**Worst Christmas presents (and givers) revealed**

* **Perfume tops the list for women (16 per cent), whilst socks are a man’s pet hate (21 per cent)**
* **The title of worst ‘present giver’ goes to the mother-in-law (17 per cent)**
* **In response to these findings Virgin Trains has been gifting Brits from two life-size trains made entirely out of 2,000 individually wrapped Christmas presents**
* **Presents included iPads, folding bikes, Virgin balloon rides and pamper days, robotic dogs and a lorry load of chocolate**

**15th December 2016:** When it comes to Christmas not all presents are welcome as Brits reveal that

bad perfume (16 per cent) and socks (21 per cent) top the list of gifts they’d rather not receive, according to research\* by Virgin Trains as part of its annual Christmas Train to spread festive cheer.

Women revealed their worst presents are kitchen utensils (13 per cent), scarves (12 per cent), slippers (12 per cent) and jumpers (11 per cent). While making up the top five list of the most awful gifts men have received are jumpers (19 per cent), handkerchiefs (19 per cent), slippers (16 per cent) and underpants (15 per cent).

In response, Virgin Trains built the UK’s largest ever replica trains made entirely from presents. Modelled on the iconic Azuma and Pendolino trains, they were unveiled at London King’s Cross on Tuesday, and Birmingham New Street stations today, with lucky passengers invited to take one of the 2,000 presents home.

Ensuring bad presents were avoided, socks and perfume were vetoed in exchange for Amazon vouchers, Sony headphones, Smythson Diaries, Kindle Fires, Virgin Train tickets, iPads, robotic puppies, Virgin Wine, Jo Malone travel candles, Virgin Experiences including a balloon ride and a pamper day, Pizza Express and Vue Cinema vouchers, Play Doh party packs, tickets to Alton Towers, and Virgin Active gym memberships.

The survey of 2,000 Brits also revealed that the worst gift giver is their mother-in-law with one in six Brits (17 per cent) saying they hate what she gives them, whilst the same amount also complained that their best friend is a terrible gift giver. An additional 16 per cent of the population moan that their partner gets them awful presents and 10 per cent think their mum is clueless.

Patrick McCall, Co-Chairman for Virgin Trains said; “With nearly two million people expected to travel on the Virgin Trains network over the Christmas period\*\* we wanted to spread some good old fashioned Christmas cheer. To mark the beginning of the countdown to Christmas we’ve unveiled two life-sized trains made from 2,000 presents to get everyone in the festive spirit.”

**Notes to Editors:**

On Tuesday 13th December, Virgin Trains gave away 1,000 Christmas presents at London King’s Cross Station between 07.00 and 12.00. Today, Thursday 15th a further 1,000 presents are being given away at Birmingham New Street Station between 07.00 and 12.00.

Presents available for lucky travellers included Amazon vouchers, Sony headphones, Smythson Diaries, Kindle Fire, Virgin Train tickets, iPads, robotic puppies, Virgin Wine, Jo Malone travel candles, Virgin Experiences including a balloon ride and a pamper day, Pizza Express and Vue Cinema vouchers, Play Doh party packs, tickets to Alton Towers, and Virgin Active gym memberships.

Virgin Azuma is set to revolutionise UK travel when it arrives on the east coast in 2018. With 65 trains providing an extra 12,200 seats for a new and expanded timetable, the fleet of Virgin Azumas will increase capacity into King’s Cross by 28% during peak time.

\*The research was carried out by Mortar London which conducted an online survey among 2,000 respondents across the UK. The sample of adults was randomly selected from a survey panel and weighted to be representative of the UK population for age, gender and region. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability at the country level was +/- 2.2% at 95% confidence limit. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The research was conducted between 25th and 28th November 2016.

\*\*refers to the Christmas period of 16th December – 2nd January, using passenger

About Virgin Trains

Stagecoach and Virgin are working in partnership to operate the East Coast and West Coast inter-city routes under the Virgin Trains brand. Together, they are on track to revolutionise rail travel across the UK.

The combined network connects some of the nation’s most iconic destinations including Glasgow, Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Leeds, York and London.

Virgin Trains is committed to delivering a high speed, high frequency service, offering shorter journey times, more comfortable travel and excellent customer service. Customers consistently rate Virgin Trains as one of the top long-distance rail franchise operators in the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) commissioned by industry watchdog, Transport Focus.

On the East Coast route, £140m is being invested to create a more personalised travel experience. We have already invested £21m to completely revamp our existing fleet and customers can now benefit from 42 additional services (22,000 extra seats) per week between Edinburgh and London. 2018 will see the introduction of completely new Azuma trains being built in the UK by Hitachi.

The West Coast route has a proud record of challenging the status quo - from introducing tilting Pendolino trains, to a pioneering automated delay repay scheme and becoming the first franchised rail operator to offer m-Tickets for all ticket types.

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