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**British Section**

**Newsletter**

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**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 Poznan (PL), September 2017, and remaining in office provisionally until new elections can be held.**

**European President: Nicolae Dutu (RO).**

**Vice-President: Dott. Giuseppe Cirillo (I)**

**European Secretary: Malgorzata (Margaret) Boczek-Kwaczynska (PL).**

**Asst European Secretary: Philip Worsfold, B.Sc., C.Eng., M.I.C.E., F.P.W.I. (GB)**

8 B Whitnage Road, Sampford Peverell, Tiverton Devon EX16 7BU.

Tel: +44(0)1884 821 805 E-mail: HYPERLINK

"mailto:wors@8bwhi.eclipse.co.uk" [wors@8bwhi.eclipse.co.uk](mailto:wors@8bwhi.eclipse.co.uk)

**Treasurer: Karl Eder (A). Asst Treasurer: Walter Rohr (A)**

### **AEC BRITISH SECTION COMMITTEE**

The Annual General Meeting for 2020 had to be cancelled due to the coronavirus outbreak. The existing committee and officers will remain in place as caretakers until such time as a new AGM can safely be convened, hopefully in October, as follows

#### **Honorary President:**

Colin Charman,  
formerly Operations Manager  
Eurostar Engineering Centre.

#### **Past Honorary President & Hon. Life Member:**

Theo Steel (formerly Project Director ONE Railway)

#### **President:**

Bob Clark, 52 Farcroft Road, POOLE, Dorset. BH1 2 3BQ.

Tel: +44(0)1202 462 912 (home). +44 (0)7941 069 018 (mobile);

E-mail: [eurosscottie@gmx.co.uk](mailto:eurosscottie@gmx.co.uk) (NEW)

#### **Vice-president:**

Patrick Rigby,

#### **Secretary & Webmaster:**

Jenny Worsfold,

8 B Whitnage Road, Sampford Peverell, TIVERTON, Devon. EX16 7BU.

Tel: +44 (0)1884 821 805

E-mail: [jenworsfold@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:jenworsfold@tiscali.co.uk)

#### **Assistant Secretary:**

Peter Davies, 24 Foxglove Drive, BIGGLESWADE, Beds. SG18 8SP

Tel: +44(0) 1767 317 683;

E-mail: HYPERLINK "mailto:peter@24foxglove.co.uk" [peter@24foxglove.co.uk](mailto:peter@24foxglove.co.uk)

#### **Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Recruitment Officer:**

Nigel Hyde, 66 Halifax Road, Brighouse, W. Yorkshire. HD6 2EP

Tel: +44(0)1484 400 646; Mobile: +44(0)7484 810 735

E-mail: HYPERLINK "mailto:nigel.hyde@btinternet.com" [nigel.hyde6@btinternet.com](mailto:nigel.hyde6@btinternet.com)

#### **Checker of Accounts:**

Colin Charman,

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. 26 No. 1  
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**A membership Application Form / GDPR Declaration is attached to the e-mail  
edition of this Newsletter.**

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

AEC Latvia is at [www.ldzb.lv/aec/lv/](http://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 available at <http://www.aec-europe.co.uk>

The British Section Facebook page is closed.

The British Section Newsletter is also available on line at the European website and on the British section website.

## EDITORIAL

### Happy 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday AEC – 22nd July 2021.

AEC celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> birthday on 22<sup>nd</sup> July. It was founded in Turin (I) in 1961 when groups from France and Italy came together after the idea had germinated at a meeting of like-minded French and German railway personnel in Hamburg. It was an idealistic attempt to unite railway people throughout Europe to prevent future military conflict. Other nations were invited to sign up for what became a Europe-wide organisation, registered in Belgium under the seal of the King of the Belgians. For this reason, the registered address is in Brussels and at least one member of the Administrative Council must be of Belgian nationality.

AEC has had its ups and downs. At its peak it boasted 14 national sections, but this has dwindled to nine over the years, although but for the Covid pandemic, it would by now be up to 10, with the addition of Bulgaria. There were problems which led to the expulsion of key members of the Italian section, but a re-birth was managed only to prove problematic within Italy itself; but despite this there remains a valid Italian section. More recently there have again been differences of opinion regarding how to deal with the loss, through a very professional scam of a considerable sum of money from European central funds. This targeted two of the officers, each of whom thought he was acting in agreement with the other, when in fact the money was siphoned off into an unknown bank account in France. It seems that a criminal investigation is still in hand but does not appear to be making any progress.

It is now hoped that the projected European Days in Sofia, Bulgaria, originally scheduled for 2020, will now take place in 2022. Sadly though, in part due to increased lack of mobility of British section members and the ongoing effects of the pandemic and the unknowns following Brexit, the likelihood of any British section representation at this event is remote.

