

British Section

Newsletter

Vol.26 No.1

December 2021

**† Theo Steel
† Patrick Rigby**

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)

E-mail: wors@8bwhi.eclipse.co.uk

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

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.

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: euroscottie@gmx.co.uk

Vice-president:

Secretary & Webmaster:

Jenny Worsfold,
E-mail: jenworsfold@tiscali.co.uk

Assistant Secretary:

Peter Davies
E-mail: peter@24foxglove.co.uk

Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Recruitment Officer:

Nigel Hyde,
E-mail: 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. 2
December 2021**

The list of committee members is on page 2.

Contents

Editorial	Page 4
Reminders	Page 4
Recruitment	Page 4
Draft Minutes of Annual General Meeting	Page 5
Notice of Annual General Meeting 2022	Page 6
President's Musings –	Page 6
People: † Theo Steel	Page 7
† Patrick Rigby	Page 8
Agnija and Janis (Latvia)	Page 10
John Batts	Page 10
John Hayward	Page 10
Transport and Travel News	Page 10
European Year of Rail: Connecting Europe Express	Page 10
Macron puts High Speed Rail back on track	Page 11
Paris – London Route	Page 12
Notes from The Bulletin Of European Rail	Page 13
Eurostar	Page 13
The Climate Train	Page 13
Stations in the Fields	Page 13
Long Distance cross border services	Page 14
Night Train studies – France and Belgium	Page 14
European Days and other Events	Page 15
European Days in Bulgaria 2022	Page 15
Recent Events	Page 15
....and Things to Come	
Association Ties and Badges	Page 15
CILT Railway Study Forum	Page 15
Young Buffers Association	Page 15
REPTA	Page 17
FEANDC	Page 16
And for the Future???	Page 17
Summary of Events	Page 18

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

In our last edition I said that AEC has had its ups and downs. Little could I have imagined what a roller coaster ride the last few weeks would have been. First we were at the peak of happiness as, early in October, we gathered at The Elstead Hotel in Bournemouth for our deferred Annual General Meeting. There were only a few of us there, but the presence of a smiling Colin Charman certainly jollied things up – notwithstanding his health problems. It was fortunate that he was able to fit us in between hospital appointments. The day after the meeting, we went again to visit the Swanage Railway, this time being able to travel on the bus that took us across Poole harbour on the restarted Swanage – Studland ferry, now again in operation. We all got safely back home on Sunday, some via interesting routes occasioned by extended engineering works. The election of the committee was a bit of a formality, since the only nominations were for those already holding office.

But then early in November we received our first shock in hearing of the death of our long standing and worthy Vice-president, Patrick Rigby; only to find out the following day that we had also lost our former Hon President, Theo Steel, who had passed away a week or so previously. So it is with a heavy heart that I write these words. Appreciations of these dear friends appear later in the Newsletter, as do reports on other members with health problems. Sadly we are all getting older.

Whilst direct air travel is easier than of late, due to the removal of some of the restrictions, the need for tests and possible isolation upon return from abroad, presents significant additional time and costs to any trip, quite apart from the ethics of air travel, given the climate heating situation. The uncertainties of having to traverse many national boundaries, even within the European Union, make overland travel all but impossible. What the covid pandemic has shown, if nothing else, is that the nations of Europe – inside or out of the Union – have very much retained their sovereignty.

Nevertheless it is still hoped that the projected European Days in Sofia, Bulgaria, originally scheduled for 2020, will now take place in 2022. The possibility of a presence by our British section has become even more remote. But I am still printing the proposed programme, if only to let you dream of what might have been.

But we ourselves are endeavouring to meet up again for a reunion at the Brewery Tap near Peterborough station on Tuesday 25th January from 12h00. This will enable our members from Yorkshire to come too, although it will be a little less convenient, but perfectly feasible, for those coming from more westerly spots. Our sojourn in Bournemouth was a great reminder of the pleasure of social company; doing things together or enjoying conversation with others over a meal and a drink. So we aim to return there for the **2022 Annual general Meeting on Friday 8th April; with a social weekend** immediately following. **Booking details will be found after the draft minutes of this year's meeting.**

I have fumed in the past about our Government's shilly-shallying about rail transport – but recent announcements to the benefit of road and air and specific disbenefit to rail, such as deferring the HS2 link to Leeds, really do take the biscuit – one or two minor re-openings of rural lines excepted. Not only does this policy go against the Government's promised levelling up for 'The North' but goes directly against efforts to save the planet from annihilation.

