



**British Section**

**Newsletter**

**Vol.14 No.1**

**Autumn 2009**

## **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.

**A.E.C. BRITISH SECTION NEWSLETTER, Vol. 14 No. 1  
AUTUMN 2009**

**Contents**

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| Editorial  | Page 3  |
| Recruitment  | Page 4  |
| Committee  | Page 4  |
| European Days and Other European Events                              | Page 5  |
| European Days in Santiago de Compostella,<br>Spain, 24 – 29 May 2010 | Page 6  |
| European Days in Poland, 12 – 18 Sept 2010                           | Page 9  |
| Lüneburg report  | Page 11 |
| Bridge Examinations... Times they are a changing                     | Page 12 |
| Railway Photography  | Page 16 |
| Recent Events ...  | Page 16 |
| ... and Things to Come   | Page 16 |
| Association Ties and Badges  | Page 17 |
| Timetables   | Page 17 |
| And for the future?  | Page 17 |
| Summary of Dates   | Page 18 |

**A separate membership application form  
is enclosed with this issue.**

**The European web page is at: <http://www.A-E-C.net>**

AEC France is at [www.aecfrance.eu/](http://www.aecfrance.eu/))

AEC Italy is at [www.aecitalia.org](http://www.aecitalia.org)

AEC Latvia is at [www.ldz.lv/biedriba/](http://www.ldz.lv/biedriba/)

AEC Spain is at [www.aec-esp.blogspot.com](http://www.aec-esp.blogspot.com)

AEC Poland is at [www.aecpl.republika.pl](http://www.aecpl.republika.pl) (*Private site, not officially recognised.*)

AEC Austria is at [www.aec-oesterreich.at.tf](http://www.aec-oesterreich.at.tf)

AEC Romania is at [www.aecaferom.xhost.ro](http://www.aecaferom.xhost.ro)

The **British Section Website** is at <http://www.aec-europe.org.uk>. You can also find the British Section Newsletter on line at the French and European websites by clicking on to the labelled link. The former ASLEF District 5 website is now inoperative.

## **Editorial: A note from the President.**

During the summer your President and Assistant Secretary have been furiously busy setting up the arrangements for the forthcoming European Days being held in York at the end of this month. It has not been an easy time, partly due to late bookings – it amazes me that people seem to think that when a deadline is stated that it is not the date before which you should have acted but the date when you begin to consider the matter. The work was further complicated by one of our key meal locations closing down (without our being informed) and only recently we found that the chosen replacement is also in difficulty. This I suppose is an inevitable result of the current economic crisis and we hope that our booking might save the day.

Fortunately we do now have a plan B but this involves using one venue twice. Work continues on the production of the paperwork necessary to ensure a smooth running event (we hope)!

On a lighter note the trip on the paddle steamer 'Waverley' proved a great success. The weather was not too bad, if not wall to wall sunshine but the sea swell prevented the landing at Minehead, so we cruised along the Welsh coast of the Bristol Channel and around the islands of Steep Holm and Flat Holm to return to Penarth, our starting point, at 17h45 instead of landing at Minehead at 15h00! Travel back east was straightforward enough but those of us who had anticipated a short journey home westwards from Taunton got there a bit later than expected.

Concerning railway photography, some sense does at last appear to prevail. There have been some silly high profile incidents highlighted in the national press and a large petition, organised by professional photographers, has received a positive response from the government.

Photographers are advised to inform the local railway authority or railway police of their presence and to carry a paper copy of the regulations, available from the ATOC website, to show to any official who may be unfamiliar with them. This does put the onus on the photographer to prove his innocence and there may not always be time to do as suggested. Time will tell if the system works or the paranoid reactions continue.

Our government in the form of Lord Adonis, the Transport Minister is taking a greater interest in High Speed rail in an attempt to reduce dramatically domestic air travel. A series of articles in the Guardian newspaper highlighted how Great Britain has been left behind in the business of developing rail travel – which it invented. Haven't we heard that before? At the same time detractors suggested that rail was probably not the best way to get from Penzance to Belfast and there were rumblings that the construction of London's Crossrail project may be in doubt. I find this amazing, when you consider that Paris, a smaller city has four 'Crossrails' in the form of its RER system!

No sooner had we published the programme for European Days in Poland in September 2010 than a completely revised programme was issued to us at the European Days in Lüneburg. This new programme will be found later in this issue.

**More urgently**, I ask you to consider European Days in Santago de Compostela in Spain, from 24<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> May 2010. Reservations are now being sought and the timescale although extended from the original 15<sup>th</sup> September 2009 (!) is still relatively short. If you wish to attend this event, please advise me as soon as possible and let me have your deposit. There are a few amendments to the programme and as promised in our last edition, booking details are included in this one.

At the Annual General Meeting in April, I reminded members that I shall be giving up as President next year at the end of my current term and that they should be considering who my successor might be. Since then, our Honorary President, Theo Steel, has asked me several times if I have found someone to replace me. I must tell you all that I have not. I urge you all to consider the matter, since I have no intention of being persuaded to 'stay on' for another four year term. So thinking caps on, please!

Philip Worsfold and the production team.

