



British Section

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European Association of Railway Personnel

Association Européenne des Cheminots (AISBL)

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**International Non-governmental Organisation with advisory status to the
Council of Europe (6.4.1977)**

**International Non-governmental Organisation with consultative status to
the UN (decision E/ 2002/ of 22.07.2002) and member of the
United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**

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AEC BRITISH SECTION COMMITTEE

The committee, officers (other than the President) elected at the Annual General Meeting on 28th April 2017, is as follows

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David King

The British Section Newsletter is produced by a small team headed by Philip Worsfold, who fulfils the non-committee role of Editor and Translator.

A.E.C. BRITISH SECTION NEWSLETTER, Vol. 21 No. 3
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The European web page is at: <http://www.A-E-C.net> (now updated)

AEC Latvia is at www.ldz.lv/biedriba/

AEC Spain is at <http://www.aec-es.net/>

Poland is at www.aecpl.republika.pl (*Private site, not officially recognised.*)

AEC Austria is at www.aec-oesterreich.at.tf

AEC Romania is at www.aecaferom.xhost.ro

Due to security issues the **British Section Website** and the **British Section Facebook** page have been closed down. The French website has also closed due to the webmaster's ill health. The British Section Newsletter will still be available on line on line at the European website. A new British section website is under consideration.

EDITORIAL

Another four months has passed and the Brexit bandwagon continues to roll. Section 50 has been activated. Sadly it seems to have affected the British section of AEC and some members have resigned – undoubtedly because of the uncompromisingly pro-European stance that Bob Clark and I have taken. Maybe this was taken as a political statement contrary to the statutes which state that AEC is a non-political organisation. But as I see it, what is happening in Britain today in relation to Europe goes far deeper than mere politics. I see it as a denial of our joint heritage and possibly a yearning for the ‘warm beer, cricket on the village green, tea and cucumber sandwiches’ idealised England, which, but for a privileged few, may never have existed except in books. We have shown again that as a nation we are not to be trusted. I make no excuses for my views. I cannot agree with people who say that we can be friends with Europe without being part of it. We are part of it! I think what is transpiring is profoundly misguided and dangerous. I continue to hope that Europe will impose such crippling conditions for Britain’s leaving the Union that we shall at last realise the folly of our ways and hopefully be given the chance to think again. In the meantime, I find the news from home and abroad so disturbing that I cannot face up to watching it on my television screen any more. I foresee a bleak future for the nations that make up what we continue to call the United Kingdom for all its present disunity.

Some of us are off to Metz soon after these words appear for a long weekend organised by the French section, which will remember the events which took place 100 years ago in the area of Lorraine – then divided and on the border with Germany. The opportunity will be taken to hold a meeting of the European Administrative Council and we shall be giving notice of our intention to organise an event in Glasgow in September 2019, which will be not just AEC European Days, but also the annual Congress of FEANDC – in effect two overlapping events to which members of both organisations will be invited. It remains to be seen how this attempt to bring the two organisations closer together will be taken – assuming that we survive that long!

In September, four of us will be off to Poland for European Days, which this year will include the triennial Congress which will elect the new European Bureau. I have to stand down as European Vice-president, since I shall have served my two consecutive terms of office. Once the administrative tasks are over, the programme of visits looks really exciting. Sadly only four people from the British section are able to attend.

In addition, Peter Davies, wearing his REPTA hat, has organised a river boat cruise and lunch on the River Thames on Saturday 2nd December 2017. Just before Christmas, it could be a jolly affair, so put the date in your diary now and make sure you have your winter wardrobe ready!

The Annual General Meeting of the British section took place on 28th April. The list of officers shows the new committee and this issue of the Newsletter has been delayed so that the draft minutes of the meeting could be included. The next edition will be in September and thereafter we shall resume publication every three months, since this gives a more convenient timing in relation to our meetings.

Philip Worsfold

Recruitment

Nigel Hyde has been elected as Treasurer and membership Secretary as well as Recruitment Officer. Any ideas you have should be channelled through him. All enquiries about membership should be addressed to **Nigel Hyde**. **Please note telephone number and e-mail address on page 2**. Also a spelling mistake in his address has been corrected.

New applications for membership can now be sent to Nigel and a new membership application form is attached to the e-mail edition, showing Nigel Hyde as the contact, with his new address. Please not especially his new fixed telephone number.

Recipients of the postal edition of the newsletter may receive printed copies of the membership application form from Philip Worsfold on receipt of a C5 size standard second class stamped addressed envelope.

We also have available a recruitment leaflet (now updated) and a 'PowerPoint' presentation to aid recruitment. This can be multilingual, within limits, for use by any national section, if required. Both have been updated recently. Should members wish to use either as aids to recruiting new members; or require back numbers of the newsletter, please let the Editor, Philip Worsfold, know and they can be forwarded as e-mail attachments.

PRESIDENT'S JOTTINGS – Bob Clark

A Song, a Song through Europe with a Song.... From ABBA to Wagner and BACH again!!....or How to avoid the Final Countdown.

This is what happens when the world goes crazy----- BREXIT, TRUMP, KIM JONG UN, worldwide terrorist outrages on city streets & now a snap election!!!! When the world goes crazy and mad things happen, music can soothe the way and have a calming effect on the mind; can relax any tension real or imagined. Music can also pinpoint a given event in time and indeed evoke happiness or nostalgia for a bygone age. It can also cause rage and anger and excessive patriotism in some instances. The pieces of music used as anthems can inspire greatness or cause depression to anyone who listens; depending of course on their point of view. Recent events show how things change not always for the good of all. For the past 40 or so years we have aligned ourselves with and been part of the EU (albeit reluctantly in most cases) and maintained this so-called "special relationship" with the USA.....marching to Sousa and Beethoven simultaneously, So is music playing a part in defining the UK's role in the world? The answer must be yes because a world without music is a dull dreary place, a colourless portrait of dreariness that accompanies the gloom and doom of modern life. Now let us go back to the days of darkness after the last World war when there was hope and aspirations for a brighter future of peace and harmony. What does music mean to me as a committed European?.....I can begin with myself as a 9 year old getting a Dansette record player and some singles at Christmas (my older Cousin worked in a music and record store) so my musical journey begun with the Beatles, Susan Maughan, Helen Shapiro and Frank Ifield amongst others and strangely enough Dominique --a song by Sœur Sourire a Belgian nun. This fuelled my taste for differing types of music over the years and I have never let anyone convince me that my taste was weird so with that in mind a history of travelling through Europe to the strains of musical laughter In Paris drinking coffee listening to Edith Piaf and Mirielle Mathieu; then on to Germany listening to Stephan Remmler, Trio and Nena, along with Kraftwerk and their Trans Europ Express album – one that evokes trains travelling through Europe... Endless, traditional oompah bands and Nichole singing Ein Bißchen Frieden, her little song of peace. In Wien (Vienna), foot tapping to Strauss and bopping to Falco, Mozart in Salzburg and Eros Ramazotti amongst others in Italy; Sakis Rouvas, Demis Roussos, Nana Mouskouri and as I strolled amongst the ruins of ancient Athens the sounds of bouzouki and other stringed instruments almost unchanged from the days of Homer. Walking through Stockholm to the sounds of ABBA. Since then with the arrival of the internet I have heard bands and singers of many musical styles on many different radio programmes in Europe (and elsewhere). I have always believed that music can unite us, where Politics and conflict cause division music can unite us all in friendship.

