



British Section

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European Association of Railway Personnel

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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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September 2017.**

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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. 22 No. 3
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A membership application form is attached to the e-mailed edition of the newsletter. If you require paper copies, please send a C5 stamped self-addressed envelope to Philip Worsfold at the address on page 2.

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.

EDITORIAL

As I write we are making our preparations for the forthcoming European Days in Sicily in May; and the French 'Long Weekend' in Amiens and the Baie de Somme' area, well known to me, for I have visited the steam Galas of the Chemin de Fer de la Baie de Somme on several occasions, helping a friend to operate his model railway, on which were represented several of the lineside buildings of the real railway. The railway is 'twinned' with our own Kent and East Sussex Railway who manage to send some of their rolling stock to run on the dual gauge section between Noyelles – the junction with the classic main line from Calais to Amiens and Paris. So it will be a nice reunion for me.

Talking of reunions, our transfer to the Royal Oak seems to have gone well, although it was the usual gang who turned up – we don't seem to have attracted any newcomers. As to the 'Lord Moon of the Mall', it was visited recently by BBC Radio 4, to interview customers on their thoughts about Brexit. I wasn't surprised to hear that the vast majority were in favour of Britain leaving the European Union. It looks as if other 'Remainers' are deserting Wetherspoons establishments as well!!

Meanwhile our government blunders on with its head in the sand, apparently unconcerned that they are systematically destroying Britain, not saving it from the dreaded Europeans. We have now reached the point where people we need are staying away from Britain, not least because of the drop in value of the pound sterling. As a result, our understaffed and under funded hospitals are staggering under their winter load and waiting time targets have been abandoned. In Scotland and in Cornwall, crops are rotting in the fields because there is no-one to pick them – although it has been suggested that those 'city' workers who will lose their jobs when their firms make their planned move into mainland Europe, could be usefully employed in the fields – if they are prepared to sweat and get their hands dirty.

Every day there seems to be a new scandal about the sex life of our politicians. They seem to live in a different world. Meanwhile, down here in deepest Devon, I get the impression that people are turning more and more inwards, where the local news is more comforting. I've been watching again some old video recordings of our local Twinning Association visits of fifteen or more years ago. How our hopes and aspirations of that time have been dashed!

Another scandal concerns the running of our railways. The current operator of the 'East Coast Main Line' has defaulted but rather than take it immediately back into public ownership (under which it ran profitably for several years prior to the letting of the current defaulted franchise) our government has allowed the defaulter to continue operating it while the government sorts out the mess. A petition of over 30 000 signatures, collected in about 3 or 4 days, has been presented to the Transport Secretary, urging him to re-nationalise the East Coast Route. This is the person who, in his thoughts for future franchise arrangements, is thinking about splitting up the Great Western network that his predecessor put back together! It seems that political dogma rules. Incompetence does not come into the equation.

David King has had some thoughts about what the association means for members in Britain and whether it fulfils their expectations. Our membership is stagnant – as can be seen from the attendances at our reunions, although there seems to be a general trend downwards of membership of associations such as ours. We are not a trainspotter's club; nor even an association of railway enthusiasts, although such interests do not debar you from membership! AEC was created as an association of people involved in or retired from the railway industry and associated bodies with the aim of expanding our mutual knowledge and understanding by means of social, cultural and scientific exchanges. The scientific bit can, of course include knowledge of the way our rail systems are put together and how they are run – mainly with a view of influencing overall planning by sharing our knowledge and offering advice; to bring us closer together. Our present British membership of around 30 people mainly retired long since, is hardly in a position to help in that quarter!

And let us remember that AEC itself was founded, idealistically, after the Second

World War in the hope that there would thereby never again be such a conflict. The now Europe wide European Movement was founded in Britain (by Winston Churchill) with similar aims and until recently AEC was a corporate member but decided that these aims had now been achieved and that the European Movement's aims had become more political. In Britain, of course, we are divided about the coming together bit, so the European Movement UK has become a spearhead in the fight to remain within the European Union Your President and I have over the past months put forward an uncompromising agenda for Europe. As a result we have lost some members who do not agree with us; but I feel that it is they who are the losers because they cannot see the bigger picture.

So I urge you to put on your thinking caps to tell us what you think AEC should be doing; whether it meets in the right place; at the right time; to realise its decalared aims – or maybe that it should change track – even whether there is still a place for a British section within AEC.

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

Reminders.

The 2018 AGM will be on Thursday 19th April at the Royal Oak, 44, Tabard Street commencing at 14h00 - the usual venue, which is now our regular haunt. You will find the agenda below.

Please also take note of the changes to the national details - on page 2. John Woods new phone number is 07380 388 374

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.**

THE PRESIDENT'S SLOT.