Nearer to home and nearer in time is our own British section Annual General Meeting, which we have managed to arrange in Bournemouth on **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> October at 16h00**. As indicated in our last edition, the venue will be as before at the **Elstead Hotel, 12-14 Knyveton Road, Bournemouth, BH1 3QP**. Afterwards we shall have an evening meal together with two nights' accommodation and some communal activities the following day and returning home on the Sunday. The final date for booking accommodation has already passed but even so, we should love to see you at the AGM, where we shall among other things discuss the way forward for the British section of AEC. We look forward to enjoying one another's company again for the first time since February 2020, although sadly friends from Europe will be unable to join us.

Philip Worsfold. August 2021

*(The views expressed are personal and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Association.)*

### Reminders.

Again a reminder that the British section website is up and running at **HYPERLINK "http://www.aec-europe.co.uk" [www.aec-europe.co.uk](http://www.aec-europe.co.uk)** It will be a source of up to date information, so please use it regularly. Jenny Worsfold is the webmaster and material for insertion should be sent to her as an e-mail attachment.

### 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 addresses on page 2**.



## **NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.**

The Annual General Meeting will take place on **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2021** at the **Elstead Hotel, 12-14 Knyveton Road, Bournemouth, BH1 3QP, commencing at 16h00**. This will allow time for members to arrive by train.

**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**

**Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021.**

### **DEFERRED 32<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 2021: DRAFT AGENDA**

**(Any further amendments will be announced at the meeting)**

Opening remarks and Apologies for absence.

2. Minutes of the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual General meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> April 2019.  
(The draft minutes of the 2019 AGM, were printed in the newsletter for June 2019 – Vol. 23, No4)
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 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 – Nigel Hyde
8. Election of Officers for the period of the remaining year, until 15<sup>th</sup> May 2022.  
(The President was elected in 2018 to serve until 2022)  
Vice President  
Secretary  
Asst Secretary  
Treasurer, Membership Secretary & Recruitment officer
9. Appointment of Checker of Accounts
10. Nomination of delegates for the European Administrative Council.  
(Meetings in Sofia, Bulgaria, on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2022 and one other to be arranged) and for the General Assembly in Sofia on 20<sup>th</sup> May.)
11. The Way Forward for the British Section
12. Dates and Venues for forthcoming European Days.
13. Proposed date and venue for 2022 Annual General Meeting
14. Reunions & Events Programme.
15. Any Other Business (see note above)

### **MUSINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT**

**Radical Paisley: Mystery, History And Other Tales Of How I Rediscovered My Hometown Rails.**

**The line that never had any future (or death came on a tram, as it cost less!)**

All of my life I suppose, railways have been a big part of the way I have progressed. This



is a brief vision back to my childhood in Paisley, the largest town in Scotland which lies 10km southwest of Glasgow. I am therefore a Paisley buddy as people from the town are known. As a child I recall things my parents have told me and a neighbour Mr Porter, who was an actual porter in Gilmour Street station the main station of 3 surviving whilst I still lived in the town. I remember being frightened by the steam engines before the blue trains arrived. I also recall travelling from

Edinburgh back to Glasgow in a Pullman car as a treat maybe it was the Queen of Scots I don't know but I was told to behave like a gentleman. Then I also had my time working on the blue trains and other rolling stock. My childhood did not have me showing a great interest in my surroundings as all I could see was derelict and decaying lines & stations (industrial decay was to follow), however the railways of the area have survived cutbacks and closures and even had a partial re-opening.

It has not been until recently I started to look into the railway history of my hometown to discover the rich layers of lines and tales of rivalry, intrigue and legal disputes; the usual thing that railway proprietors got up to in Victorian times. Ironically it was a fictional Railway detective\* that got my interest going. The books in the railway detective series are set in the earliest days of the railways and the Metropolitan police; and are a statement of social hierarchy at the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign which is round about the time the first railways started to develop along the River Clyde and in fact on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1837 the Paisley & Renfrew line opened. This was built to the 4ft 6in gauge on stone blocks. This line was in operation before the some of the constituent parts of the West Coast Main Line. Around the time of Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, the railway system expanded rapidly and intense rivalry created many duplicate lines and this gave Paisley buddies at least 13 stations to travel from. Expansion of the suburban lines continued even though electric trams were encroaching on the territory of the 2 rival companies. This led to a series of lines being built and fitted out for service which never opened to passengers. These lines became known locally as "The Dummy Railway". The only memories I have of this is a little section of line into Potterhill station which was used for a distribution point for Cadbury chocolates and, further on, embankments with decaying station buildings which could be seen on the way to my Aunt's house which was in a post 1945 housing estate. Like many towns across Europe Paisley was an industrial town which hosted shipbuilding, chemicals, food producers, starch & bleachfields along with engineering; even building some 91 of the famous blue trains for the North Clyde electrification in 1959 (*at Pressed Steel in Linwood which later became Rootes car plant, home of the popular Hillman Imp*) and it was a major producer of thread, textiles, dyes, bleaches and sundries associated with textiles & weaving. The Pressed Steel plant was connected to the Gourrock /Wemyss Bay line by a remnant of the old "Dummy railway". A hotbed of radical thought, Paisley has a history of fighting inequalities, one of its citizens was a signatory of the American Declaration of Independence in 1776. When visiting Roubaix for our European Days in 2013, they highlighted the textile heritage which like Paisley was in decline. Our common threads of industrial heritage shine through adversity and we continue to exist side by side, reinventing the fabric of our townscape and adapting to changing times. I know nothing of the railway history of Roubaix but I hope they didn't have a railway that was obsolete before it opened.

