



British Section

Newsletter

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December 2023

† Constatin Proca (Coco)

European Association of Railway Personnel

Association Européenne des Cheminots (AISBL)

International Association (A.R. 4.2.1985)

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)

Registered address: A.E.C (AISBL), 25 Square de Meeus, 1000 Brussels, Belgium

AEC EUROPEAN BUREAU –elected at the General Assembly at Sofia (BG), May 2022.)
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European Vice-President: Nicolae Dutu (RO).
European Secretary: Malgorzata (Margaret) Boczek-Kwaczynska (PL).
Asst, Secretary: Xosé Carlos Fernández Diaz (ES)
Treasurer: Jacques Matter (F). Asst Treasurer: Luc van Mele (B)

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The Annual General Meeting for 2023 took place in London on Thursday 13th April. The existing officers and committee remained in office, and will continue for the present as we move towards union with the Belgian section.

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Checker of Accounts:

Colin Charman,

The British Section Newsletter has been produced by a small team headed by Philip Worsfold, who fulfils the non-committee role of Editor and Translator. He is also Data Protection Officer.

**A.E.C. BRITISH SECTION NEWSLETTER, Vol. 28 No. 2
June 2023**

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The European web page is at: <http://www.A-E-C.net> (hosted by the German section)

AEC Latvia is at www.ldzb.lv/aec/lv/

The aecitalia website is not recognised as representing the official Italian section of AEC. Vito Visconti is no longer a member of AEC.

The **French section website** has been **re-established** at:
<http://aec-france.pagesperso-orange.fr/>

The **British Section Website** is now closed.
The British Section Facebook page is closed.

The British Section Newsletter is currently available on-line at the European website.

EDITORIAL

This Editorial contains important information regarding the future of the British section. If you have not already contacted the editor and Data Protection Officer regarding transfer to the Belgian section, please do so at once. If you do not do so before 7th December, you will not receive further communications once your current subscription expires.

This will be the last edition of the British Section Newsletter, at least in its present form. There will be no further printed editions after this one. I shall continue to update those members whose e-mail addresses I have with a bulletin in e-mail format as and when necessary, but three-monthly publication will cease. It will just contain news and will not contain articles. If you receive this newsletter by post only and would like to be added to the e-mail list, please send me an e-mail to say so and also confirm whether or not you wish to continue as a member of the Belgian section – see above.

It is with some sadness and regret that I write this, having edited the newsletter for more than twenty years. I should like to give credit and thanks to my predecessors in this job, particularly Laurie Hall and Colin Charman – thankfully still with us. They set the standards which I hope I have been able to maintain. Also my eternal thanks to my proofreader, John Batts, whose eagle eye has saved many a bloomer – although rarely all of them! How professional proofers cope with a 900 page tome, I can't imagine.

For the time being, the present committee will continue in the background, in case the merging with the Belgian section does not work out and we shall have to organise either the closure of the British section, or its renewal if we can find extra members. 25 is the minimum number of members for a national section to exist under the European Statutes by which we are bound. Twenty-three members have so far agreed to transfer, and I shall deal with this as Data Protection Officer, and we shall pay their first-year subscriptions from British section residual funds. From 2024 onwards, it will be up to individuals to pay their own subscriptions to the Belgian section (or other section of their choice) directly by international money transfer. Some banks, notably Barclay's and Lloyds, charge for this service. It may be possible for us to arrange a single payment for the whole group, with costs recovered from you in this country. Members who have joined the Belgian section will be kept informed regarding this possibility.

For now, we intend to keep centralised membership details here in Britain, but since e-mail addresses will have been shared with the Belgian section, members may also be contacted by them directly to seek further details if they need them. As a second party I am not permitted to divulge to them more than you have authorised.

It was with great sadness that I heard yesterday of the death of Coco Proca, the President of the Romanian section. An obituary appears later in this issue.

Since writing the above, we have had a government re-shuffle. The leader of the ultra-right wing bully boys has been removed from post. Let us hope that this will bring about a more human and humane attitude to refugees and victims of war whatever their nationality, and an improved relationship with our friends in Europe. Alas, I don't see a move towards re-joining the European Union being on the agenda in my lifetime.

Philip Worsfold 6th November 2023

Website.

The British section website is closed.

