

Newsletter of the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter August 2007

Chapter Meeting Saturday, Aug.11 at the Coaz's [17 Oak St., Los Altos, CA 94022](#)

Refreshments: Please bring items listed if your LAST name starts with:
A - G : Desserts H - O: Drinks P - Z : Finger foods

Future Chapter Meetings

Locations will be listed in the next newsletter.

Upcoming Module SIG Events

BLACKHAWK IS COMING SOONER THAN YOU THINK!!! – Get your modules ready and see further in the newsletter where to catch the award winning layout!



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August 2007 Addendum – By Jim Recker

EuroWest 2007 – C'est formidable!

SAN CARLOS, July 14 – With the French “tricolor” flying outside the front entrance, this year’s EuroWest took this annual event to a new level by wrapping it all up into a theme. It was simply a coincidence that Bastille Day fell on the first day, but the SF Bay Area ETE organizing committee grabbed the opportunity and made everything “français” for the first day!

The SF Bay Area SIG ran exclusively on a French schedule. Beret toting operators ran trains that had never before touched the modular rails! There was steam, autorail, Corail, SNCF freight and, of course, several generations of TGV.

As the many local ETE volunteers scurried around managing a variety of events and seminars, a number of invited French-speaking families wandered the show floor. Although the French consul had sent his regrets (obviously he already had a busy schedule), Federation of Alliances Françaises board member (and also a secret train fanatic) Bernard Metais stopped by to share his delight with the entire event! Residing in

Berkeley, the SF ETE Chapter will now have to get him to become a member!

Other highlights of the EuroWest included the spectacular Southern California Chapter modules, a superb modular layout by our local HOM narrow gauge SIG, and outside out back, the Bay Area Garden



Railway Society (BAGRS) treated us to some much larger scale trains.

Tom Catherall of Märklin and others presented both French-related and train-related seminars. Surrounding the usual number of seller tables were numerous activities and contests. Märklin/Trix was there, as well as representatives from the new LCG/Brawa/Piko conglomerate.

Finally, bridging the two days, the SF ETE Chapter hosted a very special *French* dinner, sponsored by the local French restaurant chain, Left Bank. The dinner includes many French delicacies such as quiches, saucisses, lamb and mussels, and a special desert that magically disappeared as guest speaker for the evening, Jeff Keuscher, took us through a short history of the SNCF – “Chapelon to TGV”.

The theme concept was a successful, and the organizing committee is already considering ideas for our next EuroWest, July 26-27, 2008!

August 2007 EUROSNIIPS – By Jim Recker

Rail Services at Standstill Following Worst Flooding in UK

LONDON, July 23 – The UK has seen the worst flooding in modern history as over 4.7 inches of rain fell in one day alone. One of the worst hit areas is Gloucestershire in the West Country, where water levels in the River Severn went to flood stage. The flooding led to submerged rail lines and damage to roads, prompting major train operators to urge people not to travel.



Scores of train services were cancelled throughout the West Country and the Midlands. Train operators are advising passengers not to travel following route blockages and bus replacement services were left unable to cope due to damaged roads.

Virgin Trains routes from Birmingham to the West Country and the south coast were blocked. The First Great Western line linking Oxford to Worcester and Hereford are closed for at least a week with no alternative road transport, while Central Trains have cancelled trains from Birmingham to Cardiff and Hereford.

Most lines remain closed until further notice apart from some which will be shut until August!

Swiss Rail Also Under Water

BERNE, July 7 – Rail traffic was finally reestablished between Léchelles and Cousset near Fribourg. Strong rains in late June caused land slides which shut down the rail link. Busses were substituted during the interruptions.

In two weeks time, a new 30 meter long support wall was built, which should avoid further problems in this area.

Summer Heat Melts Tracks

SOFIA, July 24 – Temperatures in Bulgaria again beat records for the third time with the mercury shooting over 43°C (110°F) in the southeastern town of Radnevo.

With casualties reported, local authorities sprayed water on the tram rails to prevent them from buckling in the heat. Trains ran at slower speeds, in some cases at 30 km/h (18 MPH) as rails were deforming under the heat.

Police also banned heavy trucks from most roads at the hottest hours of the day.

Railteam Unites European High-Speed Trains

BRUSSELS, July 2 -- Eurostar and six other European high-speed train operators launched Railteam to allow passengers to book one ticket covering several companies.