Further information on the railway [HYPERLINK "http://railway.paisleyhistory.uk/"](http://railway.paisleyhistory.uk/)<http://railway.paisleyhistory.uk/> (English language only)

\*Inspector Robert Colbeck Railway Detective series by Edward Marston - 19 books so far.

## **TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL NEWS**

### **THE PERILS OF RAIL TRAVEL IN THE AGE OF COVID**

A recent article in The Guardian newspaper highlights a problem experienced by prospective rail travellers when they try to obtain a refund after the service for which they have booked is cancelled. The article highlighted one particular booking agent

who advised their client to contact the rail company – in this case the Thello overnight service provider between France and Italy. 20 months after making a claim, the client complains he is no further forward in obtaining a refund.

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But the situation was far from simple. Due to the Covid outbreak, Thello had had to suspend its operations and without state support was on the verge of bankruptcy if not already bankrupt. The specialist booking agent, like many such, was a small family business, which has already paid out to the operator for the tickets and following the cancellation will have received at best a credit against future bookings. So a major liability for refunds could put them into bankruptcy too.

A similar circumstance has occurred with your editor's booking for rail travel to Sofia for the 2020 European Days in Bulgaria. In this case, payment had been made and tickets received just days before Covid restrictions were announced. The bookings were cancelled and the various rail companies involved all offered to the agent credit against future bookings. All the agent, again a small family firm whose business had effectively dried up, could offer was either a refund at some unspecified time in the future if and when their business became viable again, or a time limited credit note against a future booking. I opted for the latter, thinking at the time that the event would be re-organised for 2021. But now we await European Days in Bulgaria in 2022. O.K., the credit note is valid until May of that year, but deteriorating mobility means that a rail journey across Europe is out of the question, even without the imposition of more complicated travel arrangements for those who are no longer European citizens. And for us, flying is unacceptable on environmental grounds. So in May 2022, the credit note will expire. Travel insurance has also expired. If we try to make a claim against the travel agent – he was, in any case about to retire – it would bankrupt him. The only option available, to keep one's conscience clear is to accept the loss as an inevitable product of Covid, Brexit and old age!

P.W.

## **EXTRACTS FROM THE BULLETIN OF EUROPEAN RAIL TRAVEL.**

### **Rescue For Eurostar**

In the last bulletin, an uncertain future was reported for Eurostar, which since 1994 has been connecting London with Paris and Brussels and thus expanding rail's share of the international market.

Thanks to the pandemic, passenger numbers had dropped dramatically, the company was only running two return trains a day, and had severe financial problems. The British government was refusing to help.

On May 17<sup>th</sup> it was announced that the French, Belgians and Canadians had put together a financial package of £250,000,000. Eurostar began to promote its services again and since the end of May has increased them to two a day between London and Paris with the promise of a third towards the end of June.

Meanwhile Thalys, which had also been running a fairly restricted service, started to increase its frequencies between Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam, plus one return trip to Dortmund.

What are the prospects now for the merger of Eurostar and Thalys into "Greenspeed", as had been announced before the pandemic?

*[However, questions have been raised in Britain because of the government's lack of interest in protecting the livelihood of Eurostar's predominantly British based staff. Trades Union and lobbyists for the Green economy have held a seminar in August to try to press the issue of protecting Britain's Green travel option to Europe, as against*

*favouring airlines. – Ed.]*

### **Progress Towards The 24/7 Railway**

It is encouraging that the Paris - Nice night train has been reinstated.

On May 20<sup>th</sup> the first train left Paris Austerlitz for Marseille Blancarde, Toulon, Les Arcs Draguignan, St Raphael Valescure, Cannes, Antibes and Nice. It took just over 12 hours and was composed of first and second class couchettes plus a coach with reclining seats. It was possible because of a relaunch plan

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announced by the French government in September 2020 with 100 million euro earmarked for the development of French night trains.

A few days later, on May 24<sup>th</sup>, ÖBB started its Vienna – Amsterdam night service, with the Austrian Environment Minister and the CEO of ÖBB on board. Sections left Vienna and Innsbruck at 20.12 and 20.14 respectively and arrived at 09.58 in Amsterdam. The southbound train leaves Amsterdam at 18.30 to reach the two Austrian cities at 09/14 / 09/19.

ÖBB stated that a single night train saved 100,000kg of CO2 emissions in comparison to an aeroplane.

On May 26<sup>th</sup> the first Nightjet returned to Brussels after the COVID 19 break, with a compulsory ant-COVID test for passengers available at Vienna's main station. Meanwhile, the seasonal Snälltoget is due to leave Stockholm for Berlin on June 26<sup>th</sup> and another open access operator, OVOE is planning overnight ski trains for Belgian customers to resorts between Salzburg and Innsbruck, and to Milan, next season.

