



British Section

Newsletter

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† John Hayward

European Association of Railway Personnel

Association Européenne des Cheminots (AISBL)

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

**International Non-governmental Organisation with consultative status to the
UN (decision E/ 2002/ of 22.07.2002) and member of the**

United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

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).

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AEC BRITISH SECTION COMMITTEE

The Annual General Meeting for 2021 was re-scheduled and took place on 8th October. The following were re-elected to serve until the 2022 Annual General Meeting, hopefully to take place in April next. Sadly, since the elections, Patrick Rigby has passed away, so his post becomes vacant. Also our past Hon President, Theo Steel has also passed away

Honorary President:

Colin Charman,
formerly Operations Manager
Eurostar Engineering Centre.

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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. 2
March 2022**

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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: <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 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

Having just recovered from the shocks of Autumn 2021, yet again we were plunged into deep sadness on hearing of the death of John Hayward. He passed away on 2nd February, and his funeral took place a week later on the ninth. I had not realised the extent to which he had been living on borrowed time, since the few weeks he was given on his last diagnosis turned out to be a couple of years. Nevertheless his passing is a great loss to A.E.C and he will be sorely missed not just by his family but by his many friends and correspondents throughout the world – not least among those of us of the British section of AEC. I was pleased to be able to attend his funeral and it proved to be a lovely remembrance of one of our most loyal members. An obituary appears later in this newsletter.

As I write, the restrictions relating to the covid19 epidemic are due to be lifted completely in a few days time. We shall see if this action is timely or, as I believe, too soon. But with a government mired with problems, some relief from the constant bad news is welcome. Also we shall have to see if travel will become any easier. Whilst it is possible to arrange holidays through travel agents to book a cruise or fly direct to a holiday destination, it is still very complicated to make personalised trips, particularly overland, with individual countries having different arrangements for foreign visitors. Our Romanian colleagues are receiving many queries regarding the European Days in Bulgaria still proposed for May this year (with a postponement to September having been briefly proposed but rejected). Sadly it still seems impossible for there to be a British section representation at this event. I have to say again that the uncertainties of having to traverse many national boundaries, even within the European Union, make individual overland travel all but impossible. Four of us managed to meet up again for a reunion at the Brewery Tap in Peterborough on 25th January for a convivial lunch, despite travel delays for two of us. We hope that more will be able to make it to the Annual General Meeting and Social weekend in Bournemouth to enjoy again the pleasure of good company; doing things together or enjoying conversation with others over a meal and a drink. Remember the dates; **Friday 8th to Sunday 10th April.**

Some good news is the announcement of the provision of a new railway station at Alrewas on the line between Lichfield and Burton-on-Trent. It will be close to the National Memorial Arboretum, where can be found, the Railway Industry Memorial and a memorial commemorating the thousands of prisoners of war who were forced to work on the infamous Burma Railway.

Recent tightening of the administration of transit to and from the United Kingdom are causing mounting delays to Cross Channel freight traffic, with huge queues of lorries on the approaches to the port of Dover. And the Channel Tunnel. A spike in traffic is the official explanation; but it is evident that there is more to it than that, since British exports to the European Union have plunged; and there are big price increases in the shops for staple goods imported from Europe, due to the additional administrative costs being passed on to the consumer. It has to be admitted though, that – for now at least – those imports are arriving in a timely enough manner to have at least eased the problem of empty supermarket shelves. But further restrictions come into force in the summer, so we still have to see what will be the full effect of Britain's decision to leave the European Union. It is interesting to note that according to a recent survey, around 20% of those who voted in favour of Brexit have now changed their minds.

Despite all this, a Government minister tells us that there is little evidence that Brexit is causing problems to trade and the British economy!

Philip Worsfold. February 2022

(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 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 2022

This is to be held on **Friday 8th April 2022 at the Elstead Hotel, Bournemouth.** Following a very successful postponed 2021 AGM in October, we are planning to hold the meeting once again on Friday afternoon, probably at 4 pm, as the start of a social weekend. There are many places in the area worth a visit on the Saturday. So we have reserved some rooms at the Elstead for both Friday and Saturday nights before we all return home on Sunday. The price is slightly more than last year: £138 per person for the two night bed & breakfast. Other meals and visits to be paid for at the time.