As part of a Europe-wide organisation I feel proud that we can get together (and music plays a major part) in harmony as the Sister Sledge melody says We are Family! Now another great European institution involving music unifying people in varying degrees is the EUROVISION Song Contest which some opinionated people consider nowadays to be trashy.....so be it that is their right in a democratic society.

However some of my best memories have been at European Days where this "trashy" music was part of the mix.....the Birdy song (chicken song in some places & originally called "Der Ententanz") getting faster and faster.....the Blue Danube played by a heavy metal band (surprisingly melodic and recognisable by Strauss himself had he been around!), the same music sitting in cafes as I ate apple strudel, sacher torte or Kaiserschmaren – wonderful memories and it is true what they say: "music is the food of love". I say food is the love of music. Put the two together and add people you have heaven! I have a feeling that Europe has a song for every taste. So music entertains us, binds us together in many ways and comforts us in times of sorrow. Sœur Sourire like so many in the music world had success and good fortune but sadly met a tragic end..... of which parallel events unfolding today could see similar tragedy for our continent if we treat our freedoms and hard won rights with disdain or indifference. We must therefore protect our democratic freedoms.

We need to remember 1944 and the times before then to show that we are not 'Running Scared' Whether you are a Puppet on a String, Rock'n' Roll Kids or a Diva – like Heroes, love a Fairytale, a bit of Euphoria or a Hardrock Hallelujah let love shine a light – rise up like a phoenix and sing our SONG OF JOY our song of peace our song of love and promote our values together...unite unite for Europe....fly on the wings of love...or as the Beatles once sang...

Come together right now.

We are Europe my Brothers Sisters Cousins You and Me.....Europe is Us!!!

(The views expressed in this article are personal and do not necessarily represent those of the Association.)

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE 29th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 28th APRIL 2016 held at the Royal Oak, Tabard Street, London SE1, commencing at 14h03

6 members were present. including P. Worsfold, European Vice-president, who acted as minutes secretary to enable all the members to participate fully in the meeting.

1. Opening remarks and Apologies for absence.

The President, Bob Clark welcomed the delegates and announced that the following had submitted their apologies for absence:

P.Davies, N. Hyde (due to travel disruption) J. Hayward, D. Crathorn, P. Rigby, P. Penaluna, C. Charman, H. Frampton-Jones, J. Roberts (noted after the meeting).

2. Minutes of the 28th Annual General meeting of 23rd April 2015.

(The minutes of the 2016 AGM were posted/e-mailed to members in January, together with the notice convening the meeting. Copies of the minutes was available for perusal)

The minutes were taken as read and approved – p: J. Woods, s: J Worsfold. **Unanimous.**

3. Matters Arising.

There were no matters arising.

4. Correspondence.

Principal correspondence mentioned was the resignation letter from Mike Hill and an exchange of E-mails with former member Mike Grieves, now resident in Berlin.

5. President's Report.

Bob Clark had little to report apart from his discussions with Peter Davies concerning the proposed European Days in Glasgow, 2019. He expressed his – and our – sadness on the death of Hans-Jürgen Krämer of the German section.

6. Reports from Officers.

Secretary – there was nothing special, but John Woods expressed his thanks for the logistic support of Philip Worsfold.

Recruitment Secretary – unable to attend

7. Treasurer's Report and Accounts. Membership at 31st March 2017.

The Treasurer had submitted the accounts and these were inspected and found to be a fair representation of the financial situation. We had just about broken even over the twelve month period. Subject to checking by the checker, the accounts were accepted.

The declared membership at 31st March 2017 was 31

8. Election of Officers for a period of one year, from 15th May 2017.

(The election of President falls due in 2018)

Vice President – Patrick Rigby

Secretary – J. Worsfold (p. Pres, Bob Clark)

Asst Secretary – P. Davies

Treasurer, Membership Secretary & Recruitment officer

Events officer – N. Hyde.

All the above existing members had expressed their willingness to continue and there were no other candidates. Following the nomination by the President of J. Worsfold for the post of Secretary, the group was elected en bloc (**Unanimous**)

9. Appointment of Checker of Accounts.

David King had offered to take on this task and was appointed by acclaim.

10. Nomination of delegates for European Administrative Council and Congress.

(meetings in 2017 – Metz: J. Worsfold, D. King. Poznan (A.C): P. Rigby, D. King). Poznan (Congress): J. Worsfold.)

Nomination of delegates to Congress will not be required in 2018.

11. Dates and Venues for forthcoming European Days.

13th – 19th May 2018 – Sicily.

9th – 14th September 2019 – provisionally, Glasgow (immediately following FEANDC Congress 5th – 9th September),

12. Events Programme.

J. Woods outlined proposals for visits to Fakenham, Seaton Tramway and Belvoir Castle.

Change of venue for London Reunions was discussed and decided that, initially for a twelve month trial period, we should move to the Royal Oak in Tabard Street starting in January (the film show) and also changing from the second to the third Thursday of the month to avoid the clash of dates with the meetings of Continental Railway Circle. We would also meet from lunchtime and maintain a presence up to 19h00

13. Any Other Business.

Following a suggestion from the editor, it was decided to revert to three monthly publication of the Newsletter.