Bob Clark

Just One Second in Time, the Liar the Witch & the Buffoons of SW1

In my role as a trade union official I am often found looking for facts and wading through laws and policy appertaining to Health & Safety (no mean task) to observe that the employer complies with the law As a multitude of pieces of information need to be consulted to ensure accuracy, multiple pages of guidance to assist you further, you get the idea? Then there is the Equality Act and human rights legislation which I need to be knowledgeable about in my role as Equalities Officer to ensure not only the employer complies but the union as well. How far we have progressed since Victorian times and how far we have regressed as the world gazes in astonishment. This and other thoughts bring me to think of major commemorative events in 2018 things like the centennial of the RAF, Polish independence, votes for women (UK) Lithuania, Latvia & Estonia also free, the founding of the first Austrian Republic the beginnings of a few cultural movements in art, music, theatre and architecture; the end of imperialism the rise of communism and then Nazism meant that the war to end all wars failed to prevent the next madness leading up to a divided Europe for four decades and this part we all know through living in that era...so I thought about the wasted lives, the dead, the lost souls, diversity in our society that time and man could not destroy. The original division of time and that made me think ... of...a...time...100 years; 1200 months; 5214 weeks; 36 500 days; 876 000 hours; 52 560 000 minutes, 3 153 600 000 seconds – just a brief moment in time for our Universe but a huge difference between the beginning of the most important events in the period between 1918 and 2018. 1918 sees the beginning of the end of the old order with the world in turmoil due to war, revolution, civil war, epidemics and the earthquake of votes for women (not all though) in the culmination of savage state aggression against those who dared to question the established order something that is still happening today in parts of the world. So what else has been happening?

Continuing war in Europe, soon to end and a flu epidemic (Spanish this time!; Hong Kong, Chinese & now (2018) AUSTRALIAN flu – strangely enough there never has been to my knowledge a British, English or any other home nation named strain!! The Imperial war machine continued to terrorise the Irish & in Dublin, along with the rest of the Emerald Isle black and tan assassination squads tried to oppress the "will of the people" culminating in the divided troubled peace of a two nation island. In the rest of the empire life carried on, blinkered too, to other hidden atrocities and in the belief the sun never would set on the Empire.....after all the expansion at the end of WW1 gain from Germany and meddling in the Middle East would (oops more meddling!) continue the myth of a benevolent colonial master, the reality being vastly different and all the more darker in cruelty and oppressive torture of those who wanted freedom from the empire. As our historical darkneses are not taught to us our image of a benevolent imperial power pervades the national psyche and the end result brings us from the beginning of the most important 100 years in UK, nay European history – that of declining imperial power; a siege mentality and along with a superiority complex that borders on psychosis – right up to date with our current situation; and so from the end of WW1, the fall of the Hapsburgs and the end of the Ottoman Empire through roaring 20s with the unfair Treaty of Versailles contributing to the collapse of the German economy and the fall of the Weimar Republic leading to darkening skies of the 30s & 40s and horrific atrocities against humanity on all sides. No one is blameless and this time saw humanity sink to a new depth of depravity not seen for centuries. Yes WW1 plunged Europe into years of instability and division, yet it can be said that it heralded a new dynamism of freedoms and liberty but this stalled in the 30s & 40s. In this ruined terrain from the ashes and rubble the new Europe emerging from devastation, down but not for long. Divided, the two Europes lived uneasily side by side coming together as the iron curtain fell. Freedom, liberty and democracy for all should be the way forward to a new bright and peaceful forward looking Europe. 3 153 600 000 seconds later -----only Perfidious Albion wishes to move forward in a backward direction! Truly the lunatics have taken root in SW1. Ah well, it is the "will of the people"!!!!

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 30th Annual General Meeting of the British Section of AEC will take place at the ROYAL OAK, 44, Tabard Street, London SE1 4JU* on Thursday 19th April 2018, at 14h00.

Lunch can be bought at the pub prior to the meeting, when it would be good to meet other members.

Please send items for the agenda, including those for “Any Other Business”, in writing, or by e-mail to the Secretary, Jenny Worsfold, to reach her not later than Saturday 14th April 2018.

2018 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: DRAFT AGENDA

(Any further amendments will be announced at the meeting)

1. Opening remarks and Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the 29th Annual General meeting of 28th April 2017.
(The draft minutes of the 2017 AGM, were printed in the newsletter for May 2017 – Vol 21, No3.. Note the year was printed incorrectly as 2016.)
3. Matters Arising.
4. Correspondence.
5. President's Report – Bob Clarke.

6. Reports from Officers.
Secretary – Jenny Worsfold
Recruitment Secretary – Nigel Hyde
7. Treasurer's Report and Accounts and membership at 31st March 2018 – Nigel Hyde
8. Election of Section President for a period of 4 years from 15th May 2018.
9. Election of Officers for a period of one year, from 15th May 2018.
Vice President
Secretary
Asst Secretary
Treasurer, Membership Secretary & Recruitment officer
Events officer
10. Appointment of Checker of Accounts
11. Nomination of delegates for European Administrative Council. (Meeting in Sicily 14th May 2018 and subsequent meeting in 2018.
12. Dates and Venues for forthcoming European Days.
13. Proposed date and venue for 2019 Annual General Meeting
14. Reunions & Events Programme.
15. Any Other Business (see note above)

*The **Royal Oak** is about ten minutes walk from London Bridge Station, just off Borough High Street, near St George the Martyr Church. The nearest Underground station is Borough (Northern Line, City branch).

Even if you are unable to attend the meeting, please let us know your views – in particular where we meet and what you expect from AEC. If you would like an item on the agenda, please let us have it, together with your point of view. It can still be discussed.

PEOPLE

Manfred Schampel

Early in February, Manfred Schampel, President of the German section, was admitted to hospital for an operation for a tumour – which I interpret as prostate cancer. He seems to be making a good recovery but has still to undergo radiotherapy on potentially infected tissue, with the possibility of later chemotherapy. We sent him a message of good wishes for a speedy recovery as soon as we heard from him. He seems to be in good spirits.

TRANSPORT & TRAVEL

SNAEFELL MOUNTAIN RAILWAY IS UNDER FORMAL PROHIBITION NOTICE Services on the Snaefell Mountain Railway are subject to a formal prohibition notice, it has emerged.