### **Recruitment**

Bright ideas should be discussed with **Bob Clark**. Philip Penaluna has suggested that we produce a 'Powerpoint' presentation to aid recruitment. This could be multilingual, within limits, for use by any national section, if required. We discussed it in the Administrative Council meeting in Lüneburg and have the go-ahead to produce a prototype version. Philip has now produced this and I have shown it during a talk about AEC given recently to a group of businessmen in Devon. It was received with interest.

Enquiries about membership should be addressed to **Bill Andrews**.

Their e-mail addresses are given below.

**There is a separate membership application form with this edition of the newsletter. Please use it if you are able to recruit a new member. Recruit seven members and get your next year's subscription free!**

### **COMMITTEE**

The committee is as follows:

#### **Honorary President:**

Theo Steel (Retiring Project Director ONE Railway)

#### **Past Honorary President:**

Malcolm Southgate OBE (formerly Deputy Director, Eurostar)

#### **Honorary Vice-president:**

Colin Charman, MCIT,

E-mail: [colin.charman@eurostar.co.uk](mailto:colin.charman@eurostar.co.uk)

#### **President:**

Philip Worsfold, B.Sc., C.Eng., M.I.C.E.,

E-mail: [wors@8bwhi.eclipse.co.uk](mailto:wors@8bwhi.eclipse.co.uk)

**Vice-president:**

Patrick Rigby,  
E-mail: [patrickrigby@bun.com](mailto:patrickrigby@bun.com)

**Secretary:**

Gerry Atkin M.I.L.T.  
E-mail: [gandeatkin@aol.com](mailto:gandeatkin@aol.com)

**Assistant Secretary:**

Peter Davies,  
E-mail: [24foxglove@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:24foxglove@tiscali.co.uk)

**Visits Secretary (Co-opted):**

As at the Annual general meeting, this post was left vacant on a temporary basis.

**Treasurer and Membership Secretary:**

Bill Andrews,  
E-mail: [fam.Andrews@ntlworld.com](mailto:fam.Andrews@ntlworld.com)

**Recruitment Secretary:**

Bob Clark,  
E-mail: [bobclark\\_aec@yahoo.ie](mailto:bobclark_aec@yahoo.ie)

**Auditor:**

Mike Hill

**EUROPEAN DAYS and OTHER EUROPEAN EVENTS**

The current position is as follows:

20<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> Sept 2009 European Days in **York, England**. (booking for this event is now closed)  
 24<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> May 2010 European Days in **Santiago de Compostella, Spain**. (revised details in this edition.)  
 12<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> 2010 European Days in **Poland**. (preliminary details in this edition.)  
 Spring 2011 European Days in **Italy - 'twixt Sea and Mountain**.  
 Autumn 2011 European Days in **Romania**.

**Events in the German section calendar are as follows:**

|                   |                       |   |
|-------------------|-----------------------|---|
| 09.09.2009        | Rostock               | Informationen aus der Bürgerschaft, Vortrag im Club |
| 12.09.2009        | Berlin                | Grillparty in Bernau bei Fam. Pause                 |
| <b>20.09 -</b>    | <b>Großbritannien</b> | <b>Europäische Tage York</b>                        |
| <b>26.09.2009</b> |                       |   |
| 06.10.2009        | Berlin                | Filmpark Babelsberg                                 |
| 10.10.2009        | Frankfurt             | Ausflug nach Idar-Oberstein                         |
| 14.10.2009        | Rostock               | Kegeln im Brauereikeller                            |
| 11.11.2009        | Rostock               | Informationen aus dem Bundestag, Vortrag im Club    |
| 13.-15.11.2009    | Hamburg               | event. Rhönfahrt                                    |
| 14.11.2009        | Frankfurt             | Gänseessen in der Gaststätte "Zur Waldeslust"       |

|                        |                 |  |
|------------------------|-----------------|--|
| 18.11.2009             | Rostock         | Theaterbesuch  |
| 28.11.2009             | Frankfurt       | Weihnachtsfeier in Miltenberg in Nordbayern                    |
| 03.-06.12.2009         | Dresden         | Weihnachtsausflug nach Neudorf                                 |
| 04.12.2009             | Berlin          | Weihnachtsfeier Gaststätte „ Zur S- Bahn“ am Bahnhof Kaulsdorf |
| 05.12.2009             | Hamburg         | Adventskaffee in Winsen  |
| 09.12.2009             | Rostock         | Weihnachtsfeier im Club  |
| <b>24.- 29.05.2010</b> | <b>Spanien</b>  | <b>Europäische Tage Santiago di Compostella</b>                |
| <b>Herbst 2010</b>     | <b>Polen</b>    | <b>Europäische Tage Hajnówka</b>                               |
| <b>Frühjahr 2011</b>   | <b>Italien</b>  | <b>Europäische Tage Sektion Italien Region Turin</b>           |
| <b>Herbst 2011</b>     | <b>Rumänien</b> | <b>Europäische Tage Sektion Rumänien</b>                       |

----- 00-00-00 -----

**The Spanish Section of AEC is organising, on the occasion of the year of Saint James of Compostela (Año Xacobeo), EUROPEAN DAYS in SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA - GALICIA, Spain, from Monday 24th to Saturday 29th May 2010**

Accommodation will be in the 3 star Hotel Congreso [www.hotelcongreso.com](http://www.hotelcongreso.com) 3 km from Santiago de Compostela, with good communications and just 10 minutes from the town centre in a quiet, residential and commercial area. With completely renovated facilities, the hotel has the "Q" certification of tourist quality that the Institute for Spanish Quality Tourism grants. It includes gardens, bar-cafeteria, Andalusian Patio, private security service and outdoor swimming pool (open in May with good weather). Comfortable rooms with Wireless Internet (wifi), television with international channels, telephone, bathrooms with hairdryer and bidet.

**PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME (July 2009 version)**

**Sunday 23<sup>th</sup> May** : Reception of the members of the Administrative Council during all the day at Lavacolla airport and at Santiago railway station.

**Monday 24<sup>th</sup> May**: (MEETING OF AEC ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL)

From 09h00 to 23h00 Reception of participants at the airport or at railway station, transfer to the hotel.

**10h00 Meeting of the AEC Administrative Council, in Hotel CONGRESO.**  
**13h30** Lunch for the members of the Administrative Council in the hotel  
**16h00** Continuation of meeting of the AEC Administrative Council in the hotel  
**20h30** Inaugural dinner of European Days with participation of a Folk group in the hotel

**Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> May**: VISIT TO THE ATLANTIC ISLES NATIONAL PARK (GALICIA'S SOUTH AREA)

**07h00-08h30** Breakfast  
**09h00** Excursion to Vigo by bus  
**10h15** Chartered boat crossing to visit the Cíes Islands in Vigo's ría (a long narrow area of water formed when a river valley floods).  
**13h30** Lunch in a restaurant in the village of *Bayona*

18h15 Visit to “Parador Nacional de Bayona”, old Celtic village at La Guardia.  
20h30 Dinner at the Hotel Congreso

**Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> May:** VISIT TO THE TOWNS OF OURENSE AND MONTEFORTE DE LEMOS (INTERIOR OF GALICIA’S REGION)

07h00-08h30 Breakfast  
09h00 Depart for Monforte de Lemos and visit to the Railway Museum.  
13h30 Visit to a cellar and lunch in a restaurant (<http://www.acantina.es>)  
15h30 Visit to remarkable monasteries and to the viewpoint of the Sil river canyons  
18h00 Return to Santiago de Compostela  
20h00 Dinner at Hotel Congreso

**Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> May:** VISIT TO FERROL AND THE ORTEGAL AREA IN THE NORTH OF

GALICIA

07h00-08h30 Breakfast  
09h00 Depart for the city of *Ferrol* and visit of the North Coast of Galicia  
14h15 Lunch in Ferrol  
17h30 Conference about the Galician railway infrastructures.  
20h30 Dinner at Hotel Congreso

**Friday 28<sup>th</sup> May:** PILGRIM’S MASS OFFERED TO THE APOSTLE ST JAMES AT THE CATHEDRAL AND VISIT TO THE HISTORIC AREA OF THE TOWN AND THE ‘CITY OF CULTURE’

07h00-08h30 Breakfast  
09h00 Depart by bus for the *Monte del Gozo*, to walk a stretch of Camino de Santiago up to the cathedral, (optional) (4.8 Km)  
12h00 “Traditional Pilgrim’s Mass”, with offertory to the Apostle St James and, later, “Botafumeiro” – the swinging of the great thurible or censer (incense burner).  
13h15 Reception at the mayor’s parlour of Santiago by the municipal authorities in the Raxoy Palace, opposite the Cathedral of Compostela.  
14h30 Light lunch (Galician tapas) in a restaurant.  
17h00 Free time.  
20h30 Gala Dinner with Folk group and dance at Hotel Congreso.

**Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> May:** END OF EUROPEAN DAYS / DEPARTURE OF PARTICIPANTS

**07h00-08h30** Breakfast

- Transfer to the railway station in Santiago / Airport Lavacolla.

**IMPORTANT:**

- *There will be a maximum of 200 participants, establishing a minimum for each country and respecting the order of deposit and registration..*
- *The date of reception of deposit will become the priority order to get to the European Days in Santiago.*

## CONDITIONS FOR REGISTRATION

### A.- PRICES.

The **prices** are **for one person**, whether it is a double, triple or individual room, as indicated.

The prices include all the meals for the days requested, inaugural and gala dinner for the participants, excursions and visits, transport for the trips, entrances and any other expenses from the visits. Include daily buffet breakfast.

(A) \* BASIC program (5 nights accommodation).

From dinner on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> to breakfast on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup>

|                                |       |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| - double room :                | 580 € |
| - triple room:                 | 550 € |
| - double room, individual use: | 700 € |

(B)\* COUNCIL Program. (2 nights accommodation). Special weekend for the members of the Administrative Council and their partners.

From dinner on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> to breakfast on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup>

|                                |       |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| - double room:                 | 170 € |
| - triple room:                 | 160 € |
| - double room, individual use: | 210 € |

*Any supplementary meal (lunch or dinner) in the hotel:* 20€

(C) \* 1 extra day + BASIC program. (6 nights accommodation).

