



European Train Enthusiasts



Newsletter of the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter
February 2007

Chapter Meeting Saturday, February 10 at:

Hope Lutheran Church

1801 Manor Blvd. San Leandro, CA !! SWAP MEET!!

ESU ECoS Presentation by Wolfgang Leitenberger

Refreshments: Please bring items listed if your LAST name starts with:

H-O : Drinks P-Z : fingerfood A-G : Dessert

Future Chapter Meetings

March 10 – Generations Church – 2811 San Carlos Blvd
San Carlos, CA – Meter Gauge layout!

April 14 – Hiller Museum – 610 Skyway Road.
San Carlos, CA – Module SIG event for 2 weeks !!

May 12 – West Bay RR Club – 1090 Merrill Street
Menlo Park, CA – This is for the DC guys!!

June 9 – Western Railroad Museum in Rio Vista CA.
Picnic and get together with the Sacramento Chapter !

Upcoming Module SIG Events

None listed yet, keep watching this space!
Rolf is working on this!!

Short newsletter! I'm afraid not all the news got to me in time, therefore a short version; next month will be a big one again!

NOTE: PRESS DEADLINE WILL BE THE 25th OF EACH MONTH! Email articles to:

ETENEWS@sbcglobal.net

January Meeting Highlights

No highlights as I did not receive them in time

2007 dues are now due!!

**Dues for 2007 are \$25.00 – please mail your check to: ETE
P.O. Box 21544
Concord, CA 94521**

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EUROSNIPS – By Jim Reckers

Kyrril ravages Europe, stops entire DB and NS

BERLIN, Jan. 18 - At least 46 people were killed and rail traffic was suspended across Northern Europe, from Britain to Poland and Finland, in one of the worst storms to hit the European continent in the last 20 years.

Named Kyrril, the storm had hurricane-force winds with gusts speeds up to 200 km/h (125 mph) in some regions, leaving one million Czech homes and 800,000 homes in Poland without power. Earlier that same evening, crude oil was spilled into the Dutch harbor of Rotterdam after a container ship broke loose and struck an oil terminal. Ferry routes across the Channel, on the North Sea and Baltic Sea were suspended. Hundreds of flights were cancelled across Europe. Amsterdam-Schiphol and Heathrow airports suffered some damage.

The Deutsche Bahn German national railways halted all operations for the first time in its history stranding thousands of passengers. Wind gusts uprooted trees, tore down power cables and sent a two-ton steel support crashing 40 meters to the ground at Berlin's new main railway station. A train in northern Germany collided with a downed tree lying across the tracks. The storm blew roofs off houses and forced stranded rail travelers to seek shelter at rail stations. Many stations remained opened throughout the night, providing emergency accommodation and distributing tea and blankets to stranded passengers. Train services limped back to life on Friday morning, but Berlin's billion-euro central station, opened with great fanfare eight months ago, remained sealed off for several days. Meanwhile, commuter rail services and long-distance trains were re-routed to other stations in Berlin.

cut catenary lines and fell onto the path of an oncoming train on the Appenzeller Bahn line to Gonten. The AB line to Wasserauen was disrupted when high winds blew a 15.5 metric ton 'Steuerwagen' (cab-coach) off the tracks onto an adjoining road (see Pic1)! Fortunately only a driver was on board who got away with minor injuries. Trees also blocked some other Swiss lines, but service was quickly restored.

One person was injured when winds caused the roof of a textile factory in Lille, France to collapse. Nearby traffic on the Eurostar, the train service connecting Britain with continental Europe through the Channel Tunnel, was suspended after an electrical cable holder fell onto the tracks

In the Netherlands, winds and lashing rain killed at least three people. In Amsterdam, bicyclists who ventured out despite warnings from the fire department were seen blown over or, in some cases, backward.

All Dutch rail traffic on the national NS rail network was suspended. Amsterdam Centraal was closed for the evening as broken glass from its ceiling rained on waiting passengers. NS personnel served coffee and sandwiches to passengers waiting for the storm to pass. The Dutch weather service compared the gale to a 1990 storm that peaked during the afternoon commute and killed 17. Kyrril brought heavy rain and recorded gusts of 81 mph.

Rail stations across London also were closed, and the evening commute melted into chaos. Broken glass rained on the platforms closed London Bridge station.

Meteorologists said the storm was unusual both for its size and for the mildness of the temperatures. Meanwhile, in southern Europe, untouched by the storm, sunny skies and mild temperatures prevailed.

Scary Rhaetian Landslide, Italian Washout

CHUR, Jan. 6 - A large landslide spilled over an avalanche protection tunnel onto an evening train, causing the locomotive to derail and hit a pier that subsequently collapsed.