### **“Connecting Europe Express”**

This important player of European Year of Rail is due to depart from Lisbon on 2nd September, and will actually be three separate trains which between them are due to call at cities throughout continental Europe.

This includes every capital of an EU state plus three capitals of non-EU states (Berne, Belgrade and Skopje) and some major cities such as Bordeaux, Verona and Frankfurt(Main).

The Connecting Europe Express is due to terminate in Paris on October 7<sup>th</sup>.

We understand that there are planned to be events at each stop. Could this be an opportunity for local rail users' organisations to become involved? You are advised to check regularly on the website HYPERLINK "<https://connectingeuropexpress.eu/resources/>".

### **By Rail To The COP26 In November**

The UN climate change conference, COP26, is due to go ahead in Glasgow in the first half of November. The European Rail Campaign (UK) has been actively pressing politicians and operators to encourage people travelling to the conference from the Near Continent to come to Glasgow by train. Of course we hope that there will be a more frequent Eurostar service well before then.

Meanwhile, ERC(UK) has had further contact with the Netherlands-based group By Rail to the COP, who aim to charter a special train from Amsterdam and Brussels to London and another from London to Glasgow for the event.

You can find out more by logging on to HYPERLINK "<https://railtothecop.com>" or by e-mailing HYPERLINK

"<mailto:info@railtothecop.com>" "[info@railtothecop.com](mailto:info@railtothecop.com)"

Those who plan to travel on scheduled trains to Glasgow may like to visit the website

of the Association of European Rail Agents (HYPERLINK "http://www.aera.co.uk"[www.aera.co.uk](http://www.aera.co.uk)) which lists UK travel agents who specialise in rail travel.

### **Shares In European Sleeper**

On 12<sup>th</sup> May the new company European Sleeper invited investors to register for shares. You can receive information from them in English or Dutch. Shares will be available from 350 Euro (Fans), 5000 Euro (Ambassador) or 100,000 (Founder). Holders of Ambassador or Founder shares will be able to vote at company meetings. Log on to the website HYPERLINK "https://europeansleeper.eu"<https://europeansleeper.eu>

The company is seeking to raise 500,000 Euro initial capital, allowing it to set up sales, marketing, customer service and operations and help overcome the initial stage.

European Sleeper calculates that its initial Brussels – Prague service will reduce CO2 emissions by 75 tonnes. It is planned to leave Brussels at 19.30, reach

Berlin at 06.00 and Prague at 10.00. The westbound train should leave Prague at 19.00 call in Berlin at 23.00 and arrive in Brussels at 09.00. Further options could be an extension to Ghent, Bruges and Ostende.

With its partner Regiojet, the company has applied for train paths and expects to receive an allocation in August.

### **European Passengers' Federation**

The EPF annual conference this year is on June 26<sup>th</sup> and is listed in the programme for European Year of Rail. It will be a virtual event between 10.00 and 15.00 (CEST) and you can register for it on HYPERLINK "<http://www.epf.eu>" [www.epf.eu](http://www.epf.eu).

Speakers will include Anna Deparney-Grunenberg MEP on how the Year of Rail is a positive sign for passengers, Anja Schmotz of kolej/depl on cross-border links between Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic, Hans Leister on expansion of the Deutschlandtakt into a pan-European approach and Kristian Schmidt of DGMOVE on EU policy. There will also be a workshop on Shift2Rail.

### **Promoting Rail Travel**

As vaccination progresses against COVID, operators are beginning to increase their services and more people are thinking about travel – within their own country or further. In this bulletin we have given some examples.

The message needs to be constantly repeated that rail is a safe way to travel, and studies from several countries over the past 12 months have shown that. The message is well summarised on the website of the Association of European Rail Agents HYPERLINK "<http://www.aera.co.uk>" [www.aera.co.uk](http://www.aera.co.uk).

On that website you can also find details of those British travel agents who specialise in domestic and international rail. Advice and easy booking are key components in promoting international rail travel.

Also recommended are two agencies in Germany – Gleisnost in Freiburg-im Breisgau (HYPERLINK "<http://www.gleisnost.de>" [www.gleisnost.de](http://www.gleisnost.de)) and Bahnagentur Schöneberg in Berlin (HYPERLINK "<https://bahnagentur-schoeneberg.de>" <https://bahnagentur-schoeneberg.de>).

At Thisted in Denmark is a further agency called Togrejse (meaning "Train Journey") which works with partners in a number of other countries. Their website is HYPERLINK "<http://www.togrejse.dk>" [www.togrejse.dk](http://www.togrejse.dk) and you can contact them on HYPERLINK "<mailto:booking@togrejse.dk>" [booking@togrejse.dk](mailto:booking@togrejse.dk)

The European Rail Timetable, available in either digital or paper format, is a great source of helpful information when you are planning a journey. Find out more about it, and order it, via HYPERLINK "<http://www.europeanrailtimetable.eu>"

[www.europeanrailtimetable.eu](http://www.europeanrailtimetable.eu) [www.europeanrailtimetable.eu](http://www.europeanrailtimetable.eu). The summer 2021

edition was published on June 9<sup>th</sup> and should contain updated times valid till

December 11<sup>th</sup>.