14. Proposed date and venue for 2018 Annual General Meeting.

The date was agreed as **Thursday 19th April 2018** (third Thursday of the month) at the Royal Oak, 44 Tabard Street.

TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL NEWS

Travel News.

FIP Pricing changes in Austria

ÖBB are now charging the threatened Zuschlag on FIP tickets. Each one is valid on any number of trains on the day of issue and the following day, to coincide with the dated box. Trains affected are RJ, ICE, IC, EC & ICB. So far, enforcement is not 100%.

FIP in Italy and Germany.

FIP is only valid in Italy on regional trains. On everything else; which means all InterCity and high speed trains, reservation is obligatory. The best way to cover long haul travel is to use InterRail*, which attracts a 3euro supplement for InterCity trains with a reservation, and a 10euro supplement for FB and AV high speed trains. FIP in Germany can only be guaranteed on IC and ICE trains. on regional trains that are operated by DB that are not also in a Verkehrsverbund (multi-operator ticketing zone)

**InterRail also has the advantage that the tickets are not route specific; so that if your journey is disrupted you are able to switch to a greater selection of alternatives. There is a reduced rate for the over-sixties. Your editor found InterRail a boon in Germany and Austria, when a return journey from a visit to Romania was disrupted by late running and missed connections.*

Gate-line passes.

For those former B.R. employees with regional and all line passes (Leather, silver, gold etc) they can now be used to activate the barriers at Paddington Station, London – among others.

The new Middleton Press Timetable.

I've had a chance to look at the Middleton Press Timetable, the winter edition of which was on sale at WH Smith at Paddington station. The format is identical with the European Timetable. However, the paper is thicker and whiter (good) but the print seems fainter which, for me makes it more difficult to read - even with my special timetable reading spectacles! If one goes for the European Timetable then there is no point in getting the Middleton one as well. At £9.95 its not such good value even though the European Timetable is twice the price - you get so much more for your money!

Philip Worsfold

Rail News from Europe

South Luxembourg - One dead and several injured after train crash near Bettembourg

Tuesday, 14 February, 2017

A passenger train and a freight train collided between Bettembourg (L) and Zoufftgen (FR) on Tuesday morning at approximately 8:40am.

According to information provided jointly by the police and CFL, there WERE four injured. Of these four, two were seriously injured and still trapped on the train. Shortly before noon, police confirmed that one of the injured did not survive the accident.

In a press conference given by Interior Minister Kersch and Infrastructure Bausch at 12:30pm, they confirmed that the driver of the passenger train, a Luxembourgish CFL employee, did not survive the crash. Both trains will now be pulled apart in order to get to the victim.

The incident occurred near the Bettembourg yard and the French border zone of Zoufftgen, where, in 2006, a similar collision occurred, resulting in the death of six people. Following that incident, Luxembourg's authorities provided themselves with additional equipment as protection against similar incidents, which Interior Minister Kersch said that he hoped would never be needed.

No alarm set off before crash

There was no alarm set off before the crash. A French conductor in the passenger train was able to get away from the front of the train before the impact. Less severely injured, she informed the Bettembourg post of the crash at 08h45. All procedural measures were immediately triggered and between 60 and 70 emergency service workers were deployed within a short time. The first intervention team was at the scene at 09h06.

As it quickly became clear that there were less than ten injured, there was no need to trigger a "plan nombreuses victimes" (high number of victims plan), however all available teams were deployed as a safety measure.

The freight train coming out of France was heading for the "triage" in Bettembourg. It was composed of one locomotive and 27 empty carriages, totalling a weight of 610 tons. The passenger train coming from Luxembourg was heading for France.

Minister Bausch did not want to speculate about the reasons for this accident. He said that investigative teams were at the scene to carry out their work.

Following the collision at Bettembourg, the route from Luxembourg to Thionville was suspended for 48 hours, with CFL putting on extra buses for passengers.

12 New trains ordered for Paris at \$4 billion price tag.

Keith Fender

PARIS – 12 January 2017.

The French Railway system has selected a Alstom-Bombardier consortium to supply 255 new high capacity commuter trains for lines D and E of the Paris cross city suburban or RER (*Réseau Express Régional*) network in a contract that could be worth around \$4 billion assuming all 255 planned trains are purchased.

The first firm order, worth \$1.2 billion entirely funded by Paris regional transport authority STIF is for 71 trains. In total 130 trains for the existing RER Line D and 125 for RER Line E services are planned replacing older trains on line D and enabling expansion of Line E service.

Alstom and Bombardier will build the trains at their French factories and the order is shared between them on a 70:30 basis with Alstom having the biggest share. The new trains will be delivered starting in 2021 in time for a \$4 billion extension of the E line west from Paris St Lazare station to Nanterre via the La Défense business district.

The new trains are designed to have no significant slack between cars and feature extra-wide sliding doors for crowded trains. About 70 percent of all French rail passengers travel on commuter trains in Paris and its surrounding region.

Alstom calls the new train design its Xtrapolis Cityduplex; the company has sold its Xtrapolis range around the world but until now never as a double deck train. Each of the new trains has single deck driving vehicles at each end with bi-level intermediate cars designed to 1,861 people.

Driverless shuttles link Paris stations

PARIS – 27 January 2017:

The city of Paris and transport authorities RATP and STIF have launched a experimental driverless electric shuttle service carrying passengers between the capital's Austerlitz and Lyon stations.

The free service is scheduled to operate between 14.00 and 20.00 every day from January 23 until April 7.

The six-seat EasyMile EZ10 electric vehicles have an operator on board, use a dedicated road lane and are recharged at night.

The trial aims to collect passenger and information about performance, reliability, supervision and safety which can be used for detailed assessment of the technology. RATP is also planning to test driverless shuttles between Château de Vincennes and the floral park in Vincennes forest, and at the CEA nuclear research facility site in Saclay.

'The experiment conducted by RATP is a strong signal', said Mayor of Paris Anne Hidalgo. 'The advent of driverless driving technologies now opens up new outlooks and will make it possible to give far more space to electric modes of transport.'

