

European Train Enthusiasts



*Newsletter of the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter
August 2005*

August Meeting, Saturday, August 13, 1:00 – 5:00 pm

**Hiller Aviation Museum, 601 Skyway Rd, San Carlos
(650) 654-0200. Host: Peter Barnes (650) 637-1210**

Swap meet and EuroWest Update

Refreshments: If your last name begins with letters as follows, please bring:

P – Z: Desserts A – G: Drinks H – O: Finger foods and or salads

NOTE: PLEASE BRING YOUR EXTRA PLATES, NAPKINS, UTENSILS, CUPS, ICE!

Future Chapter Meetings

Aug 13: Hiller Aviation Museum, 601 Skyway Rd, San Carlos, (650) 654-0200. Host: Peter Barnes (650) 637-1210. Swap meet and EuroWest update

Sep 10: TBA

Oct 8: Home of Stretch & Michelle Andersen. Our annual Module SIG FREMO venue.

Nov: No meeting – conflicts with International Railfair.

Dec: TBA

Upcoming Events

Aug 20-21: EuroWest 2005, Basque Cultural Center, South San Francisco (our third here).

Sep 24-25: GATS, Santa Clara County Fairgrounds, San Jose.

Nov 12-13: International Railfair, Roseville fairgrounds.

Nov. 26-27: GATS, Alameda County Fairgrounds
4501 Pleasanton Avenue, Pleasanton

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Highlights of past meetings

July Meeting Highlights

A special thanks to the Museum of the San Ramon Valley and Rolf Krumbiegel for hosting the July meeting. Beverages, provided by Andreas Hildebrandt and Chrissa Imports, and barbecue were enjoyed by all who attended. Chairperson, Chris Vais, summed up the plans for Eurowest and asked for volunteers. Chris will give the “last minute” summary for Eurowest at the August meeting.

Dieter Vorbach presented the final designs for our ETE bumper sticker. The Chapter also sought ETE Nat'l Board approval, which has been given, to proceed. It was decided to run off 1500 stickers and have them ready for sale at Eurowest. They will also be sold to other chapters at cost for them to resale to their members. Thank you Dieter for all the hard work you put into this project.

Please remember Dieter's mother in your thoughts and prayers. She recently passed away at 90 years of age in Germany. **I**

The Reverse Corner

The module SIG had another successful run at the Museum of the San Ramon Valley. From 25 June to 10 July, the public enjoyed our 4x2 layout. The museum advertised Six Train Weeks featuring Five Train Scales. ETE was again proud to be there for “Big Train Day” 26 June.

Special thanks to Richard Orr, Hans Auerbach, Pete Nieber, Ed Rickelman, Don Good, Peter Barnes, Bob Greenfield and module owners Robert De Jong, Steve Stern, Ian Lorentzen, Rolf Krumbiegel, Chris Vais, Stretch



Andersen, and Steve Imialek for donating their time to be docents and operators.

And yes, we've been invited back next year. This is a smaller layout that allows rail fans of all ages to get "up close and personal" with our layout. It's very popular Saturday mornings during the Danville Farmers' Market.

Our next venue is Eurowest Aug 20-21 where we'll be sharing the spotlight with the Narrow Gauge (Bemo Boys) fremo layout and the San Diego ETE Chapter modules. See you there! **I**

Steve's Report from Lucerne

If you are planning to visit Switzerland and Lucerne (*Luzern*) is one of your destination stops, then I would highly recommend the Hotel "Drei Konige" or Three Kings (www.drei-koenige.ch). It's conveniently located about two minutes walk from the Old Bridge and about five minutes from the station. Hugo and Doris Hostettler are the owners of this neat and tidy hotel where 44 students and adults on our tour stayed this July.

Make arrangements with Hugo to see his 72 square meter layout in the hotel attic. I was able to spend some time with him running trains one afternoon (169 blocks, 13 track automatic staging yard, DC Selectrix computer operated using Soft Lok programming). His layout is featured in the latest 7/8 2005 *LOKI* magazine as well.