From dinner on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> to breakfast on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup>

|                                |       |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| - double room:                 | 670 € |
| - triple room:                 | 640 € |
| - double room, individual use: | 800 € |

(D) \* SPECIAL program =Saturday to Saturday=. (7 nights accommodation).

From dinner on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> to breakfast on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup>

|                                |       |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| - double room:                 | 760 € |
| - triple room:                 | 720 € |
| - double room, individual use: | 920 € |

-----  
*Notice: For supplementary days to these programmes, the prices, booking and payments of deposits you should enquire directly to Hotel CONGRESO ([hcongreso@hotelcongreso.com](mailto:hcongreso@hotelcongreso.com)), indicating as reference "JORNADAS AEC".*

### B.- GENERAL RULES FOR REGISTRATION.

*The registration of the participants of each European section must be sent in only a form for each of the sections, indicating:*

NAME AND SURNAME, passport or ID number, program and type of room, money transferred and day and time of departure + arrival from/to the Lavacolla airport or railway station in Santiago.

The date of the transfer of the deposit to the Spanish bank will remain the order of reservation of the total number of places of those attending in these European Days.

> Deposit payment : **275 €/person.**  
*Booking is open from 15<sup>th</sup> September 2009.*

> Balance of payment, **according to the chosen program .....**  
to reach the Spanish bank account by 18<sup>th</sup> March 2010 at the latest.

**Booking through the British section is obligatory.**

The event is arranged by the Spanish section of AEC, which is the responsible organiser. Payment through the British section is offered and minimises the cost of money transfer. If you wish to take advantage of this offer, a deposit of £275 (sterling) per person is required. **Cheques should be made payable to Philip Worsfold, and should reach him before 16<sup>th</sup> October 2009.** The British section does not act as a travel agency and does not make travel arrangements. Neither the British section of AEC, nor any individual officer thereof can accept responsibility for any problems or losses arising. You will be responsible personally for your payments and for any losses that may be incurred. You are advised to take out appropriate insurance cover.

**The person in charge of registration in Spain is: Mónica Guerrero**

- e-mail: [mguerrero@tmb.cat](mailto:mguerrero@tmb.cat)

**The person in charge of the bank transfers: Francisco Casquete**

- e-mail: [pacocasquete@gmail.com](mailto:pacocasquete@gmail.com)

---

**EUROPEAN DAYS IN PRZEMYSL, POLAND 12<sup>TH</sup> – 18<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2010**  
**The Programme for European Days in Poland has been completely revised**

**11<sup>th</sup> September (Sunday)**

- Arrival of Participants and accomodation in hotel Grumada in Przemysl
- 19h30 – 2200 Supper

**13<sup>th</sup> September (Monday)**

- 08h30 Breakfast
- 10h00 Meeting of the Administrative Council and arrival the other Participants of European Days and transfer to hotel
- 14h00 Lunch in the hotel
- 15h00 Town Visit with guide – Kasimirzowski Castle, Old Town, Pipe and Bell Museum (*on foot*)
- 19h00 – 22h00 Supper and formal opening of European Days with music from a Chamber Ensemble.

### **14<sup>th</sup> September (Tuesday)**

- 08h00 Breakfast
- 08h30 Tour by bus to Lancut – Visit to the castle, Park Kutschen Museum, Orangerie, buy souvenirs.
- 14h00 Lunch
- 15h00 Travel to Lezajsk – visit to the Bernardine church; samt concert of organ music.
- 18h30 Return to the hotel.
- 19h00 Supper in the hotel.

### **15<sup>th</sup> September (Wednesday)**

- 07h30 Breakfast
- 08h00 Tour with guide to Bieszczady Mountains. Round trip of Bieszczady to the Staud dam on the San in Solina (the biggest reservoir in Poland). Walk across the dam. Trip to Ustrzyki Dolne – Natural Science Museum of the Bieszczady National Park.
- approx 13h30 Lunch in Ustrzyki Dolne.
- Trip to the main station of the historic Forest Narrow Gauge Railway in Majdan (Bieszczady). Trip by special train on the line Majdan – Cisna – Przylup.
- approx 18h30 arrive back in Przemysl.
- 19h00 Dinner. Singing presentation by AEC by national sections. Disco.

### **16<sup>th</sup> September (Thursday)**

- 08h30 Breakfast
- 09h00 Visit to the new Przemysl Regional Museum.
- 11h30 Trip to Bolestrzyce – visit and walk through the arboretum.
- 14h00 Lunch.
- 15h30 Journey to Krasiczyn. Visit the Castle and Park complex in Krasiczyn. Beer festival meal with music by a folk band. Evening meal. Attraction on the castle walls – a mysterious 'White Lady'.
- 21h00 Return to the hotel Supper

### **17<sup>th</sup> September (Friday)**

- 08h00 Breakfast
- 09h00 Visit to Tataren Hill – town panorama, Ski-lift; a toboggan run is possible.
- 11h00 We get to know the fortifications and history of the Przemysl Fortress of the First World War.
- 14h00 Lunch
- 15h00 Free time, purchases, relaxation (and for those who are interested, a visit to the border freight station of PKP Cargo S.A. in Medyka – the EU boundary between Poland and Ukraine – with dual gauge track).
- 18h30 Festive Closing of AEC European Days; Evening dinner and dancing (to recorded music).