'Testing, integrating and developing innovative technologies that offer a better service to the region's inhabitants are at the heart of the transport revolution that I launched in Paris and throughout the region a year ago', said STIF Ile-de-France President Valérie Pécresse. 'The data to be collected from this demonstration, and also from at least three other permanent, driverless shuttle services to be launched in the region by STIF this year, will help build the world's first Smart Region.'

Wind powered trains to enter service in the Netherlands.

January 16, 2017

UTRECHT, Netherlands — Passenger trains in the Netherlands are set to use the 21st century equivalents of centuries-old windmill power to move. Nederlandse Spoorwegen, the Dutch passenger railway company, is partnering with Eneco, a local electricity company, on new wind energy technology.

Starting this month, the company's entire fleet of passenger trains will be powered exclusively by wind energy, New Atlas reports.

According to a spokesperson for the Dutch rail company, the railway uses the same amount of energy as the city of Amsterdam. Newly built wind farms are helping supply additional energy for the railway and its passenger fleet.

Nederlandse Spoorwegen is the primary passenger rail operator in the Netherlands, operating more than 4,000 trains each day across the country's more than 3,200-mile rail system.

A small fleet of diesel-powered trains will be phased out by the end of 2017,

China delivers first inter-modal train to the UK

James Graham

Cargo delivery is the latest lane in China's New Silk Road

January 18, 2017

LONDON — A rail freight depot in East London was the destination today for the first container train travelling between China and the United Kingdom. After travelling 7,450 miles from Yiwu in Zhejiang province near Shanghai, it arrived at DB Cargo UK's London Eurohub terminal in Barking, Essex, just eight miles from the centre of London. The yard is connected to the High Speed 1 rail line from the (English) Channel Tunnel. Yiwu is about 190 miles south of Shanghai.

Chinese embassy officials joined media, local politicians, business leaders, and railway industry personnel to greet the train. Trade Minister Zhu Qin from the Chinese embassy in London spoke warmly of the growing commercial trade that the service will support.

"In two weeks we celebrate the Chinese New Year. It is the year of the rooster who we regard as the break of day, a new beginning, just like this service," Qin says. "It is 45 years since ambassadorial relations were created between our two countries. This is a tangible link between China and Britain which can only grow stronger."

The train was announced by a cacophony of train horns as it entered the freight yard. It had been loaded with 34 40-foot containers in Yiwu for Europe. Six of the UK-bound containers were not permitted in the Channel Tunnel for safety reasons and went via a ferry crossing. The twelve Chinese Railway Express containers that arrived in London were loaded primarily with textiles and other consumer goods.

The Rail Freight Group, an industry body that promotes freight by rail, welcomed the initiative as a further effort to remove containers from Europe's crowded roads. The 18-day expected transit time is under half that of a typical sailing from Shanghai to Europe.

"It is great that this train has arrived here in London with merchandise for the British market," says David Martin, Director of the China-Britain Business Council. "I look forward to the return segment when quality British goods are being sent in the other direction."

Power haul

The train was provided with two locomotives as the Channel Tunnel link is electrified while the Barking depot is not electrified. Pulling the train was 23-year-old Class 92 92015, a dual-voltage electric locomotive which can run on 25 kilovolts A.C. from overhead wires or 750 volts D.C. from a third rail. It was designed specifically to operate services through the Channel Tunnel between Britain and France and is based at Crewe. The 139 ton loco has a top speed of 140 mph.

In the rear was 17-year-old EMD-built Class 66 66136, a six-axle diesel electric freight locomotive based in the Midlands. It weighs 143 tons and has a top speed of 105 mph. The locomotives, both in DB Shenker livery, were embellished with logos associated with the operation.

Initial suggestions are that the service will operate weekly in a west-bound direction until traffic can justify a daily service.

After the official speeches, guests were entertained by a troupe of Chinese dragon dancers. They then watched a demonstration of how quickly crews can offload a container.

The train was operated by the Swiss-based multinational freight forwarder InterRail Group on behalf of Beijing-based China Railway subsidiary China Railway International Multimodal Transport. DB Cargo was responsible for the Duisburg–London section via the Channel Tunnel. The containers required specifically for the UK were loaded on to Deutsche Bahn's container platforms at the Duisburg container terminal, which are specially approved for the Channel Tunnel. operation

The train traversed Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus, Poland, Germany, Belgium, and France before reaching the U.K. Three gauge changes were encountered on the journey where containers were transhipped between the different gauges rather than wagons swapping wheel sets.

London is the latest destination added to the China–Europe rail link dubbed the "One Belt – One Road" corridor, an initiative of the Chinese government, which serves Duisburg (D), Madrid (ES); Afghanistan; and Riga (LV).

Bombardier to build new passenger train sets for German operator

BERLIN – 3 April 2017.

Bombardier Transportation is working with Vlexx, a German passenger rail operator, on building 21 Talent 3 train sets for passenger rail operations in Saarland, Germany. The three-car electric multiple units will be used on the Saar region's electrified rail system, beginning in December 2019.

The three-car trains will accommodate 160 seats, room for two wheelchairs, and nine bicycles per car. The vehicles will also be equipped with sliding steps to help bridge the gap between station platforms and the train during boarding.

The Talent series debuted in 1995 by railcar builder Waggonfabrik Talbot.

Bombardier later bought the company. The company has built approximately 1,400 Talent train sets for service in Europe and Canada. In Germany, there are about 400 Talent 2 train sets in use. Vlexx provides passenger rail service in the regions of Rhine-Hesse, Nahe, Westpfalz, Saarland, and the Rhine-Main metropolitan area of Germany. The company operates about 3.9 million train miles per year. The new Saar-region contract includes about 1.4 million train miles per year.

LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL: SUN SHINES FOR BRUNEL'S BIRTHDAY

Rail staff confirm the legend that rising sun shines through Box tunnel in Bath on birthday of Isambard Kingdom Brunel

Steven Morris

Monday 10 April 2017

Engineers have tested one of the UK's most intriguing railway legends: that the rising sun shines through the Box tunnel near Bath on the birthday of the 19th-century genius who created the line.

For many years, railway enthusiasts and mathematicians have argued over whether Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the creator of the Great Western mainline, did design the two-mile tunnel with his own birthday in mind.