Booking has closed, but a reservation is not required just to attend the AGM. 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 26th March 2022.

33rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022: DRAFT AGENDA (Any further amendments will be announced at the meeting)

1. Opening remarks and Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the 32nd Annual General meeting of 8th October 2021.
(The draft minutes of the 2021 AGM, were printed in the newsletter for December 2021 – Vol 26, No1.
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 2022 – Nigel Hyde
8. Election of Officers for a period of one year, from 16th May 2022.
President (to serve until 2026)
Vice President
Secretary
Asst Secretary
Treasurer, Membership Secretary & Recruitment officer
Events officer
9. Appointment of Checker of Accounts
10. Dates and Venues for forthcoming European Days and nomination of delegates.
11. Proposed date and venue for 2023 Annual General Meeting
12. Reunions & Events Programme.
13. Any Other Business (see note above)

PRESIDENT’S MUSINGS.

Voyage, Voyager The Imperialism And Exceptionalism Of Disintegrated World Travellers- All You Need Is Bradshaw & Passepartout!

My inspiration for this item was the 2021 TV presentation of Around the World in 80 Days by Jules Verne, Bradshaw’s Continental Guide 1853 Edition.

In the 21st century world we have taken for granted freedom of movement as EU citizens a freedom lost to those of us who live on this septic Isle. A group of public schoolboys have taken us back in time by at least 2 centuries to the darkness of a deeply divided world of princes and paupers. The prospect of having European Days back then would be unimaginable, Europe was far from united and regarded with suspicion by the imperial empire lying off its coast (much as it is today by this corrupt dictatorship posing as a government). If we look into the past very few railways existed but were expanding rapidly worldwide making travelling easier for those whose status allowed them.

Let's imagine what European Days would be like in the year 1853....

Germany did not exist nor did Italy as unified countries; and the USA was 77 years old, along with others we know of today. This was the year before war was raging in Crimea (still topical today as the Ukraine crisis escalates) the Austrian-Empire & the Ottoman Empire were in existence and only a few years after France revolted & became a republic (848), then a few years later voted to become an Empire & a President became an Emperor), Poland was part of Russia & Nice was in the Piedmont Kingdom of Sardinia. Money matters were a big deal as no common currency existed making it difficult for the traveller of limited means. Time constraints restrictions on movements and local conditions hindered the progress of all but the most intrepid of individuals. Imperial rivalries and inbuilt suspicions of foreigners made contact outside your own circles almost impossible, creating a fear of all people & things foreign, a fear still ingrained in certain countries today. For my plan of an 1853 European Days I consulted a copy of *Bradshaw's Continental Railway Guide*, which proved fascinating for the information provided along with the Superiority that the Englishman of the day felt over others, (**I use the term "Englishman" as that is how it is printed therein**). I am choosing some places I have visited along with the British Section in our 20th/21st century events. I will state parts of what Bradshaw's printed about each location which is no reflection on the modern incarnations of these places.

Amiens – An ancient, handsome, fortified city on the Somme which is navigable to here for vessels of considerable burden. The town is well built, and being intersected by canals, resembles some of the Dutch cities.

Lille & Roubaix

Lille – A very fine city and one of the most considerable in France. The streets are wide and well formed; the houses mostly in the modern taste and well built.

Roubaix – A large manufacturing town, which has of late risen into great importance and is still increasing in population, which now exceeds 24,200 besides a large number of foreign workers, when the factories are in full operation. It lies 6 miles north of Lille.

Namur – The capital of the province of Namur at the conclusion of the Sambre and the Maese, a well built city with wide & clean streets. It is defended by a citadel on the summit of a craggy rock. It is the strongest fortress in Belgium.

Salzburg – A town of 11000 inhabitants, beautifully situated on the banks of the Salza, anciently governed by an archbishop.

Riga – No information.

Offenburg – A town containing about 4000 inhabitants, 17 German miles from Carlsruhe (*old spelling – Ed*) by railway, on the route to Basle. The country in the neighbourhood is interesting.