John Potter, who compiles this timetable, also issues a very useful Friday Flyer every week, giving short updates.

### **Plane Or Train?**

A survey published in The Times newspaper on May 28<sup>th</sup> asked about planning to make international journeys, 80% said the cost would make them consider rail rather than flying.

The climate charity Possible stated that two thirds of people were willing to consider travelling without flying "at least some of the time but cost is a key factor."

The report noted that aviation was responsible for 10% of UK carbon emissions, but that the British government indirectly subsidised air travel by £70 billion (829 bn euros) a year. Meanwhile, in April French lawmakers moved to ban short-haul internal flights where a rail alternative exists – essentially where the same journey can be done by train in less than 2 hours 30 minutes.

In 2020, Austrian Airlines replaced their Vienna – Salzburg flights by extra trains after receiving a government bail-out with provisions to cut their carbon footprint.

### **AUSTRIAN RAILWAYS ORDERS 20 MORE NIGHT TRAIN SETS**

Austrian Federal Railways has ordered a further 20 seven-car sets of Viaggio Next Level coaches from Siemens Mobility for use on Nightjet overnight services. The order announced on August 10 is the second to be placed under a 2018 framework agreement covering up to 700 vehicles.

An initial firm order for 13 Nightjet sets was placed in August 2018, and these are currently being assembled at Siemens Mobility's Wien plant for use on services from Austria and Germany to Italy from December 2022.

The 20 sets in the latest order are to be deployed on the Wien/Innsbruck – Hamburg/Amsterdam, Wien/Graz – Zürich and Zürich – Hamburg/Amsterdam routes.

Each seven-car train will have two seating coaches, two sleeping cars and three couchette cars. The sleeping car compartments will have a private toilet and shower, while the couchette cars will feature 'mini cabins' providing more privacy for single travellers. Every set will include a multifunctional vehicle with a low-floor entrance, a barrier-free couchette compartment, and an accessible toilet.

#### **The sustainable future of travel**

The latest order 'is an important step in positioning ÖBB as the market leader in Europe's night train business', said ÖBB CEO Andreas Matthä.

'ÖBB is already Europe's largest night train operator, and with the new state-of-the-art Nightjet fleet, we will further reinforce our position and offer our travellers first-class comfort'.

Siemens Mobility CEO Michael Peter said 'with the new Nightjets, ÖBB is investing in the sustainable future of travel. Night trains provide climate-friendly overnight connections between European cities, make rail journeys more comfortable and attractive, and thus make an important contribution toward achieving climate goals.'

'We are building the European night train network of the future from Wien', commented Austria's Minister for Climate Protection, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation & Technology Leonore Gewessler. 'By 2025, a total of 33 new Nightjets will be operating throughout Europe. Board the train in the evening and wake up refreshed at your destination the next morning. I'm really looking forward to it.'

### **ELECTRIFYING NEWS**

Reports have been flying around regarding the future of road haulage as the use of diesel fuel is phased out. One report suggests that as an experiment, a part of a motorway in Lincolnshire is to be fitted with overhead conductors so that lorries working on electric battery power 'off piste' can re-charge their batteries whilst on the long haul. Multiple conductors are envisaged to permit overtaking. Just how this would work we do not know, because, unlike a dodgem track the road would not be paved with steel plate, and each vehicle would require two conductor/pantographs or whatever – like a trolleybus. Further it is understood that a trial is already in hand in Europe; but this is restricted to a single lane for electric pick-up. Presumably, a lorry could overtake by leaving the electrified lane and using its battery power briefly. From illustrations, the height of the pantograph would mean that trailer height would have to be limited. In Britain some trailers are a lot higher than the maximum permitted in Europe, so either Britain would have to change to comply with European standards or have a much higher catenary which would debar European lorries from using the British system. But then you could attach a trailer or two – or maybe 30 or more behind each lorry. You could reduce pollution due to rubber particles – a major source



of environmental contamination,

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we hear – by fitting steel wheels and running them on a sort of steel guide-way. But haven't we got there already – with railways? Interestingly, the European Union is also investing heavily to encourage environmentally friendly rail freight transport.

### **BONNE NUIT, GUTEN MORGEN. – SLEEPING CARS ON RAILWAY POSTERS**

For train journeys lasting longer than a day, luxury sleeping cars were introduced in the late 19th century. They were operated by specialized companies such as Wagons-Lits and later Mitropa. The first decades the 'mobile hotels' were only available to the wealthy. Posters advertising overnight travel featured sleeping beauties and lots of dark blue.

After World War II affordable options became available for mass tourism, but some of the romance disappeared. By the year 2000 the number of overnight services declined sharply due to the rise of high-speed trains and cheap airline tickets. Because of climate change, night trains are currently experiencing a renaissance. Is the same true for posters?