Philip Worsfold. November 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 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.**

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE DEFERRED 32ND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
8th OCTOBER 2021

held at the Elstead Hotel, Bournemouth, commencing at 4 pm

Members present: Bob Clark, chairman of the meeting, Philip Worsfold, Nigel Hyde, Peter Davies, Colin Charman, John Batts, Jenny Worsfold (secretary)

Apologies for absence: John Roberts, John Hayward, Patrick Rigby.

It was agreed that we send good wishes from the meeting to John H, Patrick and also Angela who we understand has been unwell.

1. Opening remarks.

The President, Bob Clark welcomed members to the meeting.

He commented on the strange time we have had for the past few months and expressed his

Hope that things would soon return to normal.

2. Minutes of the 31st Annual General meeting of 16th April 2019.

The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Matters Arising.

Planned events could not take place because of covid restrictions.

4. Correspondence.

Bob has received correspondence from the German Section who are not happy about the way a scam taking a considerable sum of money from the Association's bank account has been handled. The matter is expected to be resolved at the meeting in Sofia. No one from the British Section is able to attend this meeting.

The printers of our newsletter have commented on the interesting content and welcomed its pro-European stance.

5. President's Report.

The President had nothing further to report.

6. Reports from Officers.

(a) Secretary – Jenny had nothing to report but the meeting confirmed that she should continue with the web-site.

(b) Recruitment Secretary – Nigel said that recruitment is difficult. This is down to privatisation as well as the age of existing members. Membership is currently 25.

7. Treasurer's Report and Accounts.

Nigel Hyde submitted the accounts. Our current bank balance is £1352.26. The accounts were accepted p. Philip Worsfold s. Bob Clark

8. Election of Officers.

The following were elected for a period to the next AGM

Vice President – Patrick Rigby

Secretary – Jenny Worsfold

Asst. Secretary – Peter Davies

Treasurer, Membership Secretary – Nigel Hyde

All p: Peter Davies, s: Colin Charman

The President, Bob Clark serves until 2022.

9. Checker of Accounts – we agreed that Colin Charman should continue in this post.

10. Nomination of delegates for European Administrative Council.

There were no nominations as nobody can attend.

11. The Way Forward for the British Section.

Visits abroad are now quite cheap compared with the cost of European Days. We should arrange a few short, cheap visits to Europe, perhaps starting with one to Belgium. Nigel agreed to investigate possibilities. It was suggested that the ticket booking companies might be willing to send out a flyer with their tickets if we gave them some publicity. Jenny agreed to try to produce a suitable flyer.

12. Dates and Venues for forthcoming European Days.

European Days in Sofia, Bulgaria, organised by the Romanian Section are from 15th to 21st May 2022. Proposed European days in Madrid/Toledo, Spain and in Lublin, Poland were postponed and have yet to be rescheduled.

13. Proposed date and venue for 2022 Annual General Meeting.

Friday 24th April 2022 at 3pm at the Elstead Hotel, Bournemouth. It was agreed that we should book 3 nights for a social weekend.

14. Reunions and Events Programme. It was agreed that we should pay a visit the following day to the Swanage Railway using the open-top bus to get there. (*The visit was much enjoyed by all.*)

Monthly reunions to recommence from January. Peter to arrange a visit to the Brewery Tap public house, Peterborough on Tuesday 25th January from 12 noon.

15, Any Other Business. There being no other business, the meeting closed at 17.53

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022

This is to be held on **Friday 8th April 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 will be 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.

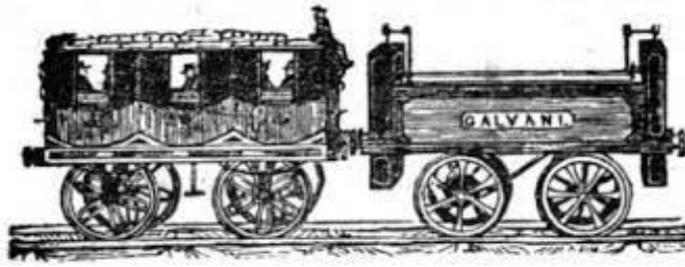
To book your place, please send £138 to our treasurer, Nigel Hyde, whose contact details can be found on page 2 of this newsletter. Please contact Nigel for bank details if you wish to pay by bank transfer, or send him a cheque payable to "Association Europeene des Cheminots".

The latest date for bookings is Friday 25th February if we still have availability.

PRESIDENT'S MUSINGS.

THE SPARK THAT MADE A DEAR GREEN PLACE.....PURE DEAD BRILLIANT!