Verona – An ancient city, containing about 65000 inhabitants, connected with Venice by railway. It has a pleasant and picturesque situation, the Adige flowing through it, which is crossed by four stone bridges; the interior of the city does not correspond with the beauty of its position, many of the streets being narrow and dirty.

Taormina- 30 miles south of Messina. A small town in a beautiful situation on the coast. Contains a Roman theatre cut in the rock, a cistern and an aqueduct worth seeing. It maintained a siege of 80 years' duration against the Saracens.

Naples, - The chief city of the Two Sicilies with a population of more than 360,000 souls and has a south Eastern aspect. Most of the houses are lofty and the streets narrow; there are no spacious squares or places. The coast to Castellamare, the orange groves of Sorrento, the fields of lava and the streets of Pompeii, all afford to the traveller food for the most pleasing study and recollection.

Cluj Napoca – Clausenburg, no information.

George Bradshaw, the Man (1800 – 1853)

Bradshaw was born at Windsor Bridge, Pendleton, in Salford, Lancashire. On leaving school he was apprenticed to an engineer named Beale in Manchester; and in 1820 he set up his own engraving business in Belfast, returning to Manchester in 1822 to set up as an engraver and printer, principally of maps.

He was a religious man. He joined the Society of Friends (the Quakers) and gave a considerable part of his time to philanthropic work. He worked a great deal with radical reformers such as Richard Cobden in organising peace conferences and in setting up schools and soup kitchens for the poor of Manchester.

It is his belief as a Quaker that is quoted as causing the early editions of Bradshaw's guides to have avoided using the names of months based upon Roman deities which was seen as "pagan" usage.

While touring Norway in 1853 he contracted Cholera and died in September of that year without being able to return to England. He is interred in the Gamiebyen cemetery about a mile from Oslo Cathedral. His gravestone is on the left by the gate near Oslo hospital.

Bradshaw's Railway Guides to Great Britain & Ireland

Bradshaw's was a series of railway timetables and travel guide books published by W. J. Adams and later Henry Blacklock, both of London. George Bradshaw initiated the series in 1839.. They are named after founder, who produced his first timetable in October 1839.

Although Bradshaw died in 1853, the range of titles bearing his name (and commonly referred to by that alone) continued to expand for the remainder of the 19th and early part of the 20th century, covering at various times Continental Europe, India, Australia and New Zealand, as well as parts of the Middle East. Publication continued after his death in 1853 until 1961

Bradshaw's Continental Railway Guide

In June 1847 the first number of Bradshaw's Continental Railway Guide was issued, giving the timetables of the Continental railways. It grew to over 1,000 pages, including timetables, guidebook and hotel directory. It was discontinued in 1914 at the outbreak of the First World War. Briefly resurrected in the interwar years, it saw its final edition in 1939.

Jules Verne

Around the World in Eighty Days (French: Le tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours) is an adventure novel by the French writer Jules Verne, first published in French in 1872. In the story, Phileas Fogg of London and his newly employed French valet Passepartout, attempt to circumnavigate the world in 80 days on a wager of £20,000 set by his friends at the Reform Club. It is one of Verne's most acclaimed works.

PEOPLE

† JOHN HAYWARD



I have received the sad news of the death on 2nd February of one of our stalwart members, John Hayward at the age of 85 years. He had been seriously ill for some time but since his diagnosis had continued to live to the full what time was left to him; and it turned out to be longer than anyone had predicted. He was a regular attender both at our monthly reunions in London and latterly in Reading and also a regular on visits organised by John Woods.

John was born in the Midlands and his childhood was somewhat peripatetic having moved with his parents to Leicester and Hull before settling in the South East. He put his failure of the 11-plus exams down to

the fact that not only had he moved several times from school to school, but also to the fact that he was happier playing football or watching the buses and trams go by. His interest in railways

developed when he was a teenager and, on leaving school at the age of 15, he got a job with British Railways in the freight department at Redhill. John took the internal; B.R examinations to retain a permanent post and progressed his career at Redhill and Croydon before moving to other jobs, mainly in freight but also on the passenger side of the business. During this time he studied for and passed the examinations to become a member of the Chartered Institute of Transport, as it then was. The promotions took him further afield to St Pancras and Paddington. Eventually he took advantage of early retirement in 1993 (as I did).

