• Manchester to Liverpool via Chat Moss• Manchester to Preston via Bolton & Chorley• Manchester to Leeds / York via Huddersfield• Edinburgh to Glasgow Queen Street• Preston to Blackpool North
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So what are the limitations?

All of the places listed above may not be viable for a variety of reasons. This includes:

- Track capacity particularly on the branch lines if single track
- Gauging restrictions under Network Rail's "Route Availability"
- Insufficient Overhead Line Equipment (OHLE) voltages
- Pathing constraints particularly on busy routes like the WCML

3. Fleet Utilisation

There have been several charters and railtours run over the years, but the most under-utilised fleet of loco's which have NOT seen much action is those class 90s numbered 90001-90015 in addition to those leased to Freightliner. That said the FL90s saw resurgence from December 2010 until the present day as a result of Virgin Trains hiring loco's from this FOC for use on their MK3 set (known as WB64).

In general though the number of charters and railtours which have featured 90s in recent years has declined to an all-time low when you compare it the situation we were in during the 1990s. However, a fair few ran during 2011 notably by UKR and Virgin Trains using WB64 with FL90s.

During 2009 and 2010 all charters, railtours and footex's etc that involved class 90 usage came from those owned by DBS albeit 90045 was used on a private footex from Euston to Wigan in December 2010. If you wish to find out more about what 90s have worked over the last few years, then refer to the railtours and charters section on the forums webpage.

During 2011 there were several instances of class 90s working railtours and charters across the UK network. The most significant were the private charters that ran between Euston and Glasgow Central during October and November 2011 when Omega Holidays hired the Virgin MK3 set.

4. Special Workings

There have been a handful of occasions when 90s have worked charters and railtours in pairs (a practice not seen today). These include:

- 90132 & 90150 - Pathfinders "Grampian Highlander" from Crewe to Mossend on 6/8/94;

- 90129 & 90130 - A1A charter "Whisky Galore" from Stafford to Edinburgh on the 5/8/95;
90128 & 90140 - A1A charter "Road to the Isles" from Carlisle to Preston on 3/8/96;

More special workings like those listed above will be added here as more details become known.

5. The Future

At present it is not clear how much longer class 90s will feature on railtours and charters, but suspect they will be around for a few more years to come particularly as more of the network becomes electrified which could be an incentive for charter operators to use electric traction instead of diesel.