As I write this, we are remembering those who gave their life in wars fought by the imperial powers against each other in a world that is vastly different from today. Millions volunteered to fight for King & Country, Empire against empire sending young people to a certain death and carving the world up between them (the imperial powers) in a war to end all wars. I am no historian but in our modern world we know that was not the case as wars still rage through certain parts of the planet and peace is furthest from the table in some cases. Some wars are tribal some are against repressive states others are classified as terrorist action but in every instance, it is still war. Nowadays there is a greater war to fight and that is against those who plunder the natural resources of the planet for profit leaving the natives in poverty and exposed to terrifying climatic extremes, deforested terrain and pollution on an unprecedented scale. Climate change, global heating however we describe the destruction humanity does to the environment it is a war of greed against need. Do we really need to destroy the forests to give us a better living standard in the industrialised world; but at the same time condemning the tribal peoples (and wildlife) who inhabit the 'undeveloped' natural worlds that are often isolated from our polluted terrain. They are the guardians of nature and their environment must be protected from those that seek to destroy everything on the planet for personal gain. Thankfully not all of us are likely to act in a destructive way towards the planet as the COP26 conference is taking place (as I write) in Glasgow to discuss measures to combat global heating. We need to re-invent our way of getting things done just as Glasgow (along with many other cities/regions) has done. Glasgow has gone from a few houses beside a narrow stream to a bustling heavily polluted industrial heritage which included shipbuilding, railway



locomotive building, becoming the biggest exporters of locomotives in the world at one time. Industrial decay and poverty have seen the cityscape lie derelict for years. In 1988 the cityscape began to become the modern vibrant image of today that is hosting the UN climate conference Cop26. Pride

in the city has been restored and once more it lives up to its Gaelic name which is Glasghu [dear green place], with an extensive electric suburban railway (largest suburban network outside of London) and with more mainline electrification planned, the city looks forward to a better air quality. Looking back in time the world's first known electric locomotive was tried on the E&G railway in 1842 proving that battery powered vehicles were possible but was ruled out by the company due to cost. The locomotive achieved a dizzying speed of 4mph proving the principal of battery powered vehicles. This was far sighted and today's efforts have to be a development of this historic locomotive. It is therefore very appropriate that the Vivarail battery-powered class 230 and Hydrogen trimode class 799 and Scotrail class 614 trains are being demonstrated to the delegates of COP26 conference with the historical connections to that early attempt at electric traction.

The first known electric locomotive was built in 1837 by **chemist Robert Davidson of Aberdeen**, and it was powered by galvanic cells (batteries). Davidson later built a larger locomotive named Galvani, exhibited at the Royal Scottish Society of Arts Exhibition in 1841. Now I must mention that Scotland has 33% of its railways electrically powered using clean renewable energy technologies (hydro electric, wind & wave) as well as traditional generation methods*(see below for Rest UK). The Glasgow railway system would not be complete without a mention of the Subway which opened in 1895, only the third in the world at the time. Relatively unchanged from the opening date (it wasn't electrified until 1935) timelessly carrying on to the late 1970's before major rebuilding and new trains. It has never been added to and still is a circle round the city centre and is once again being modernised to operate automatically. New trains are being delivered from Stadler in Switzerland. A progressive outlook has seemed to be the way forward; through the years railways have been in the blood of the city and they have been our bond of friendship as a society and European family for many years. Our commonalities shine through the adverse barriers that have made the freedom of movement difficult. Our environmental credentials are often overlooked as railways have been victims of cost-cutting and starved of funding. COP26 has shown the way forward, let's hope that it will lead to actions not just blah, blah, blah (thank you Greta Tunberg!).

- England has 47% electrified railways. Wales has only 4% so far!

PEOPLE

† THEO STEEL



I have received the sad news of the death on 20th October of our President Theo Steel. He was 72 years old and had been seriously ill for several years. He joined British Rail in 1970 and had a long and successful career which included being Asst General Manager of Anglia during the 1980's, when I first met him having been sent, rather green as probably the 11th reserve representative, from Norwich Division. He became Managing Director of South Wales and West until 1995. After privatisation he worked for a time for London and Continental Railways before moving on to become General Manager of 'Great Eastern'. During the construction of the second phase of HS1 he was responsible for the build-up to the London

Olympics and it was during this time that we were privileged on several occasions to hear about progress direct from 'the horse's mouth' and also visit the site of what was to become Stratford International station. He was not particularly well known to our friends in Europe but in 2009 he presided over the opening of European Days in York, when he surprised everyone by delivering his speech in both French and English. Soon thereafter, ill health began to take its toll and he decided to relinquish his role as Honorary President of the British section. We made several visits to Leigh on Sea, in the attempt, not always successful, to have a reunion near to his home. He will be sadly missed by our British section members and our thoughts are with his family at this sad time.