He married quite late on and, rather bravely, to a wife who came with a ready made family of two young daughters, aged 8 and 10 at the time. Those daughters resented him at first, but his charm and care for others won them over and their love for him was oh so evident on the day I attended his funeral.

He was a member of many transport related societies, including the Continental Railway Circle where he met some of our own members for the first time; and travelled widely, taking advantage of his railway privilege travel facilities. In so doing, he instilled in the girls their own sense of the wider world to the extent that they both became language teachers. One of them now lives in Réunion. He also amassed a huge body of friends and correspondents throughout the world and after his retirement, his travels took him far beyond Europe to some quite remote places. In fact, it is probably due to his wider roamings that he rarely found a slot for European Days; his last encounter being at the joint AEC and FEANDC assembly in Amiens. So he was not well known among our friends in Europe. However he will be sorely missed by us members of the British section; and judging by the number of Old Southeronians present at the funeral, by many of his now retired former colleagues too.

John Woods adds:

Greatly saddened indeed to hear about John.

He was a great supporter of rail activities both heavy and light rail ; as a friend of the latter, only last September we were enjoying drinks together in Fleetwood and then visits to Steam Town in Preston. John was always game for interesting out of the way trips - we rode the Middlesbrough Transporter bridge before it was declared unsafe - followed by beer at scarcely £1 !.

I admired his grip on similar events overseas and his knowledge and contacts were certainly wide-ranging.

I am grateful to have often seen him these last few years and valued his regular updates.

A really kind gentleman ; friend and colleague - shall we say 'Cheminot'

I trust that mementos of great times will buoy us up at this time.

JOHN BATTS

John's feet are still a bit of a problem for him and limit his ability to negotiate large railway stations. The cross London journey to reach Burgess Hill for John Hayward's funeral was too much for him, but he is able to achieve the simpler trips and we look forward to seeing him again at the AGM weekend and at reunion in the not too far distant future. His eagle eye can still be relied on for proof reading the newsletter prior to its publication!

TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL

EUROPEAN ACTION PLAN FOR LONG DISTANCE AND CROSS-BORDER PASSENGER RAIL SERVICES

16 December 2021

The European Commission has set out an action plan designed to boost long distance and cross-border passenger rail services, with the aim of doubling high speed rail traffic and making scheduled public transport trips under 500 km carbon neutral by 2030, and tripling high speed rail traffic by 2050.

The action plans focuses on two main pillars: full implementation of the existing EU regulatory framework, including the removal of any redundant national rules, and removal of obstacles to long distance and cross-border passenger services.

Amongst the measures in the action plan are:

- revision of the TEN-T regulation to improve the passenger rail network and ensure it is better integrated within the multimodal transport system;
- revision of Technical Specifications for Interoperability, including for 'go-everywhere' passenger rolling stock (2022), to include improved processes for implementing new technologies and paving the way to the introduction of automated train operation, 5G communications, and potentially satellite-based services;
- a revised regulatory framework for train drivers (2022);
- programmes to ensure that future skills needs are met, including an increase in apprenticeships.
- regulatory action to improve capacity allocation and traffic management processes (2022), and giving consideration to an EU-level entity overseeing the optimisation of cross-border rail traffic;
- guidelines for setting track access charges which support long distance and cross-border passenger services (2023);
- consideration of exempting the public financing of track access charge reductions from the notification obligation under state aid rules;
- proposing a regulation to be adopted by the end of 2022 on multimodal digital services to enhance data exchange between transport providers and facilitate the conclusion of fair commercial agreements with third-party ticket sellers, including protection in case of missed connections for passengers travelling on combined separate tickets;
- monitoring compliance with the Rail Passenger Rights Regulation once it becomes applicable in June 2023;
- assessing the need for an EU-wide VAT exemption for international train services;
- promoting air-rail multimodal journeys on routes where the suitable infrastructure is in place, and assessing regulatory options to facilitate such multimodal services;
- publishing interpretative guidelines for applying the Land PSO Regulation including to long-distance and cross-border rail passenger services (2022);
- a proposal to amend Erasmus reimbursement rules to promote the use of sustainable transport;
- ensuring sufficient availability of rolling stock.