He also has the World's Largest Train Pin Collection according to the *Guinness Book of World Records*. If you go to the web page the layout is under "Specials". And while you are in Lucerne don't miss the Swiss Transportation Museum in nearby Verkehrshaus, it's just a 2 SF ride from the train station. Happy Rails to You! Steve Imialek. **I**

Hiller Museum Appreciation

Peter Barnes received the following letter from Hiller Aviation Museum:

Hello Peter,

I am so embarrassed that this took so long. Please accept my apologies and know that the Hiller Aviation Museum truly enjoys having the ETE display at the museum.

As per you email I have cc'd Tom Melka, and Rolf Krumbiegel. A hard copy with our letter head is in the mail.

Thanks again for yours and the groups continued support.

*William Turner
VP Marketing
Hiller Aviation Museum **I***

EuroWest Update

Lectures and Clinics

Saturday, August 20:

- Bob Carlson - Photo presentation on the Semmerling Pass
- Klause Kiel - Aviation in Model Railroading
- Errol Kubicki - Catenary Clinic
- Tom Catheral - "Getting Started with Märklin HO"

Sunday, August 21:

- Ryan Hoover - Railway Employee Uniform Caps
- Bob Carlson - Semmerling Pass
- Tom Catheral - "Getting Started with Märklin HO"

Bob needs to let me know what sort of A/V support they require. I will have a schedule by the Hiller meeting.

I have the following volunteers for staffing the entrance table: Charles Smith, Don Good, the Ruehles, Jim Lowe, Ed Rikkleman, and Jim Elliot. I understand that Jim Lowe may not be able to attend after all, therefore I will need one more volunteer. I will have a schedule for you at the August Meeting at Hiller.

Friday set-up will be accomplished with the help of Peter Barnes, Jens Ullman and some members of the module group. Tear down on Sunday to be headed up by Greg David and hopefully help from the same group from set-up.

Tom Catheral asked that we have some available to mind Märklin's Table while he is giving his presentations on Saturday and Sunday. I need two volunteers to spend an hour or so playing with all the new Märklin stuff while Tom presents. I think that, rather than ask for volunteers for this, I ought to put it out to bid and see if we can raise some money. Just kidding!!! If you are interested, see me at the meeting at Hiller.

Important - All of you who have volunteered in some way or another already and anyone else would like to help out, please plan on spending a few minutes to meet at Hiller since this will be our last opportunity to work out last minutes details before the event. **I**

EuroSnips *Compiled by Jim Recker*

UPDATE

Roco Reorganized After Bankruptcy

SALZBURG (Hallein), Austria -- July 26 - After over a week of uncertainty since declaring insolvency and shutting down its doors, Roco reopened for business with a new management team overseen by their largest creditor, Bank Raiffeisen. This new team, led by a previous owner of Roco for 28 years, Christian Plohberger, is impatient to

demonstrate that they can overcome the company's challenges despite a down market across Europe.

Roco's new management has very aggressive goals. With a € million bank loan, Roco expects to return to profitability in five months with revenue goals of €25-€30 million by July 2006.

There will be some big changes. Staffing at Hallein (marketing / distribution) and at Gloggnitz (tooling and molds) will be cut in half, while Banska Bystrica (manufacturing) will hire a few more workers as all production will be moved to Slovakia.

The new production facilities in Hallein, built only last year, will likely be sold since it's too large for existing operations.

An Austrian bankruptcy judge has issued a court order preventing Roco's past owner Pierre Maegdefrau from entering the premises. Since buying Roco three years ago, Maegdefrau's excessive spending and new marketing schemes lost over € million per year, resulting in debts of about €45 million.

Maegdefrau responded by threatening several lawsuits, reminding the judge that he retains Roco patents and trademarks. He also claims that he has a Hong Kong investor ready to buy the factory.

The Salzburg press anticipates a messy extended court case. Local union leaders are devastated by Roco's bankruptcy. All local production jobs will likely be lost.

A major slump of the toy train market in Germany is the primary cause of Roco's troubles, which accounts for 65% of Roco's total sales. The German market has seen overall domestic sales sag from €206 million in 2002 to €180 million in 2004.