On Sunday 9th April – 211 years after Brunel's birth – the line was shut because of upgrade work, providing Great Western Railway and Network Rail with a rare chance to observe whether the sun really does shine through the length of the tunnel on 9 April.

Teams positioned themselves at the eastern and western ends of the tunnel and waited for the sun to rise on one of the brightest days of the year.

Communications manager Paul Gentleman, who was at the eastern end, said he was treated to a spectacular sight. "When you look from the east portal, the cutting provides a lovely V-shape," he said. "The sun rose from the left and was shining directly down the tunnel. We couldn't see how far.

"It was fascinating to watch the sun as it nestled in the centre of that V as it rose – quite an astounding sight. When you look at it from that east portal you got the feeling that effect was definitely part of the design."

At the western end, it was not quite as striking. Matthew Golton, commercial development director at GWR, said: "We could see the sun had risen but we weren't getting full-on sunshine through the tunnel."

Golton said the idea of building such a long tunnel between Bath and Chippenham was hugely controversial and was described during a debate in parliament as "dangerous, extraordinary, monstrous and impractical". Railway pioneer George Stephenson said passengers would be terrified.

The project was over budget and behind time. At the height of construction, 4,000 people were working on the tunnel and the engineers were getting through a tonne of candle wax and a tonne of explosives every week. One hundred people died during its construction.



Sunlight beaming through Brunel's Box Tunnel. Photograph: Adam Scott/GWR

It is not a surprise to Golton that Brunel might have added a mischievous detail to his astounding design. "There are lots of good reasons why Brunel might have wanted to provide a riposte to his critics by not only completing the structure but putting a special architectural signature into the job," he said.

There will be no more practical chances to test the theory for the foreseeable future. The line is now open again and, from the autumn, new Intercity Express trains will begin operating on the line.

Golton said the tunnel had changed since it was completed in 1841. "Back then, it had 30m new bricks in the lining," he said. "It hadn't had 130 years of steam locomotives through it to make it darker."

Golton said the tunnel had changed since it was completed in 1841. "Back then, it had 30m new bricks in the lining," he said. "It hadn't had 130 years of steam locomotives through it to make it darker."

It is possible that the sun used to glint off water in the tunnel – Network Rail continues to work hard to keep the tunnel dry. "Perhaps when it was first opened there was more water inside that the light could have been reflected off," said Golton.

The supposed link with Brunel's birthday was first reported by the Devizes Gazette in 1842. The Daily Telegraph followed the story up some time later but, until now, as far as GWR knows, there have been no photographs of the supposed phenomenon.

EUROPEAN EVENTS

AEC Mini Days in Lorraine (France): 19th – 22nd May 2017

FEANDC Seine cruise 10th – 16th September 2017 – booking is now closed.

AEC European Days in Poland. 25th – 30th September 2017 – booking is now closed.

AEC European Days in Sicily. 13th – 19th May 2018 – see programme on next page.

Proposed AEC European Days and FEANDC Congress in Glasgow, Scotland 5th- 9th (FEANDC) /9th – 14th September 2017 (AEC).

ITEMS FROM THE GERMAN SECTION

10.05.2017 RV Rostock: Informationen der DB Regio

27.06.2017 RV Rostock: Busfahrt Darß / HST mit A.E.C. Wien

ITEMS FROM AUSTRIA

2017: 09 und 23 Mai, 13 und 27 Juni usw.

Im Vereinsbüro der AEC - Sektion Österreich stehen an jedem zweiten und vierten Dienstag im Monat, jeweils von 14.00 bis 17.00 Uhr, Vorstandsmitglieder zur persönlichen oder telefonischen Kontaktaufnahme zur Verfügung.

(There is a presence in the Austrian section's office at 1040 Wien, Gußhausstraße 19/18, (Vienna) every second and fourth Tuesday of the month from 14h00 to 17h00)

EUROPEAN DAYS IN NAXOS, SICILY; 13TH – 19TH MAY 2018
Provisional Programme.

Sunday 13th May – arrival in the afternoon of delegates for the AEC Administrative Council at railway station -GIARDINI NAXOS -TAORMINA. Transfer from the station to the hotel 4* ZONE, Giardini Naxos –Letojanni. Allocation of accommodation, dinner and overnight stay.

Monday 14th May – Breakfast at the hotel. 09h00 – AEC Administrative Council meeting. 13h00 – lunch at the hotel for AC delegates.
In the afternoon, arrival at the hotel of other participants of European Days. 19h30 – Opening Dinner.

Tuesday 15th May – Breakfast in the hotel. 09h00 guided visit by bus to visit Syracuse. 13h30 – lunch in a restaurant - continuation of the visit. 18h30 return to the hotel, dinner et overnight accommodation.

Wednesday 16th May – Breakfast in the hotel. 09h00 excursion to Etna. 13h00 return to the hotel for lunch. 15h00 – excursion to Messina – tourist visit – return to the hotel dinner et overnight accommodation.

Thursday 17th May - Breakfast in the hotel. 08h30 excursion to visit Taormina – return to the hotel for lunch. In the afternoon a visit to Catania. 19h00 return to the hotel, dinner et overnight accommodation.

Friday 18th May – Breakfast in the hotel. 09h00 excursion to visit Acireale and Acitrezza. 13h30 return to the hotel – Free time. 19h30 – Gala Dinner and Closure of European Days.

Saturday 19th May – Breakfast at the hotel before departure for home.

COST OF PARTICIPATION.

From Dinner 13th May to lunch 14th May 90euros per person in double/twin room.

From Dinner 13th May to lunch 15th May 170euros per person in double/twin room.

From Dinner 13th May to lunch 19th May 570euros per person in double/twin room.

Visitor tax, payable directly to the hotel: 10euros per person.

Single room supplement: 22euros per day.

The cost includes accommodation in 4 star hotel; full board with drinks (¼l wine and ¼l water), the bus excursions as shown.

The programme is subject to variation.

Déposit of 50% before **30th January 2018**. The balance to be paid in full before **30th March 2018**.

THE SAD STORY OF THE TSS DOVER

John Hayward

During the visit to Middlesbrough the team were crossing the River Tees on the Transporter bridge (see report later) when they noticed a large ship in the river Tees leaning over next to a quay, rather like the Costa Concordia!