† PATRICK RIGBY



It is also with deep sadness that I have to inform you of the death of Patrick Rigby. He passed away early on 2nd November. He was 84 years old and had been suffering for some time from Parkinson's Disease. It was very touching that his wife Diana should have thought AEC important enough to let us know the same day. Our President, Bob Clark, writes: "Patrick will always be there in our thoughts.... a quiet gentleman and a typical Englishman, who had a good sense of humour, a rare ability to absorb information without taking notes and remembering

those things that others have forgotten.. On our European Days of which there were many, Patrick was one of the regular participants from the British Section. He was loved by all whose path he crossed. He had a method of getting a round about on the excursions and would quietly go to see something that interested him, always being there in time to get back to the hotel. Sometimes Diana his wife accompanied him and she seemed to have a happy time herself. I am unable to recall the first time I met Patrick but he became a good friend, he just always there, he seemed to be a part of the team. We have lost a dedicated railwayman and a committed European for which our association will be the poorer. Patrick loved a beer with his friends and we had many a beer in some cases more than we should but we had a good night or two! Recently I looked at a photo of Patrick & John Woods (this was the day I heard the news of his death) sitting down with a good beer 26 floors up in the Skyline bar of the Radisson Blu hotel in Riga. A heavenly view to be drinking in so buddy I raise a glass to you and hope the beer is good where you are!"

Patrick had worked at the BR Technical Research Centre at Derby and had regularly attended meetings of the Derby Engineering Society. He had probably been our most committed member, having attended all those many European Days and made many friends, particularly in Italy. Your editor asked European Honorary President, Mimmo Persico, to ensure that the Italian members all receive this sad news.

Patrick was a very private man. With Diana, their two daughters, Andrea and Sarah, and the whole family in our hearts, I offer our heartfelt sympathy, Several of our European Correspondents have replied. Here are some of their words;

From European President Nicolae Dutu,

Dear friends, Dear colleagues, Ladies and gentlemen,

I learned with deep sadness the news of the passing of Patrick Rigby, one of the most loyal members of the AEC.

Thank you Philip and I would like to pass on through you the family, his wife Diana, my condolences, from the entire AEC office, still in office, and all the compassion for his disappearance.

For me personally Patrick was a special man, a charismatic and a special colleague present at all the series of the AEC European Days in the last years, no matter where they took place.

He was distinguished by the joviality, calm and English humour that I cherished whenever I met him. His passing is a great loss to our AEC community, and it should also be a moment of deep reflection on who we are and what we leave behind.

When I first met Patrick, I used to joke every day saying God bless the Queen in English. Today I say God bless him over there.
Nicolae Dutu

From Honorary President Mimmo Persico
Hello Philip,

It is with great pain that I become aware of the sad news you have communicated. Patrick has always been, for all those who have had the pleasure and honor of knowing him, a dear and unforgettable friend. He was the most assiduous participant in the AEC demonstrations. It will be very sad for me to have to communicate the sad news to Italian friends who have shared his friendship.
I extend to the friends of the English Section my heartfelt condolences which I hope you will be able to convey to the relatives of the unrelenting friend who died.
Best regards Mimmo.

From Anna Gabriele of the Italian section.

Caro Philip,
apprendiamo del decesso di Patrick Rigby ed esprimiamo affettuosi sentimenti di cordoglio alla famiglia ed a tutta l'AEC che perde un amico.
L'A.E.C. Italia ti chiede cortesemente di rivolgere i nostri sentimenti di cordoglio alla famiglia.

Cordiali saluti. Anna Brancato Gabriele

(Dear Philip

We learn of the death of Patrick Rigby and express our sincere condolences to his family and all those in A.E.C. who have lost a dear friend.

A.E.C Italia asks especially that we pass on their thoughts to his family

Best wishes, Anna Brancato Gabriele.)

From European Honorary President Jean-Pierre Estival

Cher Philip

Je m'incline devant ce deuil cruel. J'avais bien connu Patrick qui venait très souvent animer nos Journées européennes. Je savais qu'il aimait beaucoup les pays méditerranéens. Nous avons de très bons contacts. C'est une grande perte
Je transmets à la section britannique et à sa famille toutes mes condoléances

(Dear Philip,

I bow before this cruel bereavement. I knew Patrick well and know that he often brightened our European Days. I know that he loved the Mediterranean countries. We had cordial relations.

I offer my condolences to the British section and to his family

Jean-Pierre Estival.)