Announcing the action plan on December 14, the European Commission said the full implementation of the existing regulatory framework under the four railway packages is a key requirement, and it would continue to work towards implementing the Single European Rail Area and opening the market for new players and services.

The commission believes that the measures in the action plan need to be implemented as a matter of urgency, and it plans to support cross-border pilot schemes to test the implementation of the concepts. These could involve quicker city-to-city connections, making use of new approaches such as integrated timetabling, support for rolling stock, or PSO contracts for cross-border connections.

'Rail is one of the most sustainable modes of transport we have. And yet, this potential risks going to waste — cross-border trips account for just 7% of the kilometres travelled by train', said EU Commissioner for Transport Adina Vălean.

'This action plan will help us make rail a more attractive option for long-distance and cross-border journeys. We have identified the main barriers, from redundant national rules to complicated ticketing and the slow uptake of digital technologies. Today we are setting out how to take down these barriers, with passengers being the real winners.'

'Urgent change is necessary'

Responding to the announcement, the AllRail association of independent passenger operators said 'it is clear that the European Commission understands that urgent change is necessary' to increase rail's market share.

AllRail called for transparent impartial ticket sales, with all operators' services bookable though both incumbent and third-party channels, as well as missed connection protection. AllRail said these are political rather than technical matters, and called for implementation by 2024

'Rail operators should compete in terms of better fares and onboard product, and not who

inherited dominant control of the downstream sales market or who offers exclusive missed connection protection’, said AllRail President Dr Erich Forster. ‘All ticket sellers should receive the same data on fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory commercial terms and compete for the benefit of passengers.’

AllRail also called on the commission to ensure that independent operators are part of the cross-border pilot schemes. It said PSO contacts should only be used in exceptional circumstances and should not become institutionalised, as even temporary contracts would ‘hibernate’ market opening until the late 2020s.

NEW TRANSPORT PROPOSALS TARGET GREATER EFFICIENCY AND MORE SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

The European Commission adopted on 14 December four proposals to modernise the EU's transport system that will support the transition to cleaner, greener, and smarter mobility, as outlined in the European Green Deal's objectives. The proposals will put the transport sector on track to cut its emissions by 90%. This is achieved by increasing connectivity and shifting more passengers and freight to rail and inland waterways, supporting the roll-out of charging points, alternative refuelling infrastructure, and new digital technologies, putting a stronger focus on sustainable urban mobility, and making it easier to choose different transport options in an efficient multimodal transport system. This is the second package of proposals to support a transition to cleaner, greener transport following the publication of the Commission's Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy in December 2020. In addition, an Action Plan accompanies the proposals on long-distance and cross-border rail that lays out a roadmap with further actions to help the EU meet its target of doubling high-speed rail traffic by 2030, and tripling it by 2050.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION ADOPTS COVID-19 RELIEF MEASURE FOR RAIL TRANSPORT

Today, the European Commission adopted a measure to support the EU rail sector amid new restrictions to prevent and contain the spread of COVID-19.

Commissioner for Transport Adina **Vălean** said: *“The COVID-19 crisis presents an unprecedented challenge to people, businesses and governments everywhere – including here in the EU. For more than 20 months now, the pandemic has created extraordinary circumstances that affect the day-to-day activity of transport companies and operators. We are today proposing this relief measure to ensure the continuation of rail services in these difficult times.”*

To reduce the financial burden on railway undertakings during the pandemic, the EU adopted Regulation (EU) 2020/1429 in October 2020, allowing the Member States to decrease or waive track access charges temporarily. Given the continued negative impact of COVID-19 on the sector, the Commission is now proposing to prolong the period in which the Member States can use this option beyond 2021.

1ST WOMEN IN RAIL AWARD LAUNCHED

The rail sector faces many challenges in a rapidly changing environment, in particular with an ageing workforce and an overall shortage of staff. It is also very male dominated with women representing only around 20% of the workforce.

The European Year of Rail 2021 is a good opportunity to highlight the cause of women in transport and in rail in particular. Therefore, the railway sector, supported by the European Commission's Women in Transport Platform, aims to honour achievements of efforts and work promoting women in the railway sector through a “Women in Rail Award”.