This turned out to be the former BR ferry - TSS Dover which was built on the River Tyne by Swan Hunter in Wallsend. She was launched on 17th March 1965 and completed by June 1965. In 1977 she was renamed Earl Siward. This steam-powered Roll-on/Roll-off car ferry was later sold and transformed into a Mediterranean passenger ship called the Sol Express. One day in September 1983 she was sailing from Larnaca, Cyprus, when she received an emergency call. Lebanese Christian soldiers and Muslim militia were shooting at each other in nearby Beirut. The fighting was so intense the port had been forced to close, but a group of American embassy staff needed rescuing. And so the Sol Express "in a sign of confidence in the government" according to a New York Times article at the time, changed destination. She sailed into Beirut and retrieved the Americans. Five years later, in 1988, an Irish shoe leather millionaire pumped a fortune into her and the Sol Express became the lavish floating nightclub, the Tuxedo Royale. For more than a decade it operated successfully in Newcastle upon Tyne. However, in May, 2000, the ship was moved to Middlehaven Dock, in front of Middlesbrough FC stadium where she became a floating strip club for the home fans! It was moved again to its present location at Able UK's Middlesbrough port in 2009. Unfortunately, the ship's owners went into administration shortly afterwards, leaving it with no legal owner, and therefore no-one with responsibility for its maintenance or removal. It has since been abandoned and is now sadly being stripped of anything valuable by thieves. A restoration project, known as the Tuxedo Royale Restoration project, was created to save the ship but this failed, as the group was unable to raise the necessary funds. Now, with all other avenues exhausted and following negotiations between Middlesbrough Council and Able UK, it is proposed to dismantle and remove the Tuxedo Royale. At a meeting of the Council's Executive Sub Committee for Property on 2nd March 2017, it was agreed that the Council would make a contribution towards the overall cost of this work.

RECENT EVENTS...

The Betjeman Bar at St Pancras Station; Thursday 12th January 2017.

As a 'one off' for Midland Main Line traveller David Crathorn, this Reunion was held at St Pancras to minimise problems for David, who is not too well. With major use of mobile phones we were able to have him seen aboard his train at Luton and met at St Pancras; then enjoying some time with him before seeing him back onto a train to Luton – all this despite pretty serious disruptions to the train service that day!.

Bombay Sapphire

On Wednesday 15th February, members enjoyed a most instructive visit to the Bombay Sapphire Gin Distillery near Whitchurch in Hampshire. (which besides still having a station on the South West main line to Salisbury and beyond, formerly had a station on the Great Western's now closed Didcot, Newbury and Southampton line). I travelled to Whitchurch station by road to provide a taxi service to members who arrived (in pouring rain such that we gave a miss to the short walk to see where the old station was). From there we travelled through bucolic countryside to the distillery, formerly at Warrington but now housed in a former paper mill and laid out, with funding from the European Union to provide for visitors. Before the visit, we had a snack lunch in the on site café – a converted double deck bus! On the visit we were at first self guided to learn of the history of the company and see growing in greenhouses the plants from which are derived the herbs and spices – botanicals – that are used in making gin. We were then taken through the distilling process and sampled the various 'botanicals' which go into the stills to make the liquor gin.

During sampling of the various aromas, we were able to note down our favourites to show to the servers in the bar to enable them to prepare a cocktail which should suit our taste. Alternatively, you could have a Gin and Tonic. After the delightful visit I ferried the troops back to Whitchurch to adjourn to one of the local hosteleries before making their way home. Because I was driving, I felt it best not to join them on this occasion!

Philip Worsfold

Middlesbrough

Travelling by Virgin Trains East Coast to Darlington and then on one of Northern's 'lovely' four wheel Pacers, the team reached Middlesbrough at 13:58!

Middlesbrough station, which contains shops, offices and two bridges, was built in 1873/77 for the North Eastern Railway. The train shed was destroyed and the platform buildings damaged by enemy action in 1942. On the down platform, we saw a tiled NER map which is an interesting and historic survival dating from prior to 1923.

We left the station for the ten to fifteen minute walk to the Transporter Bridge, partly along the road and through a recently landscaped park area. En route, we saw two interesting buildings – the imposing Cleveland Club (originally built in 1870/72 by John Gibson of Westminster, for National Provincial Bank and converted to private club in 1936); and a pair of houses, dating from 1835, with a mid 19th century extension. They have a blue plaque, which records: "H.W.F. Bolckow and John Vaughan founders of the Cleveland Iron Trade lived here 1841-1860". The two men were Victorian industrialists who founded the ironworks on which Middlesbrough's growth was based. Both served as mayor of Middlesbrough and Bolckow also became Middlesbrough's first MP. John Vaughan died in 1868, and Henry Bolckow died 10 years later.

We could see the Transporter Bridge in the distance, dominating the skyline, long before we reached it. It is an imposing web of blue painted steel girders and cable that has become Middlesbrough's best-known landmark.

We also walked past the now closed Captain Cook pub which stands lonely and isolated looking out over the new developments at Middlehaven. The pub had existed since the mid 19th century, although the present building dates from 1893. It closed in July, 2010 and is boarded up. The council bought the building for £321,529, and is currently in the final stages of agreeing a lease with a developer, who hopes to turn the building into a high-end gastro pub and micro brewery. The pub famously featured on TV series *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet*.

The Tees (or Middlesbrough) Transporter Bridge, is the furthest downstream bridge across the River Tees. It connects Middlesbrough, on the south bank, to Port Clarence, on the north bank with its industrial hinterland beyond. The Transporter Bridge carries a 'car', or 'gondola', suspended from the structure, travelling across the river in 90 seconds. The 'gondola' can carry 200 people, 9 cars, or 6 cars and one minibus of a maximum weight of 3 tonnes. It carries the A178 Middlesbrough to Hartlepool road. The original 'gondola' carriage was damaged by enemy action in 1940 but subsequently repaired.

This Grade II listed bridge has an overall length (including cantilevers) of 851 feet (259 m), leaving a span between the centres of the towers of 590 feet (180 m). The bridge carries the 'gondola' car suspended 160 feet (49 m) above the Tees by steel cables.