### **18<sup>th</sup> September (Saturday)**

- 07h00 – 09h00 Breakfast
- Departures of the participants of the European Days from Przemysl.

**Booking details are still awaited and will be published as soon as possible.**

## European Days in Lüneburg, Germany, 25<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> May 2009.

The German Section clearly had some prior knowledge of the weather when they managed to choose one of the very warmest and sunniest weeks of this summer to host European Days in Lüneburg.

Lüneburg is a spa town and our hotel was situated right beside the swimming pool complex, so when not sightseeing, we were in an ideal situation to enjoy the pools filled with naturally salt water. (Slight worry when we heard that the town's salt mines were closed because there was so much lead in the salt that it was poisonous. But I expect they sorted that out before the water got into the pool – we are all still alive anyway!) The adjacent Kurpark was a pleasant relaxing place for an evening stroll – or sitting in front of what appeared to be a huge trimmed hedge down which salty water trickled, to breath in the salty vapours!

Monday evening was the usual opening dinner when we met old friends again, made some new ones, tried to sort out which language we were supposed to be in, enjoyed a good dinner and all rose to our feet as the European Anthem was played – something I always find a strangely uplifting and exciting experience. Coming from insular Britain, it is good to be reminded that we are part of a much wider community. *[Your editor had meanwhile attended the meeting of the Administrative Council, which was a pretty quiet affair compared with some recent meetings.]*

On Tuesday we were shown round Lüneburg– a very historic and interesting old town – and attended a reception in the Rathaus, where we were welcomed by a representative of the mayor. We lunched in the Ratskeller below on a typical local dish, which bore a striking resemblance to Lancashire Hotpot.

On Wednesday we went to visit Hamburg. Following a bus tour of the town and the docks, we had a trip on the river with an excellent lunch served on the boat. Before returning to the hotel we stopped off at a fish restaurant. They hadn't quite got English fish and chips sussed, but it was a good try. And the quantity of wine consumed was rather more than at your average "chippy".

We set off for Lübeck on Thursday, but stopped on the way to see the boat lift at Scharnebeck. This is a truly remarkable and huge piece of engineering. Full specification was provided by the Germans but I think I will omit it from this article. Arriving in Lübeck, we were met by our guides and had a very interesting tour of another lovely old town.

After lunch we went on to the seaside (well, estuary-side) resort of Travemünde and our German hosts once again demonstrated their ability to produce schnapps from nowhere at each stop.

On Friday we went to Lüneburg Heide. First we stopped at the very strange Heidekastell Iserhatsche. I won't attempt to describe this as I couldn't possibly convey the whole bizarre concept. It really should have been left as the youth hostel it once was.

The Heidegarten that we visited next was much more beautiful. Here they were cultivating hundreds of different types of heather and we met the "Heather Queen", a local young lady who holds this title for a year. Lunch was in a very old farm building – originally built to accommodate both family and the animals, just like a Devon longhouse! Those of us who spend time tramping the English moors were a little disappointed not to see any real heathland – but we shall be able to show our hosts

what heathland should really look like when they come to visit the Yorkshire Moors during European Days in York.

Friday evening we enjoyed the Gala Dinner in our hotel, followed by music and dancing for those with sufficient energy left, and the British Section received the Banner and the Lamp, Key and Cushion – the symbols of AEC – as we shall be the hosts of the next European Days in September. I hope we can put on as good a week as the Germans did – it will be a hard act to follow!

*[We travelled to and from the event by train, stopping overnight in Köln in each direction. We had a couple of pleasant leisurely evening meals there too – and discovered that German trains do not always run on time!]*

### **Bridge Examinations...Times they are a changing.**

#### **Lennie Girling reminisces...**

*Times they are a changing* as sung by Bob Dylan in those far off days in the sixties when life was lived at a gentler pace; that included railway workers of all types and bridge examiners alike, and indeed the life of a bridge examiner was very much different than it is today.

Work in the Ipswich bridge office was different when the astute and clinically obese and smelly John Gale tapped the keys of his typewriter to write reports with such frugality that you would have thought that words were a pound each, and if you were lucky you might get a whole page of defects per structure.

John Gale worked at Colchester in the structures office with his trusty mate Reg, assistants we call them today; Reg Macklin was affectionately known as the singing postman, I have no idea why, but that is what he was called behind his back, his arched back made him look as if he had dowager's hump, but Reg was a nice man who, although working with John, did not like him that much, and like so many railwaymen of that time has since retired and is now dead.

The Ipswich examiner was waited on hand and foot, a sort of a batman was the bridge examiners mate. This was a coveted job for those who wanted to do work of little exertion; this was no different to any of the bridge offices in the Anglia region in which I worked, including the Norwich office, where shiny shoes Taplin was working the bridge examiners mate.