And a question mark now hangs over whether the line will be allowed to open as planned next month.

A Health and Safety at Work Inspectorate investigation is still underway into a runaway tram incident in August when car no.2 lost power to its brakes after leaving the summit station. It hurtled out of control over the crossing at the Bungalow before the motorman was finally able to bring it to a halt using the manual fell brake. More than seven weeks after the incident, the Department of Infrastructure finally announced it was suspending services. It said it was working with the HSWI 'to identify a number of improvements as part of a comprehensive review' and wanted to commit its engineering staff to dealing with these matters rather than support day-to-day operations.

The inference was this was a voluntary suspension. But it has now been learned that in fact the suspension was enforced by the HSWI. Operations are under a formal prohibition notice and significant changes will be required, and safe operation demonstrated, before permission would be given by the Inspector of Railways for the line to re-open as advertised on March 29.

One passenger on board the runaway tram in August was Nick Douglas who says he is 'alarmed' that IoM Transport has confirmed that failsafe brakes will not be fitted in time for the start of the season.

This is despite public transport director Ian Longworth telling a tram enthusiasts' magazine in December that new failsafe brakes would be fitted over the winter.

Mr Douglas said from his home in Northern Ireland: 'I am exceedingly alarmed. They propose to operate without fail-safe brakes when they know they need them, because they can't make them in time for their nominal season start date.

'Do they not have legal obligations to uphold the safety of the travelling public? Does that public accept this blasé approach to their safety?'

Mr Douglas contacted Infrastructure Minister Ray Harmer who told him: 'I would like to take this opportunity to apologise for any distress caused by the incident last year and can reassure you that we regard the safety of our passengers and staff as paramount.'

In his email, Mr Harmer said the operation of the trams had been reviewed in 'great detail' and his department has undertaken a 'wide range of ongoing improvements that will ensure the safe operation of our tramway for the future'.

These included 'detailed consideration of both the current range of braking systems and the possibility of upgraded equipment'.

Mr Harmer wrote that 'providing systems that fail to safety is a key part of that work' - but it's not clear whether he was referring to failsafe systems.

He added: 'We have engaged both specialist engineers and equipment suppliers from across the EU and await their advice.

'I can assure you that no decision has been taken about what changes may be needed for next season.'

We asked the Department of Infrastructure to confirm the situation with the formal prohibition notice and what action would be needed before the prohibition could be lifted and the line could reopen. But in a statement, the DoI would say only: 'The department has engaged a range of specialist advisers and suppliers to determine what changes can be made to the Snaefell Mountain Railway trams to ensure their safety.

'An investigation being undertaken by the Health and Safety at Work Inspectorate remains ongoing.'

EUROPE

DB no longer sells Thalys tickets. They are available on line from Thalys.com and if in Germany from the Thalys 'store and more' in the station forecourt at Köln. This has been the case since June 2013 – so it's obviously not causing much of a problem to us.

London to Amsterdam by Eurostar. The first London – Amsterdam Eurostar was due to start in the New Year. However the service at present relies on a connection at Brussels into Thalys services. At present, as far as I can see, the only change is that through booking is now possible. Eurostar have announced that a through service will start on 4th April – initially only in the London – Amsterdam direction. To travel from Amsterdam to London, it will still be necessary to change at Brussels to pass through immigration controls. What a shambles...

Rotterdam Centraal Station to be Modified for Eurostar Services (31 Jan 2018)
NETHERLANDS: Work to adapt Rotterdam Centraal station to accommodate Eurostar's future Amsterdam – London services has begun, VolkerRail announced on 31 January 2018.

The work is being undertaken by VolkerRail and Arcadis on behalf of infrastructure manager ProRail.

During a nine-week possession, tracks will be realigned and a platform which currently faces track 1 will be widened by 4 m to face onto track 2, providing an extra 3 000 m² of space to separate passengers who have passed through security screening. The contract includes changes to signalling and control systems. Completion is planned for March 26.

RAILFUTURE.

We now have a liaison with Railfuture, which campaigns for rail and produces a quarterly bulletin on European rail travel. Below are extracts from their last edition.

CAMPAINING FOR NIGHT TRAINS

Activists meet in Perpignan

For the weekend of November 11th/12th, French campaigners for the future of the night train were joined in Perpignan by colleagues from Great Britain, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and the USA.

The morning was spent in group discussions on the role of the night train network and its rolling stock; how to engage with the community and develop dialogue with political and other decision-makers; and the scope for technical and economic research.

The conclusions and recommendations of the group discussions were considered after lunch and in the late afternoon a two and a half hour public meeting attracted over 40 people, including a local member of the National Assembly and a leading Regional Councillor. French activists from ouiautraindenuit (“Yes to the night train”) reported on their work and Powerpoint presentations were given by Poul Kattler, Joachim Holstein and Trevor Garrod. They covered the role of night trains in combating climate change and the actions needed. The experiences of Germany, Slovakia and Great Britain were described – countries where investment was taking place in new rolling stock.

There was more than one way of operating a night train service – those in Germany were now run by the Austrian Federal Railways, whereas the British Caledonian Sleeper and Night Riviera were franchised and those in France and Slovakia were still operated by those countries’ state railway companies.

Arrangements and charges for track access were critical, to ensure that the services were reasonably priced and reliable.

It was pointed out that many night trains carried an international clientele and if they terminated at a country’s border, then onward connections across that border were very important.

The day ended with a photocall at Perpignan station and a convivial evening at a creperie. Sunday morning focussed on further group work and planning activities during activities 2018.