Such posters were produced in the past to advertise night trains, such as the "Ostend-Vienna Express". Is it not time to use graphic art again for today's services?

"The Renaissance of the Night Train" is the theme of an imaginative post contest just launched by Back-on-Track Belgium.

Back-on-Track Belgium invites all persons living in the European Economic Area plus other states including Switzerland and the UK to design a poster in A1 format highlighting the benefits of night time travel for passengers and for society in general. A jury will make a selection from all entries, to be displayed in Brussels in the autumn and the winners will be announced the start of December.

Prizes will include complimentary tickets or passes donated by Interrail/Eurail, European Sleeper and Ostende – Vienna Orient Experience, plus an Ice Watch run on solar energy. There will also be prizes specially for students.

The entries may be submitted from now until October 31<sup>st</sup>. For rules (In French, English and Dutch) and information on how to enter, please log on to HYPERLINK "<https://www.backontrackbelgium.be/poster-contest>"<https://www.backontrackbelgium.be/poster-contest> .

### **EXTREME WEATHER TASK FORCE**

The International Union of Railways' Taskforce on Extreme Weather Conditions has been launched, and will initially focus on addressing the impact of heavy rain and floods. Strong winds are proposed as a focus for next year, and earthquakes in 2023. UIC's Safety Platform decided to create the taskforce following a series of extreme weather events, in particular floods. The taskforce is open to all UIC members. The kick-off meeting on July 21 included an overview of current research, including the SAFIRST project looking at sidewinds, the FORESEE project for resilient transport infrastructure, the development of a climate change policy guide for low-income countries in Africa and South Asia, UIC's Resilient Railways facing Climate Change project, and the Rail Adapt project to ensure railways are prepared for climate change. UIC Head of Operations & Safety Frédéric Henon said a systemic approach to developing preventive and predictive measures is required, and the taskforce would work closely and cross-functionally with UIC's Passenger, Rail System (operations and infrastructure) and Fundamental Values (safety) departments.

### **LYON –TORINO BASE TUNNEL CONTRACTS SIGNED.**

Three major contracts have been awarded for construction of the 57.5 km cross-border Mont Cenis base tunnel, which is central to the programme to develop a high-capacity rail route between Lyon and Torino.



The contracts signed on July 7 2021 have a combined value of more than €3bn, with the package being co-financed by Italy, France and the EU.

The €1.47bn Lot 1 contract awarded to a consortium of Eiffage Génie Civil, Spie Batignolles, Ghella and Cogeis covers the 22 km between Villarodin-Bourget/Modane and Italy. Tunnelling is expected to take 72 months, with two TBMs heading towards Italy and blasting towards France.

Lot 2 worth €1.43bn was awarded to a consortium of Vinci Construction Grands Projets, Dodin Campenon Bernard, Vinci Construction France and Webuild. This covers the 23 km between Saint-Martin-la-Porte/La Praz and Modane, as a continuation of the 10 km already completed from Saint-Martin-la-Porte towards Italy. It will be bored using three TBMs, although some blasting will be needed for the more geologically complex parts, and construction is expected to take 65 months.

The €228m Lot 3 is the shortest, covering the 3 km section between the western portal at Saint-Julien-Montdenis and Saint-Martin-la-Porte. This contract was awarded to Implenia Suisse, Implenia France, NGE, Itinera and Rizzani de Eccher. Excavation will be carried out by blasting and is due to be finished in 70 months.

The twin-bore tunnel will be suitable for passenger trains running at up to 220 km/h and 120 km/h freight trains. Construction is being managed by Tunnel Euralpin Lyon Torino, which is owned 50:50 by Italy's FS Group and France's Ministry of Economy & Finance.

Due for opening in 2030, the base tunnel will require 162 km of tunnelling in total, of which 60% will be bored and 40% excavated. To date, around 30 km has been completed. The total cost of the project is now put at €8.6bn.

Speaking during the virtual contract signing ceremony, European Commissioner for Transport Adina Vălean said completion of the high capacity link between France and Italy would help to shift large volumes of cross-border traffic from road to rail.

## **FLIXTRAIN TO LAUNCH NEW ROUTES AND NIGHT TRAINS**

In Sweden, FlixBus and its local partner Hector Rail are now operating 38 trains/week between Stockholm and Göteborg. The first FlixBus service in Sweden was launched on May 6 by Peter Ahlgren, FlixBus's Managing Director for the Nordic region.

FlixBus announced on May 11 that it intends to launch two additional inter-city routes in Germany over the coming months, as part of an expansion programme aiming to double the number of open access services.

FlixBus suspended operations at the height of the coronavirus pandemic last year, but restarted regular services in July 2020 on the east-west route linking Aachen, Köln, Hannover and Berlin and a Köln – Hamburg service via Düsseldorf, Essen and Osnabrück. Its established Berlin – Frankfurt – Stuttgart route is now expected to resume operation in June.