The system covers Eurostar, Deutsche Bahn, and SNCF and the networks in France, Germany, Holland, and Belgium.

For the first time travelers will be able to book tickets through to destinations in France, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland and Austria with one payment on a single website, www.railteam.eu.

The operators claim city to city fares will be low enough to compete with budget airlines, and are likely to start at about £69.

Railteam will not set fares, but will act as a 'broker' to allow customers to access the tickets easily.

Richard Brown, chief executive of Eurostar, said conventional lines in the UK would be incorporated so passengers could travel, for example from Peterborough to Lille, on one ticket.

Railteam will offer a "Hop On" service to passengers who book with it, which will allow them get on the next available service if a train is late, or is a connection is missed.

The website will be backed up by staff in call centers who will handled enquiries in the caller's native language.

SNCF chief executive Guillaume Pepy said staff on all the Railteam members had been trained in the "Hop on" service, and would now make announcements about the transfer options as a train came into a station. Best news is that timetables will be adjusted to make sure that passengers typically have to wait only 15 minutes when changing trains.

Negotiations are under way to allow the expanding Spanish and Italian high-speed networks to join Railteam.

The seven alliance partners have agreed to handle complaints about one another's services, meaning that passengers will no longer be told to contact a foreign operation when seeking compensation.

2,100 passengers stuck on train

BRUSSELS, June 21 – Hundreds of train passengers were stuck on a defective train for almost two hours during rush hour. A faulty locomotive came to a standstill between Denderleeuw and Gent. Three trains had to be stopped, stranding a total of 2,100 passengers on board.

Not only the faulty train between Schaarbeek and Kortrijk came to a standstill, but two other trains behind it – one heading from Eupen to Ostend, the other from Landen to De Panne – were also stopped and later forced to return to Denderleeuw.

The spokesperson for rail infrastructure manager Infrabel says it was a "lamentable incident." This stretch is the busiest rail connection in the country. Transport company NMBS offers its apologies to passengers.

Stuttgart 21 project approved

STUTTGART, July 23 – After years of discussion, German Rail's (DB) ambitious Stuttgart 21 project has been approved together with a high-speed line from Stuttgart to Ulm at a total cost of €4.8 billion. A memorandum of understanding was signed in Berlin on July 19 by the federal transport minister, Mr Wolfgang Tiefensee, the first minister of Baden-

Württemberg, Mr Günther Oettinger, Stuttgart's mayor, Mr Wolfgang Schuster, and the CEO of DB, Mr Hartmut Mehdorn.

Stuttgart 21 involves reconstruction of the city's main station to convert it from a terminus surface station to a through underground one. The station will be connected to a new 30km line, running via the exhibition center and airport to Wendlingen, and a 58km 250km/h line from Wendlingen to Ulm. Construction will start in 2010, and the project should be completed in 2019-20 allowing the Stuttgart-Ulm journey time to be cut from 56 minutes today by ICE train to 28 minutes.

Virgin loses British Cross Country franchise to Arriva

LONDON, July 10 – Arriva is set to operate Britain's revised Cross Country franchise from November 11, after Britain's Department for Transport (DfT) selected it to succeed current franchise holder Virgin Trains. The franchise covers services from the South West of England to Birmingham, the North East and Edinburgh, as well as London Stansted Airport – Birmingham and Cardiff – Nottingham services previously operated by Central Trains.

DfT will pay Arriva a subsidy of just over £1 billion over the eight year four month period of the franchise. Revenue is expected to exceed £600 million in the first full year of the new franchise.

Russia Enters Era of High-Speed Travel

MOSCOW, July 20 – Russian Railways (RZD) has started production on its first high-speed train, the Velaro RUS.

The trains are expected to run at speeds of up to 250km/h on a line connecting Moscow and St. Petersburg by the end of 2009. Russia joins China, Spain and Germany who collectively have over 160 high speed trains.

In addition to the high-speed line between Moscow and St. Petersburg, other rail connections are currently being planned, including one between Moscow and Nizhny Novgorod.

Velaro technology is based on developments of the ICE 3 trainset designed for German Rail (Deutsche Bahn AG). Siemens Transportation Systems has announced that bodyshell production has already begun at the Krefeld-Uerdingen plant in Germany.