Thanks are due especially to Claire and Olivier Brun, Sylvain Fischer, Lorelei Limousin, Nicolas Forien, Vincent Madeline, but also to everyone else who contributed to a memorable and productive gathering.

For further information about this and other Back-on-Track actions, log on to <http://back-on-track.eu>

Brussels Conference On Night Trains

European Parliament, Tuesday January 30th 09.30 – 12.30

Back-on-Track has organised a half-day conference in the European Parliament aimed at stakeholders and decision-makers as well as actual or potential customers. The aim is to consider the contribution which night trains can make towards providing an environmentally friendly alternative to overnight road and air travel; to look at positive developments and what can be done by political and industry decision-makers to promote overnight services, as part of a Europe-wide network of international trains.

There will be two speakers from the railway industry – Dr Libor Lochman, Executive Director of the Community of European Railways and Mr Kurt Bauer, Head of the Long-distance Passenger Department of the Austrian Federal Railways. They will consider the challenges and experiences of operating night trains, as part of an international rail network. It is also planned to have short speeches from other experts. The event is co-sponsored by two Members of the European Parliament – Lucy Anderson and Jakop Dalunde – and it is intended to encourage MEPs to use their influence to facilitate the development of the rail alternative to air and road travel.

Invitations are being sent out very shortly and it is necessary to register in advance for the conference, which is free of charge. You can also obtain more information from trevorgarrod2000@yahoo.co.uk

European Week Of Action

From Saturday April 7th to Sunday April 15th, Back-on-Track is co-ordinating a European Week of Action on night trains. This could be in the form of articles (as the British association Railfuture is planning), local petitions, meetings or dialogue with local and regional decision-makers.

CROSS BORDER SERVICES

Missing Links – Any Progress?

On September 28th Miichael Cramer MEP organised a seminar in Brussels which examined the Connecting Europe Facility – an EU initiative to fund modest schemes to improve cross-border services.

It was reported that the initial call for schemes had produced a list which would cost ten times the amount budgeted, and so only a limited numbers of projects could be chosen. However, the EU will provide more money over the years. In July 2017, 140m Euro was earmarked. For a full report of the seminar visit <http://www.greens-efa.eu/en/article/event/missing-links>

Switzerland – France

Work is in progress on rebuilding the 22-km line between Delle and Belfort, closed in 1992. Local roads are congested, partly because of the large number of French workers commuting into Switzerland. Trains should start running on December 9th 2018.

This autumn work has been in progress to renew the track, electrify, build halts and make crossing safer.

The cost of the project had been shared by both countries.

(This, incidentally, was a line once used by the Orient Express, and it could well play a strategic role for longer-distance passengers as well in the future)

Another cross-border project, the 16-km S-bahn Ceva, should be completed between Geneva and Annemasse in 2019

Over 60,000 commuters cross this border by road at the moment.

The line from La Chaux de Fonds to Besançon is due to be renovated, to provide a better service to attract some of the 10,000 commuters who drive across the frontier to work in the Swiss clock and watch industry.

Austria – Italy and Slovenia – Italy

During 2018 two Inter City trains will again run between Ljubljana and Venice. Meanwhile an article published in the magazine *Eisenbahn Oesterreich* entitled “Tauern Railway versus Tauern Motorway” points out the growth in tourist traffic between Austria and Italy and the marketing opportunity that things offers the railway industry. A second EuroCity train is due to run between Vienna and Venice this winter, but the case is made for three Railjet trains to be introduced as well. For 10

example, Railjet 111 from Munich and Salzburg to Klagenfurt could be extended south to Trieste or Venice. The author calls for imagination and optimal marketing to make such a service a success.

Harwich – Hoek van Holland

This is part of a rail/sea/rail international route...

[We have already reported on the plan to convert the railway on the Dutch side, from Schiedam to Hoek van Holland, into part of the Rotterdam area metro, operated by RET – Ed..]

Original plans to complete the project by the end of September were not fulfilled due to problems with the groundwork, but the new service is now expected to be operating by the end of February 2018.

On October 22nd, two RET trains were seen standing on the tracks at Hoek van Holland (which had all been relaid). Passengers currently having to use a replacement bus can thus see that progress is being made.

PASSENGER CONCERNS

CER Customer Liaison Group:

The October 18th meeting of this consultative group of the Community of European Railways (in which the European Passengers' Federation participates) had detailed discussion of passenger rights and accessibility, lessons to be learned from the incident at Rastatt which disrupted north/south services in Germany; Passenger Name Recognition proposals to improve security; and issues affecting disabled people and cyclist. The report about standards on EuroCity trains was only briefly discussed. EPF will work with the train operators in CER to draw up a list of "force majeure" or "extraordinary circumstances" that could affect train services and therefore influence whether or not compensation can be paid if there are delays. For example, is it "force majeure" if a track is blocked by a landslide, but not if rolling stock is badly maintained and breaks down?

Good Ideas

Connection into Night Train?

The Metropol night train between Berlin and Budapest has been cutback with the December timetable change to run only from Prague to Budapest and passengers from Berlin will be expected to leave at 17.00 by EuroCity train, change at Prague and wait for two hours there!

A rail campaigner from Dresden comments, "Thus another connection is lost, with which you can cover Europe while sleeping."

The Czech passengers' association commented, "Days trips from Prague to Berlin for tourists and business travellers are now less attractive when you have to start the return journey shortly before 17.00"

German passengers' association Pro Bahn and Czech passengers' association SCVD (svaz cestujících ve veřejné dopravě) have issued a joint press release calling upon the operators to keep the overall journey time the same. This could be done by extending to Prague the 19h00 Inter City train, which currently terminates in Dresden.