Bookings opened on May 11 for a north – south route linking Hamburg, Berlin and Leipzig which started running from May 27. This was to be expanded south to Nürnberg, Augsburg and München from June 17, and northwards to Kiel from September 11. FlixBus is looking to operate up to eight trains per day between Leipzig, Berlin and Hamburg, going head to head with Deutsche Bahn's half-hourly ICE service.

A second new route introduced on June 18 links München and Frankfurt via Augsburg, Würzburg and Aschaffenburg; this will initially have one train each way per day.

FlixBus founder and CEO André Schwämmlein told WirtschaftsWoche that the group had used the hiatus during the pandemic to modernise its fleet, offering 'a quantum leap in the quality of the rolling stock'. With the backing of leasing company Railpool, the group has acquired a substantial fleet of second hand vehicles which are

being refurbished by Talbot Rail Services at Aachen and fitted with onboard wi-fi.

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The expanded fleet will enable the operator to provide low-cost services on more routes with tickets starting from €5 each way. 'We are putting additional trains on the tracks and want to send a clear signal', said Schwämmlein. 'Train travel must be accessible for everyone. And people should have a choice about which train they want to take. So it's all the better that we are providing an excellent alternative with modern trains, affordable prices and fast travel times.'

Schwämmlein confirmed that FlixTrain is also preparing to enter the night train market, and introducing two overnight trains between München, Berlin and Hamburg from mid-June. 'If that goes well, we will expand it further', he added. Although DB withdrew from this market some years ago, the state-owned operator has been working with Austria's ÖBB to support several Nightjet routes, and has announced its intention to operate overnight seating services using ICE high speed trains.

Schwämmlein said FlixMobility wanted 'to show the politicians that we, as a private railway company, fit into their vision of interlinking Germany even more closely'.

He believes that the proposed Deutschlandtakt national regular-interval timetable should not be run solely by DB, but suggested that the standardised paths on key routes should be shared with private operators.

Whilst FlixTrain had to appeal to the Bundesnetzagentur three years ago in order to obtain long-distance paths on routes that DB Netz had declared to be congested, Schwämmlein reported that the operator was now seeing 'intensive co-operation' with the infrastructure manager. Although the path allocation process was 'very bureaucratic', he said DB Netz now recognised that 'we can be part of the solution:

## **EUROPEAN DAYS AND OTHER EVENTS**

**What appears below as proposed is all dependent on the progress made on defeating the Covid-19 virus and re-opening Europe to its citizens and visitors.**

### **Dates of European Events.**

**AEC European Days in Bulgaria (Sofia) 2022** organised by the Romanian section from 15<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> May 2022 Existing bookings by British section members have been cancelled and refunds made, so for new bookings see the detailed programme below. You are advised to contact the organiser direct for booking details..

**The Spanish section proposed European Days in Madrid/Toledo and the Polish section for AEC European Days in Lublin, Poland.** These postponed events will need to be re-scheduled.

## **EUROPEAN DAYS IN SOFIA, BULGARIA, ORGANISED BY THE ROMANIAN SECTION.**

**15<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> MAY 2022**  
**(Note revised prices)**

### **Sunday: 15 May 2022**

08.00-24.00 – Arrival of participants at the European days of the AEC. Transfer from the train station and from international airport of Sofia. Accommodation at **Hotel Rila\*\*\*** located just 50 metres from the main shopping street of Sofia, equipped with restaurant, terrace, conference room, bar, etc.

19.00-23.00 - Dinner at the restaurant.



**Monday: 16 May 2022**

- 07.00-09.00 – Breakfast
  - 09.00-13.00 - Administrative Council meeting in the conference room of the hotel.
  - 13.00-15.00 – Lunch in the hotel's restaurant.
  - 15.30-18.00 - Meeting of General Assembly and election of the new European Bureau AEC.
- For other participants, take the program relax by the pool or stroll through the historic center.
- 18.30-22.00 - Official opening of the European Days of the AEC. Festive dinner with music, dance and a folklore program with a Bulgarian specific at a restaurant in the area.

**Tuesday: 17 May 2022**

- 07.00-09.30 - Breakfast
- 10.00-13.00 – Tour of the city of Sofia with a visit to the Cathedral Alexander Nevski, Saint Sophia Church, Saint George Church, The Royal Palace and The National Theater Ivan Vazov.
- 13.30-15.30 - Lunch at a restaurant in Central Sofia.
- 16.00-19.00 – Continue to the city and visit the National Park Mount Vitosha, the oldest natural park on the Balkan Peninsula, visible from almost all parts of Sofia.
- 19.30-21.30 - Dinner at a restaurant in Central Sofia.

**Wednesday: 18 May 2022**

- 07.00-09.00 - Breakfast at the hotel.
- 09.30-12.30 - Visit the Krakra Fortress and the Pernik Mining Museum (35km)
- 13.00-15.00 - Lunch at a restaurant in the Rila Nature Park (95km).
- 15.30-18.00 - Visit to Rila Monastery, the largest Orthodox monastery in the Balkans.  
Return to Sofia.
- 19.30-21.30 - Dinner at a restaurant in Central Sofia.