Recruitment

Nigel Hyde will remain in the background Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Recruitment Officer for the British group. For the present all enquiries about membership should be addressed to **Nigel Hyde**.

PEOPLE

Bob Clark.

Bob has now retired from his job at the Post Office. Nevertheless, contacting him other than by post continues to be difficult.

†Constantin Proca (Coco)



John Woods writes:

Coco was in many ways larger than life; and somehow, I never expected to hear of his passing, seemingly so unexpectedly.

As others have said his friendship really extended to so many different people – he was a central figure at the European days in Oporto in May this year and I feel so pleased to have been there at that time.

When the British Section took off in 1987-8 it was good to make a special link with Romania where Coco and Nicolae (*Dutu*– *our European Vice -president and formerly both European Secretary and President*) were the movers and shakers, ably supported by our Belgian friends; I think I recall they organised a few Romania - British events.

I enjoyed many an evening with Coco and our dear departed David Crathorn supping 'Romanian water' (!).

[‘Romanian water’ was Coco’s home distilled plum brandy, of suspect legality{!} It was a very strong spirit, and he took it with him everywhere he went. How he ever got it past Customs we shall now never know. – editor.]

Our hearts go out to Coco’s family in their loss. The whole community of AEC will miss Coco enormously. It will not be the same without him. - P.W.

TALLINN SAFETY CONFERENCE SEEKS TO EMBED A CULTURE OF LEARNING

THIS ARTICLE FIRST APPEARED IN THE 14th AUGUST 2023 ISSUE OF RAILWAY GAZETTE INTERNATIONAL

EUROPE: The European Union Agency for Railways is set to host its third safety conference in the vibrant Baltic capital of Tallinn, Estonia. Taking place on September 20-21, the two-day event is expected to draw approximately 300 rail professionals and safety specialists.

The conference will revolve around the central theme of ‘Learning’, encompassing a wide array of activities and individuals that serve as the bedrock of railway safety. ‘We need to create a culture [in the rail sector] in which people feel empowered, if not required, to speak up when they see a problem’, says Keir Fitch, Head of the Rail Safety & Interoperability Unit at the European Commission.

Delving into various aspects of rail safety, the conference aims to shed light on valuable lessons that can be gleaned from safety culture peer reviews. Furthermore, it seeks to explore the potential knowledge transfer between the railway industry and other sectors, examining their routines and performance to identify best practice.

‘A positive and just culture for safety represents a massive opportunity for senior management to get staff engaged and walk the extra mile for the organisation’

Tony Licu, Head of the Safety Unit at European air traffic management body Eurocontrol

Additionally, the conference will focus on leveraging accident investigations as catalysts for overall improvements within the railway sector. By analysing near misses, attendees will also gain insights into preventive measures to avert future incidents. The role of ‘big data’ in revolutionising railway safety will be explored, along with the implementation of techniques to influence safety behaviour and enhance the effectiveness of safety training.

ERA has assembled a diverse set of speakers to assess how best to embed a safety culture across the sector, while also offering a networking platform, fostering safety awareness across the sector.

The Tallinn edition is intended to build upon the inaugural Railway Safety Days conference in Dubrovnik in 2018, which started the process leading to 250 rail senior managers signing the European Rail Safety Culture Declaration, and the second edition held in Porto in 2021, which unveiled the results of the European Rail Safety Climate Survey with over 46 500 respondents. In 2023, ERA will introduce key initiatives aimed at promoting learning within the industry. These include the launch of an ambitious portfolio of safety training modules and a call for the qualification and promotion of training courses that have proven to support stakeholders in implementing EU legislation.

Drawing on the positive feedback from previous events, the conference will offer delegates the opportunity to participate in two out of eight interactive workshops, covering subjects such as communication, cognition, strategy, and intervention. Each of the three days will conclude with a session featuring insights from keynote speakers who will share their perspectives on the proceedings they have heard.

In addition, the Estonian infrastructure manager Eesti Raudtee is to host three technical visits on September 22, although attendees should note that these tours are of limited capacity.

Divided by a common language

A proposed recast of the EU Directive for certification of train drivers to mandate the use of English for communications on international routes has divided opinion across the European rail sector, with little sign of a consensus emerging. Toma Bačić reports.