John Gale would eventually come to work in Ipswich bridge office at the London road, which is where I started work in about 1989 as a temp, as so many of us did, but by this time Derrick Race was safely ensconced in this position and had been for some time. I often covered for him while he was annual leave; he would find me something smothered in dense vegetation on a closed line out in the wilds of Suffolk somewhere. In fact I still pass a structure or two from time to time when I work out that way. I even have a photograph to prove that I was there, standing in front of a BR mini bus in yellow livery and the red double arrows that adorned every vehicle and building that was connected to the railway. In fact there are a few signs still in existence.

The Ipswich bridge office was once the old plumber's shop where I pressed my name into the soft putty of a newly installed windowpane along with the date that I started work, as an apprentice gas fitter 10 08 64.

The old London road workshops were closed down and the buildings were turned into offices, and I played a small part in its transformation, digging trenches and installing steel threaded gas pipe

There were permanent way, signal and telegraph and the Engineer's offices, the bridge office being a part of the latter and seen as the not so important department then, the engineer's office being the hub of the workshops universe. The bridge examiner's office was on the outer edge of this railway universe, almost forgotten except when there was an engineer's inspection or that the reports that the bridge examiner had written were to be read by the Senior Area Works Supervisor to find work for his department. Later these would be sent Norwich for the engineer to read and action, the work would later be farmed out when the money could be found.

Life as I said in the Ipswich office was at a leisurely pace, Derrick nearly always turned up on time parking his car as close to the office door as possible and woe betide any one who dared take his parking spot. John Sparkes was his mate by this time, affectionately known as Ned, and if you have seen a male donkey you would know why. Prior to Ned there was Ted Taylor who excelled at doing very little except reading the newspaper and filling in crossword puzzles, and making fun of others, chuckling in a "Mutley" type manner to himself, as if he had an ingrown hair down his throat causing him a tickling sensation.

Ned was a good mate and looked after us both well; he saw this as his duty, to do all those menial tasks that he thought we should not be doing being a "Sir" as he put it. Our job was to examine and write.

Ned's knowledge of the structures and the railway in general was very good; remembering the closed lines when they were open, he even told me of their use and if he had travelled on them.

Ned drew the reports from the cabinet when we needed them and put them back when we had finished, he made the tea and toast, washed up, prepared the flask when we went out, loaded the van when we could get one, we had to share a van with the Colchester bridge office every other week with Bill and Jeff.

We also shared our office with Jack Lord the bonus clerk, he was a bricklayer who used to work in the workshops, but looked more like a spiv than a tradesman, trilby hat, thin moustache, shifty looking and talking in a quiet voice sometimes out of the corner of his mouth, he always carried a holdall and rode a black Raleigh bicycle, the bag hanging from the handlebars, he always had a little something to flog, I would not be surprised if he had half a dozen iffy watches strapped to an arm and two or three packets of nylons inside his jacket pocket, he alas has now departed from this world like just like Ted and many others railway men that I used to know.

Derrick would come into the office put down his case and settle back into his chair, prepare himself for the day, clean out his pipe and fill up with counter shag pipe tobacco, take a match from his box and strike it and place the flame to the pipe bowl and draw the flame down inhaling the smoke through his mouth and out again, this was a daily ritual, Ned would follow into the office soon after, late as usual after clocking on, supervisors did not clock on in those days, which suited me, because often or not I used to be late as well when I was on the tools as we called it.

My real start was due to a lucky break, quite literally. Tony, the Cambridge bridge examiner, broke his ankle while playing football one Sunday and that let me into the bridge office for Cambridge and March areas office, but by this time Derek Scott was involved and he was in sole charge of all the examiners in the Anglia region under the guidance of Peter Scown our production manager from the Norwich engineer's office - an ex permanent way technical office man.

Scottie was a long time railwayman; he started as an apprentice carpenter and worked his way through the grades in the workshops office, but when there was a reorganisation of the workshops Scottie came into the bridge office at a higher grade.

Derrick Race and I had worked together many times on the tools and he was pleased to see me getting this chance, but changes were on the horizon although we did not know it. The conservative government was in power, they were selling nationalized industries, gas, water, electricity, and then the mention of the railway that it may be sold off. In the meantime time I had completed the bridge examiner's course at Watford 1991 which took eight weeks. It was 'live in' and when I successfully completed it, I was brought back to work on the Ipswich area which made life easy for 'Racy' as he was assisting 'Scottie' the senior examiner, he would sort the reports out, making the recommendations, by then we were free from the workshops and were a department in our own right.

Bridge report writing had not changed since its inception in about the nineteen fifties, everything was written with a Biro pen, pencil, rule, green and red pens for defects noted on drawings, later, copies were made using carbon paper between three sheets of paper and a Biro pen, we always kept one of these reports for our own use, the remainder were sent Norwich to be read and actioned by the engineer, the work to be farmed out to the workshops staff at a later date, if there was enough funding to pay for the work.

The fact that we were now working alone without being under the guidance of the workshops proved our importance; all work came from our reporting. The mention of privatisation raised its ugly head, and as the departments were split up, and I had to go back on the tools and was put to work with GTRM, an acronym for "get the redundancy money" I was after all only temporary in the bridge office, and had to return to the workshops working for GTRM when I was advised to put in for the level crossing examiners job at Ipswich by my mate Derrick the bridge examiner, after being on the tools again for 6 months.