The Austrian and Czech Railways are looking for longer term night train solutions, but these will probably not be possible for at least a year. The Metropol is run by Hungarian Railways who announced its cutback at quite short notice.

An initiative in Eastern Hungary:

The Debrecen Regional Transport Association (DERKE) has devised a table-top game for primary school children, which involves linking together different means of public transport. It is a good idea to get them familiar with trains, trams and buses!

Role of Regional Railways in the 21st Century

Miroslav Vyka and his colleagues in SCVD have produced a 214-page book *Role regionalni Zeleznice ve 21. Steleti* which is very well presented and illustrated, with examples not only from the Czech Republic but also elsewhere in Europe. Although the book is in Czech, it also contains an English summary at the end.

ISBN 078-80-906622 – 9

www.regionalni-zeleznici.cz

European Passengers' Federation

You can also find out about the European Passengers' Federation and its 37 member bodies in 20 countries by logging on to www.epf.eu EPF is due to hold its Annual General Meeting on April 14th in the Netherlands and then a conference in June.

BERLIN TO MUNICH IN LESS THAN FOUR HOURS AFTER NEW GERMAN HIGH SPEED LINE OPENS

Keith Fender

BERLIN ,December 11, 2017

The German high speed rail network just got bigger and now offers much faster journeys between Berlin and the Bavarian cities of Munich and Nuremberg. German Chancellor Angela Merkel officially opened the new high speed line between Ebensfeld in Bavaria (north of Nuremberg) and Erfurt in the former East Germany on Dec. 8. It is the last part in a nearly 30-year project to build a high speed rail route from Berlin to Munich. Regular passenger services started on Dec. 10, with the fastest InterCity Express trains now taking just 3 hours 55 minutes to cover the 390 miles between Berlin and Munich, with stops in Erfurt and Nuremberg.

The project to build a high speed railway between Berlin and Munich started just after German reunification in 1990. Three separate 187.5-mph high speed lines opened between 2006 and 2017 with three other sections of existing line connecting the new high speed lines rebuilt for operation at up to 144 mph. All the major stations on the route have also been modernized.

The 67-mile long section opening this month was the most complex to build as most of it cuts through — or under — the hills of the Thüringen Forest. Of the 67-mile length of the route, more than a third, or 25.6 miles, is in tunnels built for 187.5-mph operation with 7.5 miles of bridges and viaducts as well. The Erfurt to Ebensfeld section has cost about \$12 billion and work was stopped for several years in the late 1990s due to a shortage of funding.

The line has been built for mixed use with freight permitted and passing loops to allow ICE trains to overtake freight trains. So far no freight has operated as access tolls are higher than the regular network.

Services on the new line are being operated using the existing Deutsche Bahn ICE fleet which has been fitted with cab signalling PTC to operate on the new line.

[Editor's note – Notwithstanding the above optimistic report, passengers suffered severe delays during the first few days of operation over the new line!]

SPANISH PRIME MINISTER INAUGURATES VALENCIA-CASTELLÓN HIGH-SPEED RAILWAY

Spain's prime minister, Mariano Rajoy, has opened a new section of high-speed railway between Valencia and Castellón on Europe's Mediterranean Corridor.

Four new daily AVE services and two new intercity services will begin operating tomorrow between Madrid and Castellón.

The new service, which is the result of a €355 million investment in Spain's high-speed rail network, will reduce travel times between Madrid and Castellón by 37 minutes.

Rajoy, Spain's prime minister and president of the government, was joined by the Minister of Development, Íñigo de la Serna, and the president of the Valencian Government, Ximo Puig.

Adif Alta Velocidad – the high-speed rail arm of Spain's rail infrastructure manager – has installed a third rail on one of the lines connecting Valencia and Castellón to allow both standard-gauge and Iberian-gauge trains to run.

More than 160km of new rail had to be installed along with the replacement of 160,000 sleepers and 110,000 m³ of ballast.

As a result, upgrades had to be carried out to the electrification and signalling systems, as well as modifications to 20 stations along the route.

iLint: THE WORLD'S FIRST HYDROGEN POWERED TRAIN by Joe Baker

Alstom is making progress on its Coradia iLint train, the world's first hydrogen-powered passenger train, expected to launch in Germany this year. The train, which emits no carbon and is capable of operating in near-silence, could be set to revolutionise the future of rolling stock while improving air quality.

As the world looks to curb carbon emissions, rail operators' continued focus on diesel has put a spotlight on the industry. Rail electrification projects have been ongoing, while industry players have been looking for green fuel alternatives that will allow trains to continue running autonomously. Nevertheless, a huge number of noisy, CO₂-emitting diesel multiple units (DMU) are still on the tracks – Germany, for example, has more than 4,000 still in operation.

However, French rail vehicle manufacturer Alstom believes this could all change with the launch of Coradia iLint, the world's first zero-carbon train using hydrogen as its energy source. The train is based on the company's Coradia Lint DMU and has been developed in partnership with German and Canadian companies. Powered by hydrogen fuel cells, the vehicle's only emissions are steam and condensed water, and it is capable of operating in near-silence.

Alstom's so-called 'train of the future' was first introduced to the world at industry trade fair Innotrans in 2016, and it is set to begin its first passenger trials in Germany from early this year. The company hopes the train could be highly marketable to rail operators looking to replace their DMUs on non-electrified lines.