There is a consensus among most policymakers that the rail industry remains highly domestically oriented in its regulatory and policy framework, which is harming ambitions to grow pan-European rail traffic, especially freight. National variations still affect everything from infrastructure and signalling to operating rules and safety regulations. There is limited scope for train drivers to cross European borders easily, and the existing Directive 2009/59 on driver certification, which came into force in 2007, has made only a limited difference.

As a result, the European Commission announced in its work programme for 2022 that it wanted to review the legislation to see if it could be made more effective. The Commission said it had carried out an evaluation that showed there was significant margin for simplification of the directive and opportunities to improve its implementation. The revision will focus on addressing outdated provisions, ambiguous language and possible scope adjustments. It is also intended to further improve the mobility of train drivers between companies as well as between member states. The responsibilities and task allocation among the various players involved in the certification scheme for train drivers will be revisited with a view to reducing the administrative burden of this part of the legislative package. In terms of added value, the revised directive should enhance the effectiveness of the EU-wide certification scheme by creating a truly harmonised framework. This would provide more clarity to national governments and to bodies across the rail industry, the Commission believes.

In terms of timescales for implementation, rail industry sources in Brussels are expecting the Commission to bring forward legislation in two parts. The first would be primary legislation defining the overall target including the functioning of certification and the language requirements. This would be followed by secondary legislation defining the practical steps for implementation and the transitional arrangements needed to get there.

The Commission hopes to adopt the primary legislation by the end of October this year, although it is unclear whether this will take the form of a Directive or a Regulation. There is understood to be little clarity to date on the form the secondary legislation would take, although insiders have told Railway Gazette International that they expect any transition to be a multi-year process.

Towards SERA

Underpinning the Commission's work on certifying and licensing drivers is the need to make progress in implementing the Single European Railway Area by better integrating the various national railway rules, processes and practices.

The current EU legislation mandates that locomotive drivers must have proof of language proficiency to level B1 in every country in which they operate trains. This is to ensure clear and mutually understandable communication with dispatchers, shunting personnel and other staff directly involved in railway operations.

At the heart of the proposed revision is an increasingly fractious debate about whether English should be adopted as the default language for verbal communication by train drivers on international flows.

From the position of a policymaker in Brussels, it is easy to see the appeal of a common language, not least because it could help bring the rail mode closer to the level of interoperability seen in international aviation for example. And on a political level, this kind of standardisation and harmonisation is a very attractive concept. But the blunt reality remains that implementing such a radical change to the operation of Europe's railways is going to be extremely difficult — and maybe even impossible.

A changing picture

In 2016, the driver certification directive was amended to enable the exemption of train drivers on international corridors who only take their train as far as the first station after the border from the B1 language qualification standard for non-native speakers.

In 2019, a legal basis was created for testing alternative options to the current language requirements in pilot projects. Then at the start of 2022, the Commission published a call for input from stakeholders for the formal revision of the directive. Among the core questions addressed by this consultation was whether a common operational language, the most likely candidate being English, would be beneficial to the rail sector.

One of the obstacles for the creation of SERA, as defined by the EU institutions, is that operating rules often mandate a change of train drivers and crew when a train crosses a border. However, there is a lack of clarity among some in the industry about whether this is an undesirable process that should be changed. In many cases, the operators involved have logical reasons to swap staff at a border point, and the crew change can often be undertaken very rapidly. A related point is that if the crew were not to change at a border, it raises the prospect of trains being mandatorily halted later in the journey to ensure staff complete safety-related rest periods.

'Road and rail environments and operational procedures are not comparable, so it is a huge question to consider. Do we really need a single driver who is able to operate a train right across the whole of Europe?' asks Alberto Mazzola, Executive Director of trade association CER, which mainly represents the incumbent state railways.

Pros and cons

The debate so far within the sector has highlighted some clear advantages and disadvantages of using a single language for driver communication.

A potential gain for smaller operators in the freight sector could arise from more efficient use of traincrew, with mandatory border stops no longer necessary. In theory this would bring rail closer to the operating model of the road haulage sector, while also potentially offering opportunities to use drivers in a more flexible way.

The language challenge was highlighted in the aftermath of the [tunnel collapse at Rastatt on the Karlsruhe – Basel main line in August 2017](#). While there was a widespread consensus that the rail industry needed to become more adaptable to respond to such major incidents, the reality is that according to the limited public data available, only around 5% of train drivers in the EU currently speak English to a recognised level.