The job was mine before I even attended the interview - by reputation I was told, my mate Peter Copper also put in for the job. It is the same in some cases still is today - It is not what you know, but it is who you know!

I worked on crossing examinations for a year but by then we were part of BRIS. My life on the tools was over and I have not touched a 'Stilson' wrench since my daughter bought her house in Ipswich a couple of years ago and altered the water services.

On the run up to the sell off, Derrick Race, John Sparks and Derek Scott had decided to take voluntary redundancy. That left a vacancy for a 'B' grade supervisor. Pat Edwards, who had been in charge of the Stratford workshops, which had closed, filled this post.

There were just me, Pat Edwards, Billy Marshal and the mates, our own self contained little examination unit; the Ipswich and Colchester areas were amalgamated together. The Colchester office was closed and Bill came to Ipswich. Bill, I thought, turned out the best work of any examiner I had seen; clear and concise, not a defect missed, his work was so very good - but Bill soon became unable to work because cataracts that had developed in his eyes and with the fear of computers lurking on the horizon he thought it was time to leave. He did so; but he was sad to go and we were sad to lose him.

I had been typing my work for some time by then, just like John Gale a previous bridge examiner. The work was completed faster and looked neater.

Peter Scown, our manager, had been talking about a computer that we could write reports on. We had not seen or had anything to do with one. "We had been adding photographs to reports for a year or so using roll film. Our reports were still hand written – or typed in my case – and photographs were stuck in place with Pritstick glue. We had also been using 'Tippex' liquid paper to blank out and write over any mistakes. This was another innovation that improved our life; so change was taking place even at such a minor level as this.

One day Peter Scown turned up one day with a redundant computer he rescued from the Stratford bridge office, it was a collection of wires and cables with a screen and a base unit and booklet. This was our first taste of technology; we spent an afternoon of putting it together and trying to get it to work, but the bulk of our work was still done by hand, we had to share this machine amongst four of us. I still used my typewriter!

But once again a move was imminent and the organisation was sold to Owen Williams, a company unheard of in this area. This was when change really took place. Our office was closed; we were to work from home, and after a few weeks of sending our handwritten reports to our York headquarters, this stopped and we would write them up in an office in Bury St Edmunds. Peter set up the new machine, gave us a quick introduction and let us get on with using it. We even had to share this one machine and still had to stick photographs onto photo sheets. But our work did look better – no digital camera yet; they were to come later, after another move to Balfour Beatty.

More changes were on the way. Mates were made redundant; bridge examiner numbers reduced and the move to Balfour Beatty was soon to follow. We were given a new computer each for home use and a digital camera, we were truly in the modern age – and all because of privatisation, like it or not.

The change for us old B R employees has been tremendous over the last ten years; a Caxton moment one could say. For us the pen and pencil is dead and the electronic printing press is here; but it took the sale and privatisation of the railway to do it.

Who knows what method of reporting we may have still using been if the railway had been left as it was? Pens and pencils still? But now we are back again with Owen Williams/Amey. With this new technology we send all reports via the telephone network and letters by e-mail, which can be accessed anywhere in England and indeed the world if need be.

Technology is truly a wonderful thing, I never thought I would ever see such changes when I entered the bridge office, but for some people new technology will never do, these are usually the older generation who have no interest in such things, as for me I think it is wonderful, long live technology and the advantages to life it brings.

*[As the former Works Engineer at Norwich, I find Lennie's comments most interesting and not quite so revealing as he might imagine. I suspect that the march of technology would have proceeded whether or not the British railways had been privatised. The old regime was in the forefront of the development of the application of computer technology. In my later capacity of 'Development Engineer' you might say that the main aim of my job was to do other people out of theirs – Ed.]*

## **RAILWAY PHOTOGRAPHY**

Bucking the recent trend, it is nice to note that Lennie has been out and about with his camera on the East Suffolk line between Ipswich and Lowestoft – for those who didn't know, Lowestoft is the most easterly place in England; I've always wondered how the birds there know when to start the dawn chorus!

He has recorded a special steam train tour – the "Easterling" with 'Oliver Cromwell', Britannia class Pacific steam engine standing on the up line at Woodbridge station in the early evening of 15<sup>th</sup> August, waiting for the electronic token block to be taken from Saxmundham, so that it can proceed towards London after a rail tour that started from Liverpool Street station, then onto Norwich, Lowestoft and returning home to Liverpool Street via Ipswich.

This engine used to run between Liverpool Street and Norwich Thorpe in BR steam days. The engine is seen blowing off steam.

Lennie's pictures are reproduced separately with this edition.

## **RECENT EVENTS...**

We have continued to meet at the 'Lord Moon of the Mall' once a month.

Our 'last Wednesday' visits have also been most enjoyable. On 27<sup>th</sup> May a group enjoyed the visit to Volk's Electric Railway Brighton and on 19<sup>th</sup> June there was the most successful trip from Penarth on the P.S. Waverley. This also proved a bit of a reunion since we saw some members we had not seen for some time previously.