During a press event at Alstom's test facility in November 2017, company representatives said Coradia iLint could highlight the start of an industry-wide shift towards hydrogen as a sustainable fuel.

"We think it's really a breakthrough in the technology," said Alstom's regional vice-president of products and innovation Wolfram Schwab at the event. "Fuel cells have been developed for other applications, but now is the time to get this done in the railway sector. Now we are just at the starting point of the migration phase to zero-emission trains."

Zero-emission trains

At the core of the iLint system is a fuel cell situated on top of the train. Hydrogen is supplied to the cell and then combined with oxygen taken from the ambient air inside it. The two products of this chemical reaction are electricity, which is used to power an electrical traction drive controlling the train's movements, and water, which is emitted as steam.

Any electrical energy that's not immediately used for traction can be stored in lithium-ion batteries on the train's underside. An auxiliary converter will also be used to adapt the energy for various on-board applications, including air conditioning, door systems and passenger information displays.

"Now we are just at the starting point of the migration phase to zero-emission trains."

Aside from its clean output, iLint's key advantages are its smart power management and flexible energy storage. Electrical energy is supplied on demand, meaning the fuel cell is only required to work in full operation when the train is accelerating over sustained periods. When the train brakes, the fuel cells are almost completely powered down, saving on hydrogen consumption.

Alstom claims that because energy being produced or recovered from braking is intelligently managed, iLint will be able to match the top speed of its latest generation of Coradia Lint DMUs at 140km/h, while being more energy-efficient. The company also says the train will be able to travel up to 800km on a single tank of hydrogen and be capable of holding up to 300 passengers.

Hydrogen generation and infrastructure

The first test run of an iLint prototype took place at Alstom's Salzgitter facility in March 2017, and trials have been ongoing since. During the test phase, hydrogen has been sourced from industrial emissions.

Nevertheless, there's still the question of how trains will be refuelled and where the hydrogen will come from in the long term. Alstom has pledged that it will make things easier for operators by providing maintenance services and hydrogen infrastructure – in particular, filling stations – alongside its partners.

The company is currently looking to green methods to produce fuel for iLint. One existing example is electrolysis, which involves splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen i.e. the iLint formula in reverse. Another is natural gas reformation, which involves combining methane contained in natural gases with high-temperature steam. Regardless, the company aims to mitigate CO₂ emissions from hydrogen production through the use of wind energy.

Germany's recent investment in Energiepark Mainz, a plant designed to generate hydrogen from wind power, makes it a suitable location for the launch of iLint. The country has also committed to reducing its CO₂ emissions by 40% by 2020 compared with 1990 levels and to using 80% renewable energy in power supplies by 2050. It's therefore unsurprising that Alstom signed letters of intent with four German states in 2014, under which it committed to provide 60 trains in total.

Getting passengers and operators onboard

Alstom's first big test began in November 2017, when the company signed a deal to build 14 iLint trains for the Local Transport Authority of Lower Saxony (LNVG). After the new vehicles have been built in Salzgitter, LNVG will lease them to a contracted train operator for use on the region's Buxtehude-Cuxhaven route from December 2021. However, the French rail giant has claimed that the first iLint could be tested on the network as soon as the first quarter of 2018.

As part of the deal, Alstom will provide maintenance for the trains over a 30-year period. Meanwhile, leading gas company Linde will supply hydrogen for the new trains and erect the first-ever hydrogen filling station for trains in Bremervörde. The plan is that hydrogen will be produced onsite via electrolysis and wind energy at a later stage of the project.

“The company is currently looking to green methods to produce fuel for iLint.”

“The use of hydrogen for rail vehicles is a milestone in the application of fuel cells for emission-free transport,” said Linde executive board member Bernd Eulitz in a press release. “This development will push the establishment of a hydrogen society and will create new solutions for the storage and transport of energy.”

Ambitious climate protection goals and the expense of electrification could help bring the iLint to other European countries in the future. In July 2017, the UK's Department for Transport cancelled a number of electrification schemes in Wales and England, which is expected to increase demand for non-electric trains. Following this, Alstom has been in talks to run trials in Liverpool, UK, as well as establish a source of hydrogen from refineries in the region.

“There has been dialogue with [the] Liverpool city region and various rolling stock operating companies about how we can develop a demonstrator,” said Alstom UK managing director for trains and modernisation Mike Hulme in an interview with The Engineer magazine. “It is an option which we're pushing quite heavily, and we seem to be getting some traction.”

Depending on the success of its implementation in Germany, iLint could prove to be an important proof case for the use of hydrogen fuel cells on trains. Until then, Alstom is on the charm offensive to attract further European partners.

EUROPEAN EVENTS

AEC European Days in Sicily. 13th – 19th May 2018 – booking is now closed.

Discover the BAIE DE SOMME and the Town of Amiens with the French section of AEC, Friday afternoon 15th June 2018 to Monday morning 18th June 2018 after breakfast. (booking is now closed)

AEC European Days in Romania. The Romanian section is preparing a programme for European Days in Romania, with some time in Bulgaria hopefully to establish a new section there. The programme is expected shortly and will be published in our next edition. The year in which it takes place will be finalised after negotiations with the Austrian section, who also propose

AEC European Days in Austria (Linz) for 2019 (see below)

The FEANDC Congress for 2018 will take place in Mons, Belgium, from 7th -11th June 2018 **Booking remains open until the end of March**

FEANDC General Meeting in Lübeck (D), 13th -16th September 2018.

The FEANDC Congress for 2019 will still take place in Glasgow as planned from 5th- 9th September 2019.