However, even this limited proportion masks some important details, including how far a level of 'conversational English' as taught by the education system could cope with the specifics of railway terminology, and also the question of how far other common or mutually intelligible languages are used at railway border points instead of English.

The fact that several types of locomotives in Europe have cross-border capabilities is increasing the desire of train operators to make the staff fully interoperable as well.

Different outcomes

As well as CER, the new entrant and private operator trade associations AllRail and the European Rail Freight Association, and transport workers' federation ETF have all expressed strong views about the common language proposal, albeit sometimes using similar arguments to support diverging outcomes.

Mazzola maintains that 'we are not just speaking about the common language for train drivers, but we have to speak about all personnel which are involved in [operational] communication. And because of that, we have to talk about a very large number of people which have to speak the common language.'

Both the European Court of Auditors and CER have expressed concerns about the cost of the proposed reform. ‘The education and all the procedures about introducing the common language are very expensive’, Mazzola warns. ‘Learning the common language would raise the cost of the drivers, and that would potentially lead to an even less competitive position of rail freight compared to road.’

In contrast, ERFA believes that a single operational language for international traffic is a necessary step towards SERA. The association says that adopting the common language reform would simplify training and certification of drivers by doing away with the B1 qualification requirement, adding much needed liquidity into a sector struggling with staff shortages.

AllRail takes a similar stance, with policy officer Salim Benkirane telling Railway Gazette International that ‘the B1 language requirement is too high, meaning higher educational costs. Changing the personnel at the border stations is an acceptable way of operating trains for the incumbent railway operators, which are often co-operating with other incumbents on the other side of the border. Independent operators do not have the same financial resources for training or recruiting staff, which is why we are advocating for a single language, with the A1 level of knowledge and specific operational vocabulary and the phraseology.’

AllRail also sees the common language reform as an opportunity to better market rail careers and to cast the net wider for operational personnel.

From the labour movement side, ETF insists that ‘the current B1 language requirement must be kept in place, and lowering of that condition would pose a high safety risk. Also, digital tools can support the drivers, but never replace direct communication with colleagues and emergency services in the local language’.

The association has rejected the parallels drawn between rail and the road and air industries, noting that ‘93% of all [rail] services are domestic, aviation operates the majority of all services internationally. Aviation is also a more closed system, with airports for example having their own fire brigades on site. In the rail sector, unlike in road transport, train drivers need to interact with a whole list of actors, including but not limited to the infrastructure manager, shunting yards, onboard staff, station staff and emergency services, all of whom operate almost only at national level.’

Problems remain

It is clear the Commission’s vision for a default language will not be easy to realise. Among the key concerns that the legislators will have to resolve are:

- how many other railway operational staff (dispatchers, shunters etc) will have to learn the language for the driver measure to be effective;
- if English is adopted, the precise qualification and assessment process will have to be reformed;
- the language reform will need to encompass the subtleties of railway phraseology across the EU as a whole;
- there is a risk that the mutual intelligibility of some European languages will make learning English an unnecessary effort.

Less tangibly, there is also the simple political reality that imposing English at an EU level is likely to cause upset in some member states in the wake of the UK itself leaving the bloc through Brexit. Set against these worries are a set of systemic problems that the rail industry has to take on if its hopes of modal shift are to be realised. As the Rastatt crisis showed, diversionary route provision remains a problem for long-distance services. When a line is closed for planned engineering works or because of unforeseen disruption, there is often no B1-qualified driver available to reroute through another territory — France, in the case of the seven-week Rastatt blockade.

The case for a common language is also arguably stronger in smaller European countries than bigger ones — the Benelux region being a case in point, where linguistic boundaries are already distinct, and the distances by rail between national frontiers are short, heightening the impact of improving international train operating procedures. That said, in some parts of Europe, such as the Balkan countries or Scandinavia, the level of mutual understanding between local languages may still mitigate against the case for adopting English or another common tongue, and in any case enforcement of such a mandate could prove difficult.