Demand for Roco trains from other neighboring countries has plummeted as well. Recent building of new facilities has also hurt. A failed venture into the North American market and subsequent withdrawal contributed to the debt.

Over the years Roco has strived for excellence. This is a shock to the European model railway industry. Roco has been producing quality models since the early 1960's and today is considered one of the finest production model train companies in the world. ¶

In the 1970s, Roco became Europe's largest manufacturer of track. By investing heavily in automation they were able to produce track for other companies at less cost than those companies could produce it themselves. This resulted in their supplying much of the track sold under various trade names.

Despite reopening their doors on July 25, Roco's web site (www.roco.co.at) remains down "for maintenance". ¶

Märklin in Trouble, too?

Roco is not the only model train supplier facing financial difficulties, Märklin GmbH has been consolidating their operations as well.

It announced at a company meeting in mid-July that it has sold Factory Building 3, also known as Werk 3. This complex was Märklin's most modern facility. It was effectively serving as the company headquarters and housed Märklin's railroad museum and warehouse.

However over the last several years it has been underutilized, with a nearly empty parking lot used by museum visitors. The museum, training areas and warehouse will be moving in September to "Werk 1", the original (and very large) main factory on the Stuttgarterstrasse.

Meanwhile, to cut additional overhead, most of Märklin's production had been relocated to the Trix factory in Nuremberg, Sonneberg in East Germany and Gyor in Hungary.

There have been some signs that Märklin may be in some financial trouble after spending a considerable sum in recent years on the museum in Werk 3 (complete refurbishment two or three years ago, and a substantial improvement in security after the break-in early this year).

Sadly this move is also likely to reduce the number of visitors to the museum, as visitor car parking at Werk 1 is virtually non-existent.

Since Märklin is a privately held company, any financial announcement is not expected until 2006, after the traditional Christmas buying season. ¶

SWITZERLAND

Swiss Rail Net Screeches To a Halt

ZURICH, June 22 - A short circuit on the SBB-CFF line outside of Zurich, between Rotkreuz and Amsteg caused an electrical a major power failure over most of Switzerland for almost four hours. Most standard gauge rail service on SBB-CFF, BLS, RM, SOB and TPF was interrupted.

This happened at a time when several alternate feed lines were offline for maintenance. As a result, the remaining power generator from the Saint-Gothard was stressed beyond its capacity, causing additional short-circuits. The instability in the power grid brought down all generators and transformers, halting most trains in the middle of afternoon rush hour.

SBB-CFF took four hours to bring everything back online. While there was no serious damage to the grid, train traffic only resumed after 9:30 pm, having affected more than 200,000 rail passengers on 1,500 trains.

Seven stalled trains were in tunnels, and it took in some cases more than 90 minutes to pull the cars out. More than fifteen trains were pushed onward with diesel locomotives.



The last trains reached their terminals by 3:45 am! Freight traffic was affected as well, with serious delays. Most domestic freight traffic was suspended for more than a day.

The following day went much better, with only some cancelled trains. Nevertheless, SBB-CFF deployed an additional thousand workers to handle customer service calls.

SBB-CFF also distributed more than 200,000 "Rail Checks" to apologize for the service failure, at a cost of more than 3 million Swiss francs!

In an interview several days later, SBB-CFF said they had no back-up plan in this situation. It is almost 100% electrified, and runs about 9,000 trains daily. It has only a few spare diesel lokos so there are few alternatives in the event of a power failure.

The power failure only affected standard gauge lines which use 15-kV 16.7-Hz AC power. Most narrow gauge lines (MOB, RBS, Berninabahn, CJ, BOB) run on DC and the continued as usual — some with many more than the usual number of passengers. **I**

Swiss Transport To Stop Smoking

ZURICH, June 25 — If the power failure wasn't enough, the Swiss federal government announced that it would be eliminate all second-hand smoke by prohibiting all smoking on all public transport such as trains, busses, boats, platforms and waiting areas, starting in December. Smoking areas will only remain on the outdoor decks of some ferries, and on charter trains with reserved smoking cars.