Items from the German section Calendar:

14.03.2018 RV Rostock: Reisevortrag Iran, U. Ramin
16.03.2018 OV Ludwigslust: Versammlung und Kegeln
23.03.2018 RV Hamburg: Besichtigung des Kohlekraftwerkes Hamburg Moorburg
11.04.2018 RV Rostock: Regionalverbandstag, Neuwahl des Vst
20.04.2018 OV Ludwigslust: Versammlung und Kegeln
02.-09.05.2018 RV Hagen: 8-tägigen Busreise nach Slowenien
09.05.2018 RV Rostock: Buchlesung, M. Köster
11.05.2018 OV Ludwigslust: Grillfest bei Anneli Behnke
18.05.2018 OV Ludwigslust: Versammlung und Kegeln
13.06.2018 RV Rostock: Besuch Biohof „Meyers-Hausstelle“
15.06.2018 OV Ludwigslust: Versammlung und Kegeln
15. - 18.06 2018 **Sektion Frankreich:** Ein Wochenende im Departement Somme
16.07.2018 OV Ludwigslust: Versammlung und Kegeln
05.08.2018 OV Ludwigslust: Kremserfahrt mit Grillabend
18.08.2018 RV Hamburg: Ein Tag in der Lüneburger Heide
12.09.2019 RV Rostock: 800 Jahre Hansastadt & 600 Jahre Universität
Rostock: H. Spielmann
29.09. - 04.10.2018 RV Hagen: 6-tägige Busreise an den Bodensee
10.10.2018 RV Rostock: Kegeln in Broderstorf, H. Jaschewski
14.11.2018 RV Rostock: Neuerungen zur Pflegeversicherung,
Pfleigestützpunkt HRO
05.12.2018 RV Rostock: Adventsfeier, M. Köster
05.12.2018 RV Hamburg: Weihnachtsfeier im Hotel Hamburg Hafen
08.12.2018 OV Ludwigslust: Weihnachtsfeier
22.12.2018 OV Ludwigslust: Tannenbaum schlagen

EUROPÄISCHE TREFFEN

**13.05. - 19.05.2018 Europäische Tage 2018 der Sektion Italien
in Naxos auf Sizilien**

**22.09. - 28. 09.2019 Europäische Tage 2019 der Sektion Österreich
in Linz (vorläufig).**

EUROPEAN DAYS

There are at present two proposals for European Days in 2019 – either In Romania with an excursion into Bulgaria as a prelude to the re-convening of a Bulgarian section; or in Linz in Austria, for which the Austrian section has already produced the following outline programme.

PROPOSED EUROPEAN DAYS IN LINZ (A) 2019

Suggested Programme:

**Sunsag, 22. September 2019 *Arrival of members of the Administrative Council
in Linz***

Monday, 23. September 2019 *Arrival of other members in Linz*

- Linz – Administrative Council
- Opening of European Days

Tuesday, 24. September 2019 *A Day in the Mountains of Upper Austria*

Trip to Hinterstoder (Dead Mountains)

Visit to the Alpineum and trip by cable car to Hutterer Böden (Lunch)

on the return journey, visit to the Poacher's Museums in St. Pankraz

Wednesday, 25. September 2019 *Trip to Traunsee in the Salzkammergut*

Travel to Gmunden and visit to the Gmunden ceramic factory

Lunch in the town centre of Gmunden and a short visit to the town

Travel to Bad Ischl and visit to the Emperor's villa followed by coffee and cake in 'Konditorei Zauner'

Thursday, 26. September 2019 *A Day in the Monastery and the Brewery*

Travel to the monastery at St. Florian and visit (music by Anton Bruckner)

Travel on to Freistadt (Visit to town and brewery.)

Trip on horse drawn railway

Friday, 27. September 2019 *A Day in Linz*

Travel to the Pöstlingberg

Toen visit Stadtführung

Free time in the afternoon

Closing of European Days

Saturday, 28. September 2019 *Departure of Members*

Prices: (Basis 1.09.2017) **650 euros** from 22.9.2019 until 28.9.2019)

Includes: Overnight accommodation including full Vollpension, all transfers, the cable car trip, visit to Gmunden ceramic factory, entry in the monastery, the Emperor's villa, museums etc.

We hope you like the programme and look forward to your visit..

Reservations with deposit for the European Days in Linz 2019 by 31st December 2018

Take no action now. This event has still to be approved by the Administrative Council. Further details to follow.

FEANDC General Meeting September 2018.

Four Days in the Hanseatic town of Lübeck and Travemünde to find out about the Baltic.

Thursday, 13.9.2018 – Arrival, town trip and welcome evening.

12.00 – 17.00 Greeting/Check-in and welcome drink in the "Holiday Inn" (Double 125 Euro, Single 105 Euro) . Taxi transfer from DB station to hotel is arranged.

15.00 – 17.00 «**Lübecker Stadtspaziergang**» (Lübeck walking tour – for those arriving before 14h00)

or **alternatively Town tour** in Open-top-Bus (50 Min.) leaving at 14h50, 15h50 from the hotel bus stop.

18h30 Uhr **Welcome evening** in the Holiday Inn with entertainer **Küsten-Jörn**.

19.00 Uhr Abendessen – bedtime when you're ready!!

Friday, 14. September 2018 – General meeting and Events programme

09h00 – 12h00 General meeting (9 – 10 with everyone), coffee break at ca. 10h30

12h30 – 13h30 **Lunch** for everyone – buffet or 3 course menu.

10h00 – 10u20 **Visitors programme:** 400 m walk to the **European Hansemuseum**

10h30 – onwards Visit museum using audio guide.