RhB locomotive Ge 4/4 II 632 and a luggage van were badly damaged, but there were no injuries to the driver or thirty passengers (see Pic2). The line was



In Switzerland where a wind gust of 225 km/h was registered on a mountain glacier, most mountain rail traffic saw some service interruptions. In Eastern Switzerland, the rail links on both sides of Appenzell were cut. Pine trees

reopened by January 10th, but Glacier Express passengers are bussed between Chur - Disentis during the clean-up phase.



This scary accident was similar to a harrowing bridge washout in Italy in mid-December. The driver of this Italian Eurostar train from Taranto to Milan managed to stop just on the edge. Several European reporters wondered if the engineer's seat needed some cleaning this incident in which no injuries were reported (see Pic3).

New Lauterbrunnen-Grütschalp aerial tram is launched

LAUTERBRUNNEN, Dec. 16 - Just in time for the winter season, the new Lauterbrunnen-Grütschalp aerial tram went into service, replacing the old funicular at the same spot. This re-opening has relaunched the panoramic mountain railway to Mürren that had been closed since April. Construction of the new aerial tram was necessary because the tracks of the old funicular crossed a slip area. The new tram now spans the main slip zone. This traffic link has been running since 1897 and is of key importance to the holiday resort of Mürren.

French court approves Eurotunnel restructuring

PARIS, Jan 15 - A French court has approved a financial restructuring for Eurotunnel the company that built and operates the rail tunnel between Britain and France. The Paris Commercial Court has backed the proposal to pay creditors with cash and bonds that can later be converted into shares. It rejected 33 lawsuits contesting the plan, but there are likely to be appeals to European higher courts.

Eurotunnel's Chief Executive Jacques Gounon said the company had been saved from bankruptcy. Under the restructuring, Eurotunnel's debt - of €9.4 billion (US\$12.15 billion) - would be cut to €4.3 billion (US\$5.56 billion). There will be a new loan, repayable over 40 years, of €4.1 billion (US\$5.3 billion).

Eurotunnel bondholders will end up with an 87% stake, and current shareholders would swap their stock for as little as 13%. Many of the small French shareholders, who stand to lose much of their investment, have expressed opposition to the plan, but boss Jacques Gounon, said they would be "mad" ("crazy") to refuse the offer. Trading in Eurotunnel shares has been suspended since last May. Mr. Gounon said he hopes they would restart trading by the middle of next month.

Eurostar profits surge thanks to 'Da Vinci Code' effect

LONDON, Jan 12 - The success of The Da Vinci Code film led to soaring sales for Channel Tunnel high-speed train company Eurostar in 2006. The thriller movie, set in London and Paris and promoted by Eurostar, helped the company record an 11 per cent increase in sales to £518 million (US\$1 billion; €773.3 million) last year.

Eurostar, which operates trains to Paris and Brussels from London's Waterloo station, carried 7.85 million passengers in 2006 - an increase of more than five per cent on the 2005 total.

Eurostar will move its London terminal from Waterloo to St Pancras station in November this year when the second, and final, stage of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link is completed. Traveling at speeds up to 186 mph, the London-Paris journey times will come down to 2 hrs 15 minutes and London-Brussels will reduce to one hour 51 minutes.

The number of people switching to its services away from airline travel, especially during the airport baggage crisis last August, also helped Eurostar results and the delays caused by fog at Heathrow just before this past Christmas. Many of them were using Eurostar for the first time and the company estimates that 1,000 business customers a week have now permanently switched from flying to taking the train. Business traveler numbers rose 17% and the number of on time trains improved from 86.3% in 2005 to 91.5% last year. Punctuality in 2006 was a record, far outstripping airline competitors on the London-Paris and London-Brussels routes. Latest figures from the UK's Civil Aviation Authority show that punctuality at London's airports remains around 70%, as in previous years.

New Roco Flying High

SALZBURG, Jan. 24 - From its new company seat in Bergheim near Salzburg, Austria, ROCO Modelleisenbahn GmbH announced it had exceeded its sales objective in the 2006 by almost 31 million Euros. For the 2007, ROCO is expecting an increase in sales of seven percent. ROCO is one of the three largest model train manufacturers in



Europe. ROCO's primary market is Germany (50%), followed by Austria.

Besides new train models, ROCO introduced a number of new product lines, like 'Rocomotion', its digital control system for model railways by computer, and a less expensive rail system "geoLINE" over the last year.

ROCO at present employs 560 coworkers at production locations in Gloggnitz in Lower Austria, in Bystrica, Slovakia and Arad, Romania. The assembly facility in Romania will be further enlarged later this year.