NO IMMEDIATE PLANS FOR HORSE TRAM EXTENSION,

Businesses need a break from construction on Douglas promenade before the horse tramway is extended, the infrastructure minister has said.

Tracks have been laid from the Strathallan terminal to the War Memorial as part of the £26m project to regenerate the capital's seafront.

Plans to continue the line to the Sea Terminal were put on hold in 2021 and now need Tynwald approval to progress.

Tim Crookall said that would not be brought forward for some time. He confirmed he would give Tynwald (the Isle of Man Parliament) members the option of voting to finish the tramway as originally intended, but said that would happen "a lot later". Mr Crookall said his immediate focus was on completing the existing scheme, as the businesses in the area wanted "to be able to get on to the promenade and use it without any construction going on". Although approved in the original scheme, which was backed by the Manx parliament in 2017, the extension from the War Memorial to the Sea Terminal was temporarily shelved last year. The £1.2m needed for the single-track extension was taken out of the main scheme by the then Infrastructure Minister Tim Baker, who said it would be delivered separately. Mr Crookall said he could not see any reason why it would not be brought forward for approval at a later stage. Existing work to finish the current phase of the tramway would continue into February, following delays in the arrival of new rail points from the UK, he said. There was "very little left to do" before the entire project was completed and the department anticipated all work would be completed before the TT (motor cycle races) in late May, he added.

NEWS FROM THE BULLETIN OF EUROPEAN RAIL TRAVEL EUROSTAR ON THE WAY BACK TO NORMALITY?

As at the beginning of December there are now between 7 and 11 trains a day on the London – Paris service, 4 – 5 a day between London and Brussels and 2-4 of these each day running to / from Amsterdam. Details are available on the Eurostar website www.eurostar.com That is an improvement on the situation at the height of the pandemic. Rules for international travel to and from the UK eased in early October and it became possible for a group of ten people led by Trevor Garrod to make a visit to France which had been twice postponed since the spring of 2020. It was necessary to provide proof of vaccination on leaving London and to take a covid test on return; and of course to observe French rules on mask wearing in public transport and indoor spaces and, when requested, to show proof of vaccination. The group enjoyed two days in Clermont Ferrand and five in Montpellier and were told by a fellow passenger on one of that city's trams how nice it was to hear English voices again. Of course, there are still likely to be further problems on the way to normality, and precautions are still needed because the pandemic is not over. Furthermore, Eurostar is not currently calling at Ebbsfleet or Ashford International stations between London and the Channel Tunnel. Eurostar's management say that the company's present financial position means that it must concentrate on capital-to-capital business, and that calls at these stations in Kent are not planned to resume before 2023. Leading members of Kent County Council have voiced their concern about this and its likely effect on the economy of the county. The European Rail Campaign (UK) has been in correspondence with them and offered them support in lobbying for such improvements

FERRIES DOVER – CALAIS

An alternative to Eurostar is now available, since in October P&O reintroduced foot passenger bookings on the Dover – Calais crossing, on 5 of the daily sailings to Calais and 6 to Dover. It is necessary to book on line (www.poferries.com) and the numbers of foot passengers allowed are "limited". There is also a 90-minute check-in time. The website also gives advice on how to get to and from the ferry terminals on either side of the Channel.

CROSSING PARIS

This part of a journey between England and much of France has always been a challenge, because it is necessary to spend time buying a separate ticket for RATP. In the early 2000s, Eurostar responded to suggestions by passenger organisations and started to sell Paris metro tickets in the bar buffet (or Cafe metropole) of their trains. In October RATP introduced a new stored value card, the Easy NAVIGO. However, the traditional carnet of metro tickets is still accepted and can still be purchased on board the Eurostar, as can the single metro ticket, in euro or in sterling.

For Continental visitors to London, Eurostar also sells the Visitor Oyster Card, which is a stored value ticket with £15 credit.

We are assured by Eurostar, "These products will be sold in our 'Cafés Métropoles' on a permanent basis for as long as the products exist."