From Anton Hofmann, President of the Austrian Section



Lieber Philip,
im Namen der Sektion Österreich bekunden wir unsere Anteilnahme. Patrick Rigby war ein sehr höflicher und aufrichter Mensch. Im Anhang eine Erinnerung an Linz 2019.

Mit herzlichen Grüßen Anton Hofmann.

(Dear Philip,

On behalf of the Austria Section, we express our condolences. Patrick Rigby was a very polite and honest person. Attached is a reminder of Linz 2019.

Sincerely, Anton Hofmann)

AGNIJA VIHHRJAKOVA and JANIS PETERSONS

Agnija has written to us on hearing about Patrick and Theo. She and Janis knew Patrick well and greatly appreciated his quiet humour. They are keeping reasonably well, though both suffering from Arthritis, and asked to be remembered to 'all those who might remember them'.

JOHN BATTS

Some better news. John has recently had a lot of trouble with his feet, which severely limited his mobility; but recent treatment seems to have effected an improvement. We wish him further improvement. It was great that he managed to get to the AGM.

JOHN HAYWARD

John too has had a nasty health scare and spent several days in hospital, undergoing tests and observation. He is currently under the watchful eye of one of his daughters. We hope that he will soon be feeling better.

TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL

EUROPEAN YEAR OF RAIL: 'CONNECTING EUROPE EXPRESS' NOW LEAVING THE STATION

02/09/2021

The 'Connecting Europe Express', a special train put together as part of the European Year of Rail 2021, pulled out of Lisbon station on 2 September. It stopped in more than 100 towns and cities during its five-week journey, before arriving in Paris on 7 October, connecting the Portuguese, Slovenian and French Presidencies of the Council of the EU.

European Commissioner for Transport, **Adina Vălean** said: *"Rail has shaped our rich, common history. But, rail is also Europe's future, our route to mitigating climate change and powering economic recovery from the pandemic, as we build a carbon-neutral transport sector. Over the coming weeks, the Connecting Europe Express will become a rolling conference, laboratory and forum for public debate on how to make rail the transport mode of choice for passengers and businesses alike. Please give us a warm welcome when we stop at a railway station near you."*

Along the route, various events are planned to welcome the train at railway stations across Europe. Rail enthusiasts can also follow debates happening on board as well as conferences on EU infrastructure policy and the role of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), that was livestreamed via the event website from Lisbon, Bucharest, Berlin and Bettembourg. The Connecting Europe Express is the result of unique cooperation between the European Commission and the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER), European rail operators, infrastructure managers and numerous other partners at EU and local level.

CER Chair and CEO of Austrian Federal Railways, **Andreas Matthä** emphasised the significance of the joint project: *"The Connecting Europe Express is impressive proof of the success of the European Year of Rail, at the same time it points out our joint challenges ahead. CER members are committed to make the Green Deal a success. A strong European railway sector is vital for achieving the EU climate targets. Currently there are too many technical barriers in cross-border rail transport and it is very complex to run a train across national borders in Europe. We need to continue to shift freight from road to rail, provide efficient services for daily commuters and expand international long-distance passenger rail transport with day and night services. I am convinced that the Connecting Europe Express will raise awareness of these challenges. I would like to thank all colleagues and partners who made this project possible and wish the Connecting Europe Express a good journey."*

Background

The Connecting Europe Express was made possible by partners from the European railway sector and institutions on EU, national and local level joining forces. Due to the different gauge widths in Europe, the Connecting Europe Express comprised, in reality, three trains – the Iberian train, the Standard train and the Baltic train – that met along the route. The

project is a reminder of the lack of interoperability between some parts of Europe's rail network, but it also demonstrates the very good cooperation in place between railway undertakings and infrastructure managers.

The coaches have been provided by different European railway companies. One of them, provided by MAV (Hungary), will host a mobile exhibition organised by the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA) and the Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking. It will showcase the many existing technologies and innovations improving the rail experience, and showed how the EU supports infrastructure projects. A conference coach (provided by SNCF, France), two standard seating coaches (DB, Germany and SBB, Switzerland), a dining coach (FS, Italy) and a sleeper coach (ÖBB, Austria) completed the standard train. The Iberian train travelling between Portugal and Spain was provided by Spanish operator Renfe, while Lithuanian LTG operated the Baltic train.

In the context of the ongoing pandemic, safety was prioritised in the organisation of all activities around the Connecting Europe Express. Some events were livestreamed, and train enthusiasts were encouraged to welcome the train in certain stations.