12h00 – 12h20 walk back to the hotel for lunch with meeting delegates.

14h30 – 10 minute bus trip (public transport) from the hotel to the Schlüsselbuden bus stop; - 10 min walk to Niederegger Marzipan world.

15h40 – 17h00 tour of «**Niederegger Marzipanwelten**» ending up together in the café

17h15 – return journey from «Wahmstraße» bus stop to the hotel – then free time until:

18h30 – **Gala evening with music** in the Holiday Inn – bed when you're ready.

Saturday, 15. September 2018

08h45 – walk (15-20 min) or taxi transfer to the boarding point at the Drawbrücke.

9h30 – 11h15 Boat trip to Travemünde «**Travemünde und die Ostsee**» to learn about the Baltic.

11h15 – 12h00 Stroll along the **beach promenade at Travemünde** (old lighthouse, the clipper ship Passat ...)

12h00 – 13h15 **Lunch** in Restaurant «**Fisherman's**» in Travemünde

13h15 – 15h20 free time in Travemünde

from 13h45 **Return** by Bus (public transport to Hotel with **Privilege fare** is possible.

Buses run every 30 minutes

18h00 – 18h20 walk to the historic Restaurant «**Schiffergesellschaft**» (750 m – 15 Min walk)

18h30 **Dinner** in the «**Lübeck**» room – after the meal, return individually on foot to the hotel

Sunday, 16. September 2018

9h30 short walk to the boarding point at the Town Gate (Burgtor).

10h00 – 11h00 **Town, Harbour and Canal round trip** of Lübeck

11h00 – short walk to return to the hotel for:

11h30 – **Lunch** in the hotel

from 12h30 **Taxi transfer** to the railway station for individual journeys home.

RECENT EVENTS...

We held our last London reunion at the Lord Moon of the Mall on Thursday 14th December 2017. In the New Year, we transferred to the Royal Oak in Tabard Street, the venue for our film show on Thursday 18th January 2018 with the presentation of a private viewing of the feature film 'Hugo' – a film from 2011 with 11 Oscar nominations and 5 for BAFTA's. It is the heart-warming story of an orphaned boy who had been trying with his now deceased clockmaker father to restore an automaton, which is designed to write.



It's 1931. The boy moves to his alcoholic uncle's workshop within the workings of the station clocks at Paris's Gare Montparnasse, where he maintains the operation of the clocks. The uncle disappears but the boy, Hugo, continues to keep the clocks going, stealing food and, from a toy mender's stall, pieces to repair the automaton, which he is sure has a message from his father; although he lacks a vital key to set it in motion. The toymaker finds Hugo a bit of a pest and wants him to go away, but the boy befriends the toymaker's god-daughter, Isobelle, (also orphaned and looked after by her god-parents) and discovers that she has a key like the one he needs. After several adventures they discover the automaton's secret – that the girl's godfather is Georges Méliès, famed before the First World War for his fantasy films but now virtually forgotten and although they do not yet know it, the maker of the automaton. They visit the library to find out more and encounter the author of the book they find on early film – who it transpires is a great fan of Méliès's work but believes him to have died during the war. This leads to a potted illustrated history of early moving film and the creation of Méliès's vision. Hugo has a dream in which the famous Montparnasse train crash of 1895 is recreated with startling realism (the film was made in 3D!). The 'wicked uncle's body is found, many weeks later, in the river Seine, to the consternation of the station Inspector who wonders who has been looking after the clocks. One thing leads to another and the film ends with Méliès recognising Hugo's skill and determination and many of his films being rediscovered – and the girl beginning to write Hugo's story.

Our second meeting at the Royal Oak took place on February 15th with 5 members attending.

...AND THINGS TO COME

London reunions will continue on the **third** Thursday the month at the **Royal Oak** in Tabard Street nominally from **16h00 onwards** until about 19h00. although if it's wet there is no reason why we couldn't start at lunchtime! The next date will be **Thursday 15th March**; then there will be the Annual General meeting on **Thursday 19th April.2018** continuing with further reunions on **17th May** and **21st June**.

Other events.

Possible venues for future visits are Belvoir Castle near Grantham and the Middleton Railway in Leeds (which in his student days your editor helped to rescue as a founder member of the then Middleton Railway Preservation Society).

For all visits and events, please **contact John regularly for up to date details**;

Since he has been having long term problems with his phone he asks to be contacted uniquely by e-mail to jauwoods@gmail.com **Phone or postal messages can be passed on via the Secretary. Details are on page 2**

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 UK inland postage. These items are available from **Philip Worsfold**. Please contact him first by e-mail or phone to check availability (details at the top of 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 RSA is currently in course of merging with the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT). Subscription rates are likely to change but at present include subscription to 'Modern Railways'. 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 changes and details of all activities can be found at www.railwaystudyassociation.org

REPTA.

The long standing Railway Employees' and 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 2018.** 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 last month's 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. Application forms are available from Peter.

FEANDC.

FEANDC has similar social 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. I continue to use the website of the European Commission and 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 issue will be published for 1st June 2018. The copy deadline is:

1st May 2018.

SUMMARY OF DATES

London reunions will continue on the **third** Thursday the month at the **Royal Oak** in Tabard Street nominally from **16h00 onwards** until about 19h00. The dates are

Thursday 15th March,

Thursday 19th April.201, - which is the Annual General Meeting, commencing at 14h00, with time for discussion over lunch from 12h00.

Thursday 17th May

Thursday 21st June.

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