In the future, technology could provide a means to resolve the language question. We set out how the UIC and Shift2Rail-backed Translate4Rail tool was being trialled on routes between Austria and Italy. But even advocates of a common language measure for drivers acknowledge that software cannot yet bridge the language barrier. ‘We don’t believe that any of the automatic translation solutions are mature enough for normal usage yet’, acknowledges AllRail’s Benkirane.

ITEMS FROM THE BULLETIN FOR EUROPEAN RAIL TRAVEL.

More Night Trains By ÖBB And DB

The German and Austrian national train operators have announced their plan to double their night train traffic during 2023.

In the December timetable change there will be new Nightjets linking Berlin and Vienna to Brussels and Paris. Initially these will run three nights a week but from October 2024 they are due to increase to seven times a week. A completely new Nightjet service between Hamburg and Vienna / Innsbruck is also planned. There will also be an additional ICE between Berlin and Vienna via Nuremberg and the current weekends –only ICE between Frankfurt and Innsbruck will become a daily service.

On September Back-on-Track Germany issued a press statement welcoming the re-introduction of a Berlin – Paris service via Brussels, recalling that before its withdrawal in 2016 this train was regularly fully booked. The statement called it as “ a sensible complement to the existing European Sleeper service” and pointed out that it would also be attractive for travellers to and from Great Britain; and that it would on average generate 28 times less greenhouse gas than equivalent air travel.

Back-on-Track has long pressed for through international tickets which ensure connections and has reiterated its demand for Value Added Tax to be withdrawn from international tickets. It also urges DB to “take more responsibility for the European night train network.”

New Services Between Spain And France

In 2022 SNCF withdrew services between Barcelona and Lyon and between Madrid and Marseille stating that these were not viable.

This summer, Renfe has started to run its own trains to these two French cities. The Lyon trains could also be useful for travellers to and from Great Britain. Renfe is in negotiations to run a Barcelona - Paris service, which would definitely be more useful.

Passengers who travel from France to Barcelona by French TGV or Renfe high speed train may want to change there to a domestic high speed train. The open access operator Iryo has approximately 30% of the high speed capacity in Spain and can be used for journeys from Barcelona to Madrid, Valencia, Andalucia and Alicante.

The company is working on how its ticketing can be integrated with Interrail and how its tickets might be interchangeable with those of Renfe. It already has an arrangement with Thetrainline.

Controls For Eurostar Passengers

Eurostar passengers are still being advised to arrive 60-90 minutes in advance of the train's departure from London and 45-60 minutes in advance of the departure from Paris Nord.

When Eurostar services began in 1994 we could arrive just 20 minutes in advance.

On September 1st I arrived at London St Pancras International at 09.00 for the 10.31 to Paris, having spent the night in a London hotel to ensure that I caught the train.

Check-in for the 09.31 had been virtually completed, the queue was now very short and check-in for the 10.31 was open. I was through the controls in less than a quarter of an hour.

The Eurostar was well filled – as usual on a Friday. The train left a few minutes late but arrived in Paris Nord on time.

On my return journey three days later I arrived at the Gare du Nord at 14.00, there were plenty of helpful staff on duty, queuing was minimal and I was drinking coffee in the departure lounge by 14.15 awaiting boarding for the 15.12 to London St Pancras.

Trevor Garrod.

Community Of European Railways And 2024 European Parliament Elections

The CER sent a questionnaire to other international bodies, including the European Passengers' Federation in the early summer. EPF forwarded the questionnaire to all its member associations. These include members and associate members in four non-EU countries because, of course, many of their members use the rail network of the EU.

The European Rail Campaign (UK) responded to relevant sections of the questionnaire. The survey is intended to help CER in its dialogue with the main political groupings in the run-up to next year's elections to the European Parliament.

It is not surprising that so many public transport users' organisations, as well as individuals, have sent in objections to this ill-thought-out move.

Back-On-Track Plans

The Back-on Track network held its monthly meeting in August, when colleagues from nine European countries took part in a detailed discussion.

This included how to work with other international organisations to make rail a key issue in next year's European Parliament elections; and how to monitor and influence the EU Transport Ministers' meeting in Barcelona on September 21st/22nd. Back-on-Track now has a Spanish section and they are working on this.

Meanwhile Back-on-Track Belgium updated us on its campaign for a Brussels – Malmo night train and meetings with potential operators and environmental associations.