Connecting Europe Express reached final destination after a 20,000km journey

On 9th October, the Connecting Europe Express reached its final destination of Paris after 36 days travelling across Europe - West to East, North to South, and even visiting neighbours outside the EU. This train was specially put together for the occasion of the European Year of Rail 2021, aiming to raise awareness of the benefits of rail and the challenges which still need to be overcome. The train made over 120 stops, crossed 26 countries and 33 borders, travelling on three different gauges along the way. Commissioner for Transport Adina Vălean said: "The Connecting Europe Express has been a rolling laboratory, revealing in real-time the many achievements of our Single European Rail Area and our TEN-T network to allow for seamless travel across our Union. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who helped us turn the Connecting Europe Express from an idea into reality, a packed and exciting itinerary, memorable meetings – of minds and persons – and a true flag-bearer for European rail." The final event in Paris was an opportunity to present the initial conclusions drawn during the unique train journey. First, for rail to unleash its potential, a true cross-border, modern, high-quality rail infrastructure is a basic requirement. Second, existing infrastructure must be better managed and its capacity improved. Third, greater pan-European coordination and common requirements are needed, and the Single European Rail Area must be enhanced. Fourth, rail needs to become more attractive to encourage more people and companies to choose rail

MACRON PUTS HIGH SPEED PROJECTS BACK ON TRACK IN 'DECADE OF THE TGV'

FRANCE: In a speech to mark 40 years since the launch of TGV services, President Emmanuel Macron announced the revival of plans to expand the high speed network, describing the 2020s as 'the decade of the TGV'.

Expansion has effectively been off the agenda since July 2017 when the president called for a 'pause' in construction of *grands projets* in the rail sector — this at the inauguration of LGV Sud-Europe Atlantique and LGV Bretagne-Pays de la Loire. Efforts would be focused instead on investment in the existing network, the president said at the time.

Macron's speech at Paris-Lyon station means that policy has now changed. Standing in front of a full-scale TGV M power car mock-up, the president confirmed that €6.5bn would be invested in three more TGV projects. Although these had been announced by Prime Minister Jean Castex on April 28 this year, Macron's public endorsement of the schemes is significant

Emphasising that the lines would be built sequentially, Macron named Bordeaux – Toulouse first, followed by Marseille – Nice and Montpellier – Perpignan, which itself will be phased with priority going to the Montpellier – Béziers section.

Without mentioning timescales, Macron also referred to the Lyon – Torino transalpine project — for which initial works are already in hand — as well as a Paris – Normandie high speed corridor and a Roissy – Picardie route. This appears now to be reduced to a 6.5 km double-track spur from Vémars at the northern end of LGV Interconnexion to Marly-la-Ville

on the Paris – Creil main line, plus upgrading of the line from Creil to Amiens; a public enquiry for this scheme was completed on April 6 this year.

The Paris – Normandie project will consist of new sections of line from Paris to Mantes-la-Jolie, Mantes-la-Jolie to Evreux, Rouen to Barentin, Barentin to Yvetot, plus a new station at Rouen Saint-Sever.

Macron also announced that two taxes applicable to high speed services, the *Contribution de Solidarité Territoriale* and the *Taxe sur le Résultat des Entreprises Ferroviaires*, would be withdrawn from 2023, saving SNCF around €200m a year. With the imminent arrival of Trenitalia's open access high speed services twice a day on the Paris – Milano route, this decision had been sought by SNCF for some time

Macron went on to describe the TGV as a 'huge French adventure', while SNCF President Jean-Pierre Farandou noted that it had been 'an incredible commercial success'.

Alain Krakovitch, Managing Director of Voyages SNCF, took the opportunity to announce that Ouigo España would launch a Madrid – Valencia service in April 2022 and confirmed that SNCF was studying the possibility of launching Ouigo services in Italy in a 'riposte' to the launch of Trenitalia's Milano – Paris service.

Macron's announcements should perhaps be seen in the context of elections for the French presidency, due in April 2022.

PARIS – LONDON ROUTE

EUROPE:: Spanish national rail operator RenFE is developing plans for a Paris – London train service which would compete with Eurostar and provide it with an alternative route into the French passenger market.

RenFE believes that the launch of a Paris – London service would be supported by Channel Tunnel operator Eurotunnel and UK high speed line infrastructure manager HS1 Ltd, and would help to provide it with a route into the French domestic market.

RenFE told *Railway Gazette International* that its demand analysis suggests it would be viable and profitable to compete with Eurostar.

RenFE has been seeking to operate Paris – Lyon – Marseille high speed trains, but is reported to have run into difficulties obtaining information from the French regulator and national incumbent SNCF, meaning that it has not been able to obtain the required approvals.

Meanwhile, SNCF Voyages has been operating Ouigo-branded Madrid – Barcelona services in competition with RENFE since May this year.