Recent studies show that only 20% of all passengers smoke in Switzerland, and there was little negative feedback to the new regulations. The SBB-CFF expects to see lower cleaning costs as well as a result of the new rules. **I**

Other Swiss News Briefs

- SBB Basel S-Bahn Line S9 Sissach - Läfelfingen - Olten might soon be replaced by a bus service, as the canton Basel Land wants to save CHF 800,000.
- SBB Re 4/4" 11125 on 1 Feb, 2005 had to help a TGV with 3 bad motors out of 12, to climb up to Pontarlier. To simplify things the locomotive was attached to the train in Zürich HB.
- SBB Seetalbahn rehabilitation Phase 2 has been approved by cantonal parliament of Aargau. The plan includes closing 80 level crossings. **I**

RAm TEE to Move to Netherlands

LELYSTAR, June 29 — Negotiations for the purchase and transfer to the Netherlands of a Trans Europe Express RAm trainset dating from 1957 are nearing conclusion.

The newly formed Stichting TEE Nederland (Netherlands TEE Foundation) and TEE CLASSICS of Switzerland have been holding discussions for the last several months.

In 1997, the Swiss organization TEE CLASSICS was able to prevent the scrapping of the last remaining Canadian trainset (DE 1003) by purchasing it and shipping it back to Europe, together with the drawings and spare parts stocks.

Despite initial sponsorship by Märklin and others, circumstances prevented TEE CLASSICS from starting operation as a historic train, which led to this very last trainset recently being put up for sale.

The biggest problem is that the Canadians scrapped all diesel motorcar elements in the 1980's and a replica needs to be built from scratch.

Netherlands TEE Foundation, a group of private Dutch sympathizers, have taken the fate of the legendary TEE to heart and worked out plans for the purchase, transport to the Netherlands, housing, restoration and operation of this unique trainset.

This Dutch-Swiss diesel/electric TEE had a strong international appeal because of its innovative travel concept (fast, efficient, safe and customs-friendly), its extremely high level of comfort (air conditioning, captain's chairs, telephone and 3-star restaurant). and its striking interior and exterior design.

After operating completely satisfactorily for 17 years and 4 million kilometers, 4 of the total of only 5 trains to be built were sold in 1977 to Canada, where they remained in operation until 1992. **I**

France

French Start Open-Access Freight

PARIS, JUNE 13 — Open-access freight train operations on the French national rail network began with a Connex subsidiary, CFTA Cargo, hauling international freight between France and Germany.

Connex recently announced that CFTA Cargo had been awarded a €10 million yearly contract by Belgian limestone supplier Lhoist, to move traffic from mines in the Meuse region to German steel manufacturers in the German Saarland. The SNCF and DB had previously been responsible for moving around 200,000 metric tons a year.

CFTA Cargo has a European rail operating license and obtained its safety certificate for the French RFF network

in July 2004. It is expected to use Vossloh-built diesel locomotives, which are approved for operation in both France and Germany. **I**

Nantes to Try Tram-Train

NANTES, JUNE 14 — Proposals to reopen the 64km railway between Nantes and Châteaubriant as a tram-train route were announced paving the way for a detailed planning study costing €4 million. To be completed by the end of 2009, the project will see the restoration of passenger services to the line along the Erdre valley after an absence of 25 years.

There will be 10 stops, of which six will be located in the eastern and northwestern suburbs of Nantes. Starting from the main station, the tram-train services would interchange at Haluchère with TAN light rail Route 1.

Initial cost is estimated about €8 million, covering track, signaling, rail crossings and stations but excluding electrification, with a further €4.55 million for the purchase of rolling stock. **I**

United Kingdom

London Underground Breaks Passenger and Train Records

LONDON, JUNE 21 — The London Underground had a record year in fiscal 2004-2005 carrying 976 million passengers, an increase of six million compared with the previous high set four years ago. The train fleet clocked up more than 70 million km, 2.5% better than the previous year, or the equivalent to 90 trips to the moon and back. LU scored 78 out of 100 in a customer satisfaction survey, up from 76 in 2003-04 and the highest since recording began in 1990-91. *[The agency has seen significant reductions following the terrorist bombings last month.]* **I**

New Heathrow Express

LONDON, JUNE 6 - Heathrow Airport is to get a new train service by August, but the airport's owners, the British Airports Authority (BAA), are not publicizing its launch.