Oskar sold to Kleinbahn

VIENNA, Dec. 5 - The model railroad industry is a small community. It knows it is in trouble: Earnings have been keeping pace with the economies in Europe and North America, but the industry is at risk at anytime. When the economy is down, luxury items (and hobbies) usually go first. The industry has been wondering who next will get in trouble?

Troubles have hit Roco, Märklin and lately Ernst Paul Lehmann (LGB). Now a small Austrian manufacturer, Oskar, has announced that it is selling its manufacturing plant to another Viennese company, Kleinbahn. Oskar was unable to diminish its debts over Christmas and its production facilities will be closed at the end of June 2007. Hopefully others will mimic the latest positive results announced by Roco.

HO Neuheiten 2007

Have you been saving your pennies? While the news is supposed to be kept secret until mid-February, some US and German train shops can't seem to resist announcing new releases (or Neuheiten) for 2007. And despite a general recession across the industries, there are many "hard-to-resist" items coming out this year! Top on many wish lists are likely to be those models commemorating the 50th anniversary of the birth of the TEE, and the 125th anniversary of the opening of the Gotthard rail link. While most of all new releases can already be found at <http://www.lokshop.de>, including Roco, Fleischmann, Weinert, Brawa, Bemo, Märklin, Trix and Piko, here are some highlights:

ROCO:

Now called Modelleisenbahn GmbH, Roco has announced new products for HO, HOe and N, suiting all European railroads, in DC and AC. Included among the 134 new locomotives can be found a new Spanish RENFE Electric locomotive E 250 „Estrella“, a French 2D2-9100, as well as the expected Swiss Electric locomotive Re 484 Cargo, a new Austrian ÖBB electric class 1042, and a model of the ÖBB "Taurus" that set a new world speed record of 357

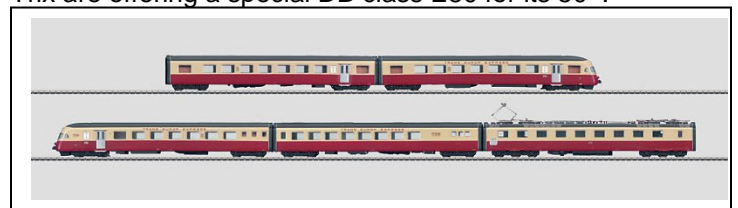
km/h for locomotive hauled trains last year. There are new DSB Danish, SJ Swedish, FS Italian, SNCB Belgian, NS Dutch, and CSD Czech diesel locomotives. Of course, there are new DB, DR, CSD, and Swiss steam locs. Celebrating that TEE anniversary, Roco will issue both SBB and (!) NS TEE RAm diesel rail car trains, an sleek FS TEE Diesel powered rail car train ALn442/448 "Mediolanum", and a copy of an old TEE diesel powered two-car autorail RGP of the SNCF. Roco also did not forget the original DB blue/cream color "Rheingold" scheme from the 1960's and will issue a new E 10.12 along with a 4-piece passenger car set.

Roco has added 65 new passenger cars, including a nice selection of modern RENFE cars, new Portuguese CP cars, and several new full scale (1:87) TEE cars sets. Roco continues to push its new geoLINE track system, but the old Profile owners are not impressed.

The new 2007 product line is already posted on Roco Modelleisenbahn's web site at <http://www.roco.co.at> (now in English).

MÄRKLIN / TRIX:

The news is already out. There are too many special items for 2007, celebrating the big anniversaries this year! To start, there's a Märklin "Mega Starter set" Gotthard special with a Crocodile freight train and an Ae6/6 with passenger cars (at €1,4990!). For the TEE 50th, Trix and Märklin are proposing a special SNCF CC 40100 or an SNCB Class 18 locomotive to pull new SNCF INOX cars for an Étoile du Nord run between Brussels and Paris. At the same time, Jacques Vuye has already ordered his new SBB TEE Rae Gottardo train set (2 anniversaries at the same time!), despite general discontent among some modelers about the 1:93 (?) scale that was chosen. Finally, Märklin and Trix are offering a special DB class E50 for its 50th.



The new catalog also included a GG-1 in a new color scheme, and a "new tooling" DB class 218 with sound effects. Märklin is offering a re-issue of the SBB Ae8/14 with C_Sine motors, and a neat little catenary maintenance car with a movable work platform and an operational pantograph. Märklin will also be re-issuing their small crane car in a fire department train.

Then you have to decide if you can really afford the "Insider" DB BR 05 steam locomotive, bells and whistle included!

A "sneak" preview of these new trains and more can be found in English at <http://www.lokshop.de>.