RenFE told *Railway Gazette International* on October 26 that there are train paths available and the capacity to operate cross-Channel services. Its demand analysis suggested that it would be viable and profitable to compete with Eurostar.

The operator said there had been 9 million trips between Paris and London in 2019, with 7 million by Eurostar. Traffic was growing before the pandemic, and RenFE expects ridership to recover next year. Its proposed service is expected to be profitable from the fourth year, and a second phase would see services extended to further destinations in France and beyond.

SNCF's low-cost high speed rail subsidiary Ouigo entered the Spanish domestic market in May, competing with RENFE on the Madrid – Barcelona route (Photo: Mariano Alvaro Navarro).

The current proposal would involve a fleet of at least seven trainsets, which would need to be approved for use through the Channel Tunnel. RenFE confirmed that initial contacts had already been made with the relevant infrastructure managers.

RenFE had previously approached HS1 Ltd about a cross-Channel service, but at the time it did not have any rolling stock which would be likely to obtain approval for use through the Channel Tunnel.

International expansion

RenFE envisages that its cross-Channel service would provide a significant boost to its reputation in the international rail market, supporting a programme of strategic expansion which was announced in 2019 ahead of the opening of Spain's domestic passenger market to competition.

ReNFE has gained access to the passenger markets of the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia with the purchase of a 50% stake in open access operator Leo Express. ReNFE already operates the Haramain High Speed Rail line in Saudi Arabia, and acquired a 50% stake in Czech open access operator Leo Express in August this year, gaining access to the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia and licences for Germany. ReNFE is acting as shadow operator of the planned Texas Central high speed line. ReNFE was part of a consortium with MTR Corp which submitted an unsuccessful bid for the UK's West Coast Partnership operating contract. Further afield, it is acting as shadow operator for the Texas Central private-sector high speed rail project in the USA, is supporting the development of the Tren Maya project in Mexico, and is part of a consortium bidding to act as shadow operator for Rail Baltica.

NEWS FROM THE BULLETIN OF EUROPEAN RAIL TRAVEL EUROSTAR

Eurostar had been saved thanks to help from the French, Belgians and Canadians and had slightly increased its previously very basic service. Extra trains are now being added to the timetable and by mid October there were 5 return trips a day between London and Paris and 3 a day between London and Brussels.

Eurostar is also increasing its publicity, aimed at the leisure market.

The UK Government is still not giving to Eurostar the sort of support it has been giving to the airline industry, however, and a new petition was launched in mid August by "Together for Eurostar" – a grouping of the rail trade unions and Friends of the Earth, with the message "ensure we have a green link to Europe." Like many British petitions, it can be found under change.org.

On August 12th, Nigel Perkins, Chair of the European Rail Campaign (UK) had the lead letter in The New European, pointing out "There is no political commitment from the UK government to improve our rail links with Europe."

His letter concludes, "In view of the climate emergency there is absolutely no reason not to develop better rail links between the UK and Europe. Rail could become our 'green gateway' to the rest of Europe."

As part of its work, ERC(UK) is also investing in an upgrade of its website www.eurorailcampaignuk.org with maps and practical information to encourage more travel to and on the Continent by train.

(....and in its budget, the U.K Government gave money to assist air and road transport, whilst a week later announced cut-backs in rail investment – particularly the high speed route to Leeds. And this during the time of the COP28 climate emergency conference in Glasgow. What great commitment to a greener future!!! - Ed)

"THE CLIMATE TRAIN" TO GLASGOW

Actually it was two trains, with a short walk in between.

The first train was a Eurostar leaving Amsterdam Centraal at 08.15 (local time), on Saturday October 30th and arriving in London St Pancras International at 11.57 (local time), calling at Rotterdam Centraal and Brussels Zuid/Midi.

It had been chartered by the initiative 'Rail to the COP'.

A separate train then took passengers from London Euston (10 minutes' walk from St Pancras) up to Glasgow where the UN climate summit took place November 1st – 12th.

The organisers invited politicians, civil servants and railway industry representatives, as well as the voluntary sector and youth activists to travel to Scotland. There were many opportunities for dialogue with experts and for networking during the journey. Among those using the train was Frans Timmermans, European Commissioner for Climate Action and First Vice President of the European Commission since 2014.

STATIONS IN THE FIELDS

The growth of the French high-speed rail network over the past 4 decades has also produced a new phenomenon – new stations "in the middle of nowhere", designed to cater

for the Park & Ride market. French people refer to them as “les gares des betteraves” (beetroot stations) or “les gares des pampas”.

There are a few examples in other countries, such as Camp de Tarragona in Spain and Noorderkampen in Belgium, while Great Britain has South Midlands Parkway.