**Thursday: 19 May 2022**

- 07.00 - Packed breakfast. Bus departure in the center of Bulgaria – about 200 km.
- 10.30 -12.00 - Visit Arbanasi - the oldest village in Bulgaria, in fact a mini architectural jewel.
- 12.30 – 14.00 – Lunch at Sevastokrator Restaurant in Arbanasi.
- 14.30 – 16.00 – Visiting Veliko Tarnovo - the former medieval capital of Bulgaria
- 16.30 – Travel to Sofia.
- 20.30 – Dinner at one restaurant in Central Sofia

**Friday: 20 May 2022**

- 07.00-09.00 - Breakfast at the hotel.
- 09.30-12.00 - Visit to the City Hall in Sofia and the Headquarters of the Bulgarian Railways.
- 12.30-14.30 - Lunch at a restaurant in Sofia.
- 15.00-18.00 - Free time for shopping and relaxation.
- 18.30-22.00 - The official closing of the European Railway Days - AEC - with music, dance and a special artistic program at a restaurant.

**Saturday: 21 May 2022**

- 07.00-09.00 - Breakfast at the hotel.
- Departure of participants. Transfer to the train station or the airport.





**Estimated costs :**

From May 16 (festive dinner) until May 21 (breakfast) – **525 euro**

From May 15 (dinner) until May 21 (breakfast) – **595 euro**

From 13 (dinner) until 17 (breakfast) – **180 euro**

Supplement Single room - **20 euro/night.**

The program includes accommodation in **Hotel Rila\*\*\***, full board including drinks for lunch and dinner, bus transport, tour guide with guide, entry to objectives and transfers from the station or airport.

**It will be up to individuals to make their own bookings directly to the Romanian section, which is organising the event. If you wish to attend please contact Constantin Proca at [HYPERLINK "mailto:aecproca@gmail.com"](mailto:aecproca@gmail.com) [aecproca@gmail.com](mailto:aecproca@gmail.com) for payment timings.**

**The bank details for payment are:**

Beneficiary: **ECO NET CONSULTING SRL**

Address: **700133 Iasi – Romania, 7-11 Bacinschi Street**

Euro IBAN account: **RO19 BRDE 240 SV 265 2520 2400**

Bank: **BRD GSG SA**, Swift Code: **BRDEROBU**

Payment specification: **AEC - SOFIA 15/16 - 21 May 2022**

**RECENT EVENTS...****...AND THINGS TO COME****Monthly Reunions and Annual General Meeting.**

Since our last report, all meetings have been postponed until further notice. The Annual General Meeting will be held at **16h00 on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> October at the Elstead Hotel, Bournemouth**, if it is safe to do so. We shall decide then how we wish to go forward.

**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 are looking into 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>

**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 [HYPERLINK "mailto:larry.fullwood@virgin.net"](mailto:larry.fullwood@virgin.net)

[larry.fullwood@virgin.net](mailto:larry.fullwood@virgin.net) .

### **REPTA.**

The long standing Railway Employees' and Public Transport Association offers bargain price insurance through offers including competitive insurances through their brokers the Alan Boswell Group; 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. For details contact our Asst Secretary, Peter Davies (see page 2), who is also General Secretary of REPTA; or visit: HYPERLINK "http://www.repta.co.uk" [www.repta.co.uk](http://www.repta.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???**

We shall endeavour to continue the production of these newsletters. I use a variety of sources for news of international interest and thank those members who send me information – but I 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 yourselves so that I can 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 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021

The copy deadline is **1<sup>st</sup> November 2021.**

## **SUMMARY OF EVENTS**

**The 2021 AGM will take place on the afternoon of Friday 8<sup>th</sup> October at the Elstead Hotel, 12-14 Knyveton Road, Bournemouth, BH1 3QP. at 16h00; subject to current covid19 restrictions..**

**To make this a social weekend,** we have reserved some rooms at the Elstead for both Friday and Saturday nights to enable us to visit some place or places of interest on the Saturday, before returning home on Sunday.



# A.E.C. BRITISH SECTION: MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

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

Forename:.....

Job Description:.....

Work Location (optional) .....

**ACTIVE / RETIRED \***

## General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

**I agree to the use of my postal address / e-mail address / telephone number(s)\* by the secretary / treasurer\* for the purposes of receiving communications from the association.**

**I authorise the editor of the newsletter to send it to me by post / e-mail attachment\***

Home Postal Address:.....

.....

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

Telephone:.....

Mobile:.....

(\*delete as applicable)

Membership of the A.E.C. costs £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 secure computer databases held individually by the secretary, treasurer and newsletter editor as authorised above; and will be used only for the purposes authorised above. No information will be divulged to any person – including other members – without your express permission. A copy of your GDPR declaration will be kept by each of the officers concerned.**

**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: **HYPERLINK** "mailto:nigel.hyde6@btinternet.com"

[nigel.hyde6@btinternet.com](mailto:nigel.hyde6@btinternet.com)