The following week we met at the 'Beer Engine' in Newton St Cyres, near Exeter, to sample the ales brewed there and to enjoy the bucolic countryside. The half mile walk from the bus stop on the main road was achieved successfully, although a taxi back to Exeter station was deemed necessary – a great pity really since there is a railway station within hailing distance of the pub but trains only stop there morning and evening. 29<sup>th</sup> July saw the return visit to Fuller's Brewery in Chiswick – always an enjoyable occasion, which sadly I had to miss, as likewise the visit to Hythe Pier just a few days ago on 26<sup>th</sup> August.

## **...AND THINGS TO COME**

Reunions in London continue to take place at the '**Lord Moon of the Mall**' on the **second Thursday of each month**, so the dates from now on are, **10<sup>th</sup> September, 8<sup>th</sup> October, 12<sup>th</sup> November and 10<sup>th</sup> December 2009 and 14<sup>th</sup> January 2010** etc. Following the visit to the 'Knights Templar' we decided that, very nice though it was, it

was too inconveniently placed for public transport access and it would be best to continue to hold our reunions at the 'Lord Moon of the Mall'.

**Please remember that, generally, the last Wednesday of the month** is earmarked for possible lunchtime talks or visits. Forthcoming '**last Wednesday**' dates are: **30<sup>th</sup> September** (although we may all be too worn out after European Days in York the previous week), **28<sup>th</sup> October, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2009**. **There will be no AEC event on 25<sup>th</sup> December since most of us will be engaged in other jollification that day!** Then we continue into the New Year on **27<sup>th</sup> January and 24<sup>th</sup> February 2010** etc.

At present we have nothing arranged but we are investigating the possibility of a visit to the Fire Service College at Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire (we shall need also to investigate transport from the railway station). On one of the New Year dates, we hope to arrange another film show.

Further details will be available from John Woods on e-mail:

[jauwoods@googlemail.com](mailto:jauwoods@googlemail.com). To keep abreast of developments it is advisable to contact John regularly, since some events are arranged at short notice and it is not always possible to announce them in these pages.

#### **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. I am sorry that we do not have a specific item for ladies.

Ties are now available, at £4.50 plus postage, and badges are in stock in small numbers, at £1.50 each, including postage. These items are available from **the President, Philip Worsfold**. Please contact him first by phone to check availability.

#### **GREAT BRITAIN ALL LINE TIMETABLE THOMAS COOK EUROPEAN TIMETABLE**

Philip Worsfold holds an up to date copy of The Stationery Office Great Britain All Line Timetable and also Cooks European Rail and Shipping Services timetable (monthly edition). This timetable contains the majority of British services in a succinct, abbreviated form. Train operators produce their own pocket timetables.

#### **AND FOR THE FUTURE?**

We shall endeavour to continue the production of these three-monthly newsletters to get information to you. They will still be mostly information with just the occasional article. So please, put pen to paper. We need to build up a library of articles. Please keep in touch and let us have your information, your views and your ideas. Next copy deadline is **11<sup>th</sup> December 2009**.

## **SUMMARY OF DATES**

London Reunions on the second Thursday of the month at the “Lord Moon of the Mall”, Whitehall, London:

**10<sup>th</sup> September,**  
**8<sup>th</sup> October,**  
**12<sup>th</sup> November**  
**10<sup>th</sup> December 2009**  
**and 14<sup>th</sup> January 2010** etc.

Dates reserved for talks or visits on the last Wednesday of the month:

**30<sup>th</sup> September** (although we may all be too worn out after European days in York the previous week),  
**28<sup>th</sup> October,**  
**25<sup>th</sup> November 2009.**

**There will be no AEC event on 25<sup>th</sup> December since most of us will be engaged in other jollification that day!**

Then we continue into the New Year on

**27<sup>th</sup> January 2010**  
**24<sup>th</sup> February 2010** etc.

# A.E.C. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other\*. Surname:.....Initials:.....

Forename:.....

Job Description:.....

Work Address:.....

Town/City:..... Postcode:.....

Internal Phone:..... Fax:.....

External Phone:..... Fax:.....

Micromail Box No:..... E-mail Address:.....

## ACTIVE / RETIRED \*

Home Address:.....

Town/City:..... Postcode:.....

Telephone:..... Include in Directory?: YES/NO \*

Mobile:..... Include in Directory?: YES/NO \*  
(\*delete as applicable)

Membership of the A.E.C. costs only £5.00 per annum and is open to anyone in the railway industry without qualification. However, if you would like to complete the following statement, please do so. It would be helpful for us to know.

I can speak the following language(s) (state how well, e.g. fluent, fair, a little)

.....

**I should like to join the Association Européenne des Cheminots.**

**Signature**.....

Data supplied will be kept on a computer database. Home, **where authorised above** and Work telephone and Fax numbers and electronic mail addresses can be divulged to other members **only**.

**Please make cheques/PO's for £5.00 payable to: "A.E.C."**

**Send this application to:**

Mr W. Andrews, Hon. Treasurer, A.E.C.

32, Greet Road,

LANCING. BN15 9NS

E-mail: fam.andrews@ntlworld.com

***If you encourage 7 people to join within your subscription year, the next year's subscription is free!***