Some of these stations have good local transport connections. For example, TGV Champagne is also the terminus of the Rheims tram line and the city has expanded up to the high speed railway. It is also planned to extend the Montpellier tram to the Sud de France station on the high speed line.

Others are less fortunate, and the French national public transport users’ federation FNAUT has been supporting a petition for TGV Lorraine to be moved to Vandieres where it would enable high speed trains on the east/west line to connect with TER regional services on the north/south line. The petition also calls for the retention and development of the regional network in Lorraine. The petition has so far attracted 4777 signatures (and not just from French citizens, for this route is of international significance.)

LONG DISTANCE CROSS-BORDER PASSENGER RAIL SERVICES

Members of the campaign network Back-on-Track and the European Passengers’ Federation were among the 96 people who took part in a 4-hour on-line seminar on 1st September. The event was to launch the initial findings of the study funded by the European Commission and undertaken by the consultants Steer and KCW.

The study took place in view of the 70% decline in the number of night trains 2001-19 but doubling of international high speed services during the same period. There had been a 37% decline in seasonal services and some very long day train services had been split into two shorter links. Only 3% of services were currently operated by new entrants.

The strategy of the Commission was explained – to make all transport modes more sustainable; to make alternatives widely available in a multimodal system; and to put in place the right incentives to drive the transition.

As part of their studies the consultants looked at 96 airport-to-airport routes and identified 38 on which the traffic was dense enough to make rail a realistic alternative. Yet 14 of these had lost their night trains during the past 20 years.

The consultants looked at the obstacles to the development of long-distance international services, both day and overnight trains, and classified these into infrastructure charges, infrastructure capacity allocation, rolling stock issues, passenger rights of connecting passengers, ticketing, Public Service Obligations and “others” (which included taxation policy).

They then identified up to 31 measures that could be taken to tackle these problems. Some of the measures were already being undertaken, or could be introduced without new laws or regulations; but some would require new legislation or would benefit from guidance by the European Commission.

Participants were divided into five work groups for detailed discussion of the issues and recommendations, after which the group leaders reported to a full session, two polls were conducted and this all produced a wealth of views for the consultants. The following day Back-on-Track held a zoom call in which ten of its members from eight countries participated, and a letter was e-mailed to the consultants for their further consideration. The consultants will now finalise their report to the European Commission and an Action Plan will be agreed before the end of the year.

NIGHT TRAIN STUDIES FROM FRANCE AND BELGIUM

France: The campaign group Quiautraindenuit (“Yes to the night train”) has just issued results of a study on air, rail and modal shift.

It finds that 30% of air passengers from Europe fly on routes that could be done by train, in the 500 – 1500 km range, and with rail travel currently up to 3 hours, there is good potential here from night trains.

The study also finds that a further 20% of air passengers fly on routes in the 1500 to 3000km range that could be done by trains including two nights, similar to the Paris – Moscow service.

The estimated total number on these routes, all modes included, assuming a modal shift of 5% to night trains in the lower range and 1% in the higher range, results in a potential traffic of 100 million passengers per year in European night trains, corresponding to a requirement of about 10,000 night train carriages to run over 350 daily overnight services.

Belgium: The association Back-on-Track Belgium is due to issue its report “A Plea for a Night Train Renaissance” later in September. Finishing touches are being put to the draft. Their study looks at the history of night trains and then the challenges and opportunities facing them today.

It will make recommendations for the policy makers and also for operators. The former will be urged to see the night train as a sustainable tool, strive for a level playing field between modes and develop a financially sustainable business model. The latter will be urged to address issues of digital ticketing and on-line experience, guarantee reliable schedules and offer a comfortable quality service.

The report will also address technical aspects and examine the case for Brussels as a major rail hub.

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 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.

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 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 Meetings.

Since our last report, it is great to report that we held our postponed Annual General Meeting on Friday 8th October in Bournemouth. The following day, we were able to visit the Swanage Railway again and travel behind the newly restored Bulleid Pacific 'Eddystone'. At the meeting we decided to re-introduce our social events slowly, starting on Tuesday 25th January with a visit to the Brewery Tap public house, Peterborough (two minutes' walk from the railway station) from 12 noon. This will allow members from the North of England to join us. And the 2022 Annual General Meeting will take place on Friday 8th April, again at the Elstead Hotel, Bournemouth, at 16h00. Again we plan to 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 March 2022

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

SUMMARY OF EVENTS

Tuesday 25th January 2022 Reunion at the Brewery Tap public house, Peterborough (two minutes' walk from the railway station) from 12 noon.

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.