Approached, the team saw the 'gondola' car just departing, so they took the opportunity to view the Visitor Centre facilities and also the Winding House Viewing Area, whilst waiting for it to return.

In the visitor centre, we saw a list of other transporter bridges that had been built, of which eight still exist, in addition to this one, although two are disused and on a third the transporter mechanism no longer works. This latter bridge is the Puente Nicolás Avellaneda in Buenos Aires in Argentina and is the only one known to be a

lift and transporter bridge simultaneously. Still in place, and the bridge is used by vehicles but only the lifting mechanism now works.

The Middlesbrough 'gondola' departs every 15 minutes from 07.15 to 18.20 with a break for lunch between 11.50 and 13.00 Mondays to Fridays and until 15.05 on Saturdays with no service on Sundays, apart from bridge tours and visits.

In 2011, to mark the bridge's centenary, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) confirmed a £2.6m award for refurbishment and upgrade work to the bridge. The HLF-supported Tees Transporter Bridge Visitor Experience Project which included the installation of a scenic glass viewing lift (constructed 2013-2015) to provide improved access to the upper walkway, renovation of the 'gondola' and the development of state-of-the-art visitor resources. The glass viewing lift was closed at the time of our visit but reopened in April.

Originally, there were ferries crossing the river at this point but a bridge was first mooted in 1872. The transporter bridge design had been developed by a French bridge engineer Ferdinand Joseph Arnodin (1845-1924), who, with Spanish engineer Martin Alberto Palacio (1856-1939) patented the "pont transbordeur" in 1887.

Arnodin's first bridge of this type opened in 1893 at Bilbao, Spain and is still in use. He went on to complete a further eight transporter bridges including those at Rouen, France (1898), and Newport in South Wales (1906). In 1906, Middlesbrough Corporation met with Arnodin and later with William Edwin Pease (1865-1926), chairman/managing director of the Cleveland Bridge & Engineering Company of Middlesbrough, and its chief engineer, Frenchman Georges Camille Imbault (1877-1951). Imbault had worked on Arnodin's transporter bridges in Tunisia (demolished in 1947) and Rouen (destroyed in 1940), and had directed the construction works at Newport. Construction of the Middlesbrough bridge took three years to complete. It was officially opened on 17th October 1911, when thousands turned out to marvel at their new landmark. Designed by the Cleveland Bridge and Engineering Co Ltd of Middlesbrough, (consulting engineer Georges Camille Imbault), it was constructed in steel by Sir William Arrol and Co of Glasgow. It is the largest and longest remaining transporter bridge in the world still in operation and is a Grade 2 listed building. Owned by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and Middlesbrough Council, it is operated and maintained by the latter.

A transporter bridge was built at Warrington in 1915. It ceased working in 1964 but is also a Grade II* listed and, standing unused and unloved, is now high on the Buildings at Risk Register. Maybe the tide has turned for transporters because, like the Tees bridge, Newport's bridge has been given a £2 million overhaul to prolong its life. Paying the £1.20 return fare, the team rode across the river on the 'gondola' for a round trip. The bridge is operated from a control room above the Winch or Winding House. Despite strong winds, the 'gondola' car suffered very little sideways movement. The refurbished gondola now features a waveform roof and 3,940 sq m of glass walls, making the most of panoramic views up and down the river. The view encompassed the sight of the former TSS Dover – the subject of a separate article. The helpful three man crew were very friendly and informative. One of whom offered to take a photos of our little group with our cameras. A fourth man operates the 'gondola' from the control room.

Before returning home we stopped at a Wetherspoons pub 'The Isaac Wilson' a short distance from the station – where a pint of real ale cost just £1.49. Isaac Wilson was a director of the Stockton-Darlington railway, which opened up Middlesbrough for development as an industrial town. He was also one of the town's first JPs and was elected as an MP for the first time in 1878.

Our grateful thanks go to John Woods for organising this interesting and successful day out, as well as tracking down the Wetherspoons in Middlesbrough, after the visit to the bridge!

Will it be a visit to the Newport Transporter Bridge be next?!!

Besides the above visits, the regular monthly reunions in London have continued, still at the Lord Moon of the Mall, with slightly increased attendances. On 9th March it was a pleasure to greet Bob, Steve and Susie from the Belgian section, the latter two spending a few days in England. Friends Bob and Steve are both familiar former members of the British section. Steve is now resident in Belgium and Bob spends most of his weekends there, so their being members of the Belgian section makes the most sense.

...AND THINGS TO COME

We shall continue our regular 'second Thursday' Reunions in London, at the 'Lord Moon of the Mall' until the end of the year. At least we can show our European credentials in a Wetherspoon's establishment and while we may not 'Take Courage' – St Paul's words, allegedly – at least we can swallow our 'Pride' at a reasonable price. In the New Year we shall move to the Royal Oak in Tabard Street and meet there on the **third** Thursday of the month from lunchtime onwards until about 19h00. The forthcoming dates for the rest of the year at the Lord Moon of the Mall are **Thursdays 11th May, 8th June, 13th July 10th August 14th September 12th October, 9th November and 14th December.**

The first date at the **Royal Oak** will be **Thursday 18th January 2018** and will be the usual film show. The next Annual General meeting will also take place on the third Thursday in April – Thursday 19th April.

John Woods is organising a visit to the Gas Museum in Fakenham (Norfolk). Please contact John to agree travel arrangements, which could be by train either to Norwich or to King's Lynn.

Other possible venues for future visits are Seaton Tramway and Belvoir Castle near Grantham.

For other visits and events, please **contact John regularly for up to date details;** by phone on **+44 (0)7478 010 245 (NEW)**, or (best) e-mail to **jauwoods@gmail.com**

ASSOCIATION TIES AND BADGES.

In common with other sections, the British section of the Association has a necktie and a badge. Our particular items are common to both the British and Belgian sections. We have produced the ties and the Belgian section, the badges. I am sorry that we do not have a specific item for ladies.

Ties are available, at £4.50 plus postage, and badges are in stock in small numbers, at £1.50 each, including postage. These items are available from **Philip Worsfold**. Please contact him first by e-mail to check availability (details on page 2.)