BAA is a major stakeholder in Heathrow Express linking the airport with Paddington Station with fast non-stop trains for a premium fare. Tickets on the new service are expected to be significantly cheaper as a routine suburban service, which happens to have a terminal in the airport, as opposed to being a dedicated Rail-Air link. Some of the biggest users of the new train will be airport workers who mainly live in the west London area.

The new service, named the Heathrow Connect, will be a stopping train, which will call at intermediary stations in west London. BAA has responded to complaints from passengers heading to Heathrow from the west London

suburbs that they are forced to backtrack to Paddington to catch the Heathrow Express. Passengers from further west of London also will benefit by being able to change trains at Hayes & Harlington. **I**

Israel

Seven Killed In Israeli Crash

KIBBUTZ REVADIM, Israel, June 21 — A passenger train crashed into a truck in central Israel, killing at least seven people and injuring over 100 in the country's worst rail accident for a decade.

Passengers were thrown dozens of meters from railway cars and others were trapped in the wreckage when the train from the northern city of Haifa to southern Beersheba hit the truck at a dirt road crossing in farmland near Kibbutz Revadim. Two carriages at the front of the train tipped over into the field. Another derailed at the rear because of the sudden stop.

Blood-covered passengers were carried from the wreckage in scenes reminiscent of attacks in over 4-1/2 years of a Palestinian uprising. Survivors reassured loved ones by mobile phone from stretchers in the sunflower field.

Police said they believed the truck driver was dead. Train crashes are rare in Israel, which only has recently begun to expand its railway network. **I**

Model Railroading

Inexpensive HO Roller Bearing Operation and Test Stand

By David Baird


Perhaps you've seen the fancy fixtures that modelers use to support their locomotives while testing. There are two parallel rails with movable roller blocks that can be clamped into various locations, one block per wheel. Fixtures supporting AC locomotives have a center wire to touch the contact shoe. Depending on the number of axles supported, these fixtures can be a couple hundred dollars.

If you're looking for a less expensive solution, I've found a nice package from Polk's Hobby. I purchased mine from MicroMark (the small tool catalog), and they are also available at the Train Shop in Santa Clara for about \$50 for 4 rollers. I got 8 from MicroMark when they had a sale at \$40 for 4, so check around.

Each roller is placed on normal track, and electrical contact is made from each rail up to the roller bearings. The two sides are electrically isolated. Detents on the bottom keep the set from moving laterally. They are not secured to the rail, so it is very easy to slide them up or down the track, to get the locomotive wheel centered between the two bearings on each side.

One disadvantage is that without a secure clampdown, the bearing can tip over if you push it too hard. However, I've had great results putting my steam locomotives on the rollers. It's great to watch all the valve gears moving when you power the track.

If you want to use them for AC loks, it would just involve clipping the second power line to the pickup shoe, or you could rig up a track with a solid wire down the middle, a la the fancy fixtures mentioned above.

The photographs (in the online editions at www.ETE.org) show how the rollers worked with a 3-axle Roco BR80. I demonstrated these at the January ETE meeting at Dave Pryor's house. Thanks to Dave for providing the photos! 

DIRECTIONS to the August 13 MEETING

**Hiller Aviation Museum, 601 Skyway Rd, San Carlos
(650) 654-0200. Host: Peter Barnes (650) 637-1210**



1. From 101, exit at Holly Street eastbound, at the San Carlos Airport.
2. Go to the traffic signal at Airport Drive and turn right.
3. Turn right again onto Skyway Road and go past the Burger King.
4. The Hiller Aviation Museum is at 601 Skyway Road at the corner of Monte Vista Drive.