Germany: 25 pct of Deutsche Bahn to be sold at end-2008

BERLIN, July 12 – A 25% stake in Deutsche Bahn AG will be sold at the end of next year, German Transport Minister Wolfgang Tiefensee told weekly Focus magazine. Deutsche Bahn CEO Hartmut Mehdorn had previously penciled in the first-half of next year as a timetable but Tiefensee described this as 'very ambitious'.

German Rail Engineers Call Off Strike

BERLIN, July 12 – German train engineers were awarded the highest pay rise seen in Germany this year after staging strikes across the railway network. Meanwhile the German train drivers union (GDL) aborted strikes after rail operator Deutsche Bahn won a court injunction against walkouts, calling it 'illegal' today.

The two large German rail unions Transnet and GDBA accepted a 4.5% pay increase on Monday, the highest Germany has seen this year. But a third union – GDL train drivers union – is demanding higher starting pay and raises based on experience which could take it up to 31%.

The current deal includes a one-off €600 payment for the second half of 2007 and a 4.5% raise in January which runs for 19 months. The union said they will not stage any further strikes before wage talks with Deutsche Bahn leaders, scheduled for Friday.

The railway's net income almost tripled to €1.7bn last year as demand for freight delivery increased and more passengers took trains during the World Cup soccer tournament.

DB AG plans takeover of EWS and Transfesa

BERLIN, June 27 – Following the approval of the Supervisory Board of Deutsche Bahn AG (DB AG), DB AG plans to take over the entire shares in English Welsh & Scottish Railway Holding Limited (EWS) and acquire a majority share in the Spanish company Transportes Ferroviarios Especiales (Transfesa). Once the contracts have been signed and the approval of the relevant authorities obtained, the acquisition of these two companies will consolidate DB AG's leading position as a global player in the transport market, especially in the rail freight sector in Europe. As a result of this move, DB Logistics will extend its central corridors in Western Europe and will be able to develop even better products for its customers as a one-stop shop.

Pictures of the Months: Austrian Summer



July 14: Bahnhoffest – Lindau, Germany



July 17 : 1216 226 Europa in MU with a 1144 roars by Schwaz towards Brenner.

The Reverse Corner by Steve Imialek

Trains are running now until Aug. 10 on a twelve module set-up at The Mechanics Bank Hilltop Mall, Richmond. Directions are easy: I-80 East and West. Exit Hilltop Drive and turn left. Turn right at Blume Drive. At next stop signal turn left onto Garrity. Turn right at Hilltop Mall Road. The modules are located in the bank’s atrium which provides natural lighting and it really shows off the modules very nicely. The architectural style of the building is Japanese and worth a visit. The bank’s hours are from 9-6 Mon.–Fri. and 10-1 Sat. This is our second year at

the bank and a very special thanks to Rolf Krumbiegel for organizing this popular venue again. Call Rolf if you are interested in operating or being a docent.

EuroWest 2007 was a huge success! Since Bastille Day fell on that Saturday it was only fitting that French trains be run: numerous TGVs, of course; but, mon Dieu, we saw trains running on the layout that had never run on it before. And all SNCF! Thanks you to all of you who brought those fabulous trains for us to enjoy during the two days. And special thanks to Jim Recker who volunteered to be at Hiller Aviation Museum early in the morning to test run anybody’s French trains. Jim also manned the layout both days and you couldn’t wipe the smile off his face! Robert de Jong came up from LA to be with us Sat. We hope to see more of Robert in the future and we hope he can stay longer at the next EuroWest which will be July 26-27, 2008 at Hiller again. For more information please contact Jens Ullmann:

eurowest2008@dreileiter.de

During EW ’07, the module owners were also able to come together and discuss future policies and issues from the updated standards and modular operations. The modular group has grown with new owners, new modules, and new venues. If you are contemplating building a module please see Tom Melka before you begin. Once it gets built Steve Stern will track test it before it gets put in a venue. All module owners will follow set-up and take-down procedures that Jim Recker will publish. Also, all module owners will become familiar with and follow the “Operating Procedures” adopted by the SIG two years ago. Or if you would like to become an owner/operator now, the SIG is looking for willing, able, and ready owners for the reverse corner, or the tunnel corner, or the corners, or the staging yard. All the module owners are there to help you get started and join the fun we have running our trains on the layout. Our next venue will be our second visit to the Tracy Historical Museum in downtown Tracy at 1141 Adam St. from Aug. 26-Sept. 9. The museum is open on Wed, Fri., Sat., and Sun from 11-4. Please contact Rolf if you would like to help.