COP 26

In the last bulletin it was reported on plans to run special trains from Amsterdam to London and from London to Glasgow, for the UN climate conference. These happened. Delegates going to Scotland by rail included EU Commissioner Timmermans and Austrian Minister for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation & Technology Leonore Gewessler. The British Prime Minister made two trips to Glasgow, the second of which was by train at least in one direction. The train from Amsterdam on October 30th was met in London by members of the European Rail Campaign (UK), whose Secretary, Ian McDonald and his wife also proceeded by train to Glasgow.

He reports: "Shirley and I took part in COP demonstrations. On November 10th, Transport Day, I stood outside the Blue Zone turnstiles from 09.00, waving a placard and shouting relevant messages to the delegates going in.

The placard read: 'RAIL AT THE COP. THE EUROPEAN RAIL CAMPAIGN (UK).'

'We must reduce CO2/NO2 emissions from air, car and truck travel. Battery replacements for all road vehicles will be impossible. We urge the need for expanded railways, mostly electrified, for far more people and freight. Also, there should be NO flights allowed where the rail journey is less than 6 hours'.

INTERNATIONAL DAY AND NIGHT TRAINS – LOOKING FORWARD TO THE REPORT

Bulletin of European Rail Travel 18 reported on the September webinar in which the British and German consultants Steer and KCW reported on the interim results of their studies into the scope for a shift to more international day and night trains and measures that could be taken to meet the challenges.

The discussions by nearly a hundred people who took part in the webinar provided the consultants with further material which they have considered when finalising their report. The Back-on-Track network sent a further detailed letter to the consultants, who also received submissions from Ouiautrain-de-nuit and from Belgian campaigners.

We are informed that the report was to be published in the week commencing December 13th in time for a meeting of EU Transport Ministers.

Meanwhile there is encouraging news from Spain where on November 9th the Government accepted a national budget amendment to invest 210,000,000 Euro in five night train services –

Madrid – Galicia (in the north west of the country)

Barcelona - Galicia

Madrid – Barcelona – Paris

Madrid – Lisbon

Algeciras (in the far south) to Cerbère (the French border station)

Further encouraging news is that The European Sleeper, now together with Moonlight Express, is due to start linking Brussels, Amsterdam, Berlin and Prague three nights a week from April 2022. For more information log on to <https://www.europeansleeper.eu>

BACK-ON-TRACK BELGIUM

During the autumn our Belgian colleagues have been putting an enormous amount of work into preparation for three days of events, December 2nd – 4th, to coincide with the anniversary of the founding of the sleeper operator Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits.

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. At the moment a European 'Green Pass' or equivalent showing proof of vaccination against covid19 will be a requirement for attending European Days in Sofia.

Dates of European Events.

AEC European Days in Bulgaria (Sofia) 2022 organised by the Romanian section from 15th – 21st 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. 15th – 21st 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 :

1. From May 16 (festive dinner) until May 21 (breakfast) – **525 euro**
2. From May 15 (dinner) until May 21 (breakfast) – **595 euro**
3. From 13 (dinner) until 17 (breakfast) – **180 euro**
4. 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.

In view of the uncertain travel situation, i 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 con tact Constantin Proca at 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...

At last four of us were able to meet up again at The Brewery Tap in Peterborough on Tuesday 25th January. Those living fairly locally made it for the 12 noon beginning, but those from further afield were dogged by train delays, not arriving until after 13h00. Thankfully, they were still in time to order something for lunch!! Sadly our friends in the North were unable to make it.

...AND THINGS TO COME**Monthly Reunions and Annual General Meetings.**

We don't at the moment have any definite plans for further reunions but two of us were wondering whether Sheffield might prove a satisfactory venue. There is a suitable hostelry close to the station and rail transport is relatively easy with convenient through trains from southern and western parts of the country. It's something to think about.

But we can look forward to the Annual General Meeting and social weekend in Bournemouth, again based at the Elstead Hotel. It will take place there on Friday 8th April, at 16h00. And we can then decide what we can do for the rest of the weekend, depending on the weather and the nations state of health. You are reminded that booking o make a weekend of it, if it is safe to do so. Booking details are on Page 6.

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 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: 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 1st June 2022

The copy deadline is **1st May 2022.**

SUMMARY OF EVENTS

The 2022 AGM will take place on the afternoon of Friday 8th April; 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.