GREAT BRITAIN ALL LINE TIMETABLE EUROPEAN RAIL TIMETABLE

The Middleton Press edition of the Great Britain Rail Timetable is available from the W.H. Smith bookstall at London Victoria (Central) – and bookstalls at some other London terminals, including Paddington. It has been recast and now contains the Great Britain part of the European Rail Timetable in the same size print. It is also available from the Ian Allan bookshop in Lower Marsh near London Waterloo. Be aware that you may still need a magnifying glass to read the smallest print; as with the monthly European Rail Timetable, with also a 'three-monthly' edition, which includes the above mentioned British internal services as well as principal services throughout Europe. It can be ordered on line from: **<http://www.europeanrailtimetable.eu/european-rail-timetable.html>** for delivery by post and purchased over the counter at:

- Oundle News, Oundle Northamptonshire, UK.
- Stanfords, Long Acre London and Corn Street Bristol, UK (www.stanfords.co.uk).
- GVE-Verlag/BahnBuchShop, Bahnhof Berlin-Lichtenberg (www.bahnbuchshop.de).
- Fahrplancenter, Winterthur Switzerland (www.fahrplancenter.com).
- Blackwell's Bookshop, Broad Street Oxford UK.

Philip Worsfold holds a reasonably up to date copy. Most European services can also be accessed on the Deutsche Bahn and other European railways' websites.

YOUNG BUFFERS ASSOCIATION. RAILWAY STUDY ASSOCIATION.

We recommend the support of these organisations, membership of which is open to members of AEC. There follows a little more detail about them.:

Young Buffers Association: There is no subscription provided that you have an e-mail address; and no obligation to attend their events. If you would like further details, the Secretary is Larry Fullwood, tel. 01485 541599, e-mail larry.fullwood@virgin.net .

Railway Study Association: The full subscription, including subscription to 'Modern Railways' is £60. Each annual session of lectures, in London and Birmingham, held on (different) Wednesday evenings, begins in October with the President's Address. Full details of immediately forthcoming talks and other activities can be found at www.railwaystudyassociation.org .

REPTA.

The long standing Railway Employees' Public Transport Association offers bargain price insurance through AVIVA and concessions and discounts at stores and attractions throughout the country. The 'Yearbook' gives full details, including the invaluable guide to staff travel facilities throughout the world. Membership for individuals costs £5.75 per year including the yearbook; with family membership, including two adults and all children (up to age 18) at £10.25. **These rates are unchanged for 2017.** Our Asst Secretary, Peter Davies is also General Secretary of REPTA. Contact him (see page 2) for details, or visit: www.repta.co.uk .

As noted in the editorial, Peter has organised a river boat cruise and lunch on the River Thames on Saturday 2nd December 2017. The all in price is £39. Assemble at 12h30 at Westminster Pier. You can obtain application forms from Peter.

FEANDC.

FEANDC has similar aims to AEC; and like AEC has sections in a number of European countries, including some which do not have AEC sections. More details and all other information about FEANDC are available from Peter Davies (address etc on Page 2).

AND FOR THE FUTURE???

We shall endeavour to continue the production of these newsletters. It is hoped to resume quarterly publication from the September 2017 issue, since this gives a better spacing to get information to you. I continue to use the website of the European Commission also Rail News as sources of news of international interest and thank those members who send me information – especially John Hayward. But I still continue with my plea for more from you. I hope I shall be able to keep my promise of more articles. So please, put pen to paper. We need more than ever to build up a library of articles. Please keep in touch and let us have your information, your views and your ideas. The next copy deadline is **1st August 2017.**

SUMMARY OF DATES – Spring/Summer/Autumn 2017

Reunions in London will continue on **Thursdays**, from 16h15, at the ‘**Lord Moon of the Mall**’ in Whitehall until the end of the year.

Thursday 11th May 2017.

Thursday 8th June.

Thursday 13th July.

Thursday 10th August.

Thursday 14th September.

Thursday 12th October.

Thursday 9th November.

Thursday 14th December.

From January 2018, we shall change our venue to the Royal Oak at 44 Tabard Street, meeting on the third Thursday of the month (**NEW**) to avoid the clash of dates with Continental Railway Circle; starting at lunchtime and staying for as long as people want up to 19h00. If the bar proves too noisy, we shall have the option of adjourning to the room upstairs.

Tuesday events:

Tuesday 3rd August 2017. Visit to Fakenham (Norfolk) Gas Museum. Travel arrangements to be agreed, which could be by train either to Norwich or to King’s Lynn.

Other than this date, John Woods has nothing further planned as yet.

As always **you should contact John regularly for up to date details;**

by phone on **+44 (0)7985 151 540,**

or (best) by e-mail to **jauwoods@gmail.com**

Please always check your train times before travelling.

EUROPEAN EVENTS

AEC European Days in Poland. 25th – 30th September 2017.

AEC European Days in Sicily. 13th – 19th May 2018 – see programme on page 14.

There should be another meeting of the Administrative Council later in the year 2018.

Projected **AEC European Days in Glasgow.** 9th – 14th September 2019 – a combined event with FEANDC.

A.E.C. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other*..... Surname:.....Initials:.....

Forename:.....

Job Description:.....

Work Address*:.....

Town/City:..... Postcode:.....

Internal Phone:..... Fax:.....

External Phone:..... Fax:.....

E-mail Address:.....

ACTIVE / RETIRED *

Home Address:.....

.....

Town/City:..... Postcode:.....

Telephone:..... Include in Directory?: YES/NO *

Mobile:..... Include in Directory?: YES/NO *
(*delete as applicable)

Membership of the A.E.C. costs only £10.00 per annum and is open to anyone in the railway industry without qualification. If you speak a foreign language and would like to let us know, it would be helpful to us.

I can speak the following language(s) (state how well, e.g. fluent, fair, a little)

.....

I should like to join the Association Européenne des Cheminots.

Signature.....

Data supplied will be kept on a computer database. Home, **where authorised above** and Work telephone and Fax numbers and electronic mail addresses can be divulged to other members **only**.

Please make cheques/PO's for £10.00 payable to: "Association Européenne des Cheminots"

Send this application to:

Nigel Hyde,

66 Halifax Road,

Brighouse, W. Yorkshire. HD6 2EP

Tel: +44(0)1484 400 646;

Mobile: +44(0)7484 810 735

E-mail: nigel.hyde6@btinternet.com