Member organisations plan to meet on November 18th in Brussels to consider Back-on-Track's work and structure for the coming year. Full information about this network can be found on www.back-on-track.eu.

European Rail Campaign (Uk)

ERC(UK) will meet by videolink on Wednesday October 25th and then in person on December 8th for its Annual General Meeting, which will be either in London or in Birmingham.

EERC(UK) has been in contact with campaigners in Kent, who have collected 30,000 signatures on a petition calling for Eurostar to resume calling at Ebbsfleet International and Ashford International on some of its trains.

ERC(UK) has also published a new leaflet *Easy Rail Travel to Mainland Europe* including a map showing over 70 major cities (such as Vienna, Florence and Barcelona) within 24 hours' travel by rail from London (by day and/or night train). The leaflet is available by post from Trevor Garrod, free of charge; but please give your postal address and how many copies you would like.

Thank you to everyone who has provided news and information for this bulletin. Trevor Garrod has taken all reasonable steps but cannot be held responsible for any errors or changes.

Trevor Garrod [tgarrod21@gmail.com] 10/09/23

PROGRAMME for the EUROPEAN DAYS 19 – 25 MAY 2024 in WARSAW (PL) HOTEL GROMADA*, Warszawa, Plac Powstańców Warszawy 2**

19th May 2024 (Sunday)

Arrival of the members attending the meeting of the Administrative Council.

19.00 – dinner at the hotel

20th May 2024 (Monday)

until 9.00 – breakfast at the hotel

9.00 – 11.30 – meeting of the AEC Administrative Council 11.30 - coffee break 11.50 - continuation of the AC meeting.

13.00 - lunch at the hotel.

14.30 -continuation of the AC meeting, (if necessary)

(arrival of the other guests of the ED)

19.00 – 22.30 welcome dinner and the opening of the European Days at the Hotel

21st May 2024 (Tuesday): Sochaczew / Żelazowa Wola (ca. 70 km)

- 7.00 – 8.30 breakfast
- 9.00 – 12.30 sightseeing tour of Sochaczew Railway open air museum
- 13.00 – 14.30 lunch in the Restaurant
- 15.00 – visiting Żelazowa Wola - place where Frideric Chopin was born - museum
- 19.00 dinner at the hotel

22nd May 2024 (Wednesday): (Warszawa: Old Town, Royal Castle)

- 7.00 – 8.00 breakfast
- 8.00 - visiting the Old Town
- around 13.00 lunch in the Restaurant
- 14.30 - visiting the Royal Castle
- 19.00 Dinner at the hotel

23rd May 2024 (Thursday): (Warszawa: Wilanów Royal Summer Palace, Łazienki Palace)

- 7.00 – 8.30 breakfast
- 9.00 – visiting the Wilanów Palace in Warsaw
- 13.00 - lunch Restaurant
- 14.30 – visiting the Łazienki Park in Warsaw
- 19.00 - dinner at the hotel

24th May 2024 (Friday): (Sightseeing of Warsaw - continuation)

- 7.00 – 8.30 breakfast • 9.00 – visiting the Railway Museum
- 13.00 – lunch, free time after lunch
- 19.00 gala dinner ending the European Days at the hotel

25th May 2024 (Saturday)

- 7.00 – 9.00 breakfast • departures of the participants of the European Days

Accommodation: Hotel Gromada*** - Warsaw, Plac Powstańców Warszawy 2 The hotel rooms include: Mineral water Coffee/tea making facilities Bathrooms with shower equipped with towels, hairdryer, shampoo, soap

Prices of stay for one person in a double room:

1. from dinner on Sunday 19.05. to breakfast on Tuesday 21.05.2024 (2 days) – 340 €
2. from dinner on Sunday 19.05. to breakfast on Saturday 25.05.2024 (6 days) – 1020 €
3. from dinner on Monday 20.05. to breakfast on Saturday 25.05.2024 (5 days) – 850 €

Supplement for the single room: 20 € a night

Payment: 1st part 40% - up to 14th February 2024

2nd part 60% - up to 15th April 2024

Payment for 1 person in double and single room

	Double Room:	19-21.05.24	19-25.05.24	20-25.05.24
to 14th February 2024	140€	410€	340€	
to 15th April 2024	200€	610€	510€	
Single room:				
to 14th February 2024	150€	460€	380€	
to 15th April 2024	230€	680€	570€	

The Bank account number will available at the end of January 2024 and will be advised by e-mail to interested members of the British group within the Belgian section.

