

Railmix



Photo: Javier Peña

New DMUs For NIR

In December 2000 the Northern Ireland Assembly granted Northern Ireland Railways 80 million GBP for the purchase of a batch of 23 three-car C3K (Class 3000) DMUs from CAF, and these trains entered service in 2004/5, replacing most of the fleet of ageing Class 80 DMUs. This strategy, however, provided little room for future service expansion, so in April 2008 the Assembly agreed to further funding for another batch of DMUs, as part of a 150 million GBP package to improve the system. N. I. Railways (part of Translink) invited tenders in June 2008, three companies registered an interest - Bombardier (a version of the Class 172 Turbostar), Hyundai Rotem (a train simi-

lar to the Class 22000 DMUs ordered by Iarnród Éireann in neighbouring Republic of Ireland) and CAF, which was awarded the 105 million GBP contract on 25 March 2009.

The 20 trains are being built at CAF's Zaragoza factory. Of 1,600 mm track gauge, the three-car Class 4000 DMUs have seats for 212 passengers, though there exists an option clause for 20 more intermediate cars to create permanent six-car sets. The engine is a 390 kW MTU diesel, powering both the traction motors and the auxiliary generators. Only one WC cubicle is provided (compared with two in the C3K trains) and most of the seating is arranged in rows, with only a few bays, to increase capacity. The entrance doors



Photo: Brian Morrison

and vestibules are positioned one- and two-thirds of the way along each car. A three-car Class 4000 weighs around five tonnes less than a C3K. Operation in multiple is possible, and this is planned, with platform lengthening taking place at certain stations to accommodate six-car trains.

The first of the batch was delivered in March 2011 and is expected to enter service, following testing, towards the end of the year, initially on the line from Belfast to Larne, displacing Class 450 DMUs. The last train is scheduled to arrive in 2012, and the fleet, which will be looked after at the new depot at

Adelaide, near Belfast, will carry the numbers 4001 to 4020. **The left-hand photo shows one of the end car bodyshells at CAF's Zaragoza works on 23 March 2011. The right-hand photo shows the first new train being disembarked at Belfast Docks on the 14th of the month, prior to being moved by road to Translink's York Road depot.**

NIR, the only vertically integrated railway company in Britain nowadays apart from heritage lines, enjoyed a 60% increase in passenger patronage between 2002 and 2009.

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