RECENT EVENTS...

We have held a successful reunion at the Monks' Retreat in Reading in October; and at the Royal Oak in London in November. It was great to see both Sarah Rigby and Nigel Hyde at the latter event.

...AND THINGS TO COME

Monthly Reunions...

Notwithstanding the forthcoming union with the Belgian section, we propose to continue with our monthly reunions, with the Monk's Retreat in Reading being the default location each second Friday of the month from 12noon. The next one will be on **Friday 8th December** (the 'Monk's Retreat' 160-163 Friar Street, Reading RG1 1HE). We shall hold the January meeting there on Friday 12th January 2024 – same time. Reading is now only 20 minutes from London, Paddington on a fast GWR train. These run every few minutes.

We are organising the reunion on **THURSDAY 8th February at Ye Olde Reine Deer Inn 47 Parson's Street, Banbury OX16 5NA** starting from about 13h00 so that John Batts and Colin Charman might be able to join us. The change of day is to fit in with Colin's medical regime. The pub is about half a mile from the station. Should some members need an overnight stop, there is a Premier Inn nearby at £47 per room per night. We shall meet as usual at the Monks Head on **Friday 8th March** from 12noon. If the Banbury event proves successful, we shall consider a repeat later in the year.

Visits...

In view of the uncertain future of the section, we have nothing currently arranged.

European Events.

European Days in Warsaw (PL) 19th – 25th May 2024

FEANDC Congress Frankfurt (D) 9th – 12th May 2024

FEANDC Afloat (F) 24th May – 4th June 2024

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. We wondered about the possibility of having a unisex T-shirt or sweatshirt. What do you think?

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).

CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF LOGISTICS AND TRANSPORT (CILT)

Railway Study Forum: The former Railway Study Association has merged with the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) as the Railway Study Forum. Subscription rates have changed and no longer include a subscription to 'Modern Railways'. Each annual session of lectures is now on line and together with other details and activities can be found on the CILT website. <https://ciltuk.org.uk>

REPTA.

Sadly, the long-standing Railway Employees' and Public Transport Association which offered bargain price insurance and other cut price offers, has closed down due to falling membership. I'm afraid it is a sign of the times, with the all pervasive influence of the internet,

YOUNG BUFFERS ASSOCIATION.

The YBA is a nation-wide organisation of mostly retired railway managers but anyone with an interest in transport would be most welcome. Events are monthly visits around the country to attractions of generally a transport theme e.g. heritage railways, bus museums, tram rides, river cruises etc - but also include events of a broader interest e.g. historical attractions, beer festivals and an annual Christmas lunch. Membership is free and arrangements for events are circulated by email. There is no obligation to attend. If you would like more information, the Membership Secretary is Keith Dumelow on 07800 630 807, email keith.dumelow@hotmail.co.uk

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???

As previously stated, THIS IS THE LAST EDITION of the British Section Newsletter. You may wish to keep a copy to retain details of other organisations mentioned. In future we shall keep in touch with British based members by e-mail only as and when necessary. But we shall still want to be hearing from you.

SUMMARY OF EVENTS

Monthly Reunions.

The reunions on **9th December 2023** and **12th January 2024** will return to the '**Monk's Retreat**' **160-163 Friar Street, Reading RG1 1HE** from about 12h00. Reading is now only 20 minutes from London, Paddington on a fast GWR train. These run every few minutes.

For THURSDAY 8th February 2024 only, we shall meet at Ye Old Reine Deer Inn, 47 Parson's Street, Banbury OX16 5NA from around 13h00 the convenience of John Batts and Colin Charman and maybe some members from further north. The change of day for the Banbury Reunion is to fit in with Colin's medical regime. On **Friday 8th March** we shall return to the Monk's Retreat in Reading from 12noon. If the Banbury event is successful, we shall consider a return visit to Banbury later in the year.

Visits.

For the moment we have no visits or other events planned.

European Events.

European Days in Warsaw (PL) 19th – 25th May 2024

FEANDC Congress Frankfurt (D) 9th – 12th May 2024

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