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(78). France (FR) - Région Auvergne: As previously predicted, the surviving train pair Ussel - Montluçon will be withdrawn "at the end of the winter season", leading to complete closure of Montluçon - Eygurande-Merlines. The weekend loco-hauled service was withdrawn at end-Dec. 2007. In a slightly longer timescale, the few surviving trains between Clermont-Ferrand and Le Mont-Dore are likely to be replaced completely by buses, the rail service being cut back to Durtol-Nohanent (only 2 stations out of Clermont-Ferrand). In a longer timescale still (not before Dec. 2008) the rail service along the axis Clermont-Ferrand - Laqueuille - Ussel is threatened since it does not feature in the long-term rail strategy of Région Auvergne, beyond Durtol-Nohanent. In this scenario, Ussel becomes the end of a long dead-end branch from Limoges, funded by Région Limousin.

The line between Clermont and Tulle was once double-track, and until fairly recently was served by such trains as "Le Ventadour", double-headed by pairs of diesel locos, and well-loaded. Whilst it is at least possible that some 'fix' may be found to retain this line, SNCF themselves have shown no enthusiasm for doing so, and the few surviving Lyon - Bordeaux trains via Ussel could (if retained) run via Montluçon instead. Brive - Tulle - Ussel is, of course, not the responsibility of Région Auvergne: it would seem likely that Brive - Tulle would retain a rail service, but this seems much less likely for the Tulle - Ussel section in a scenario of withdrawal of the 'transversales'.

(79). Germany (DE) Regarding item 10/1057, page 01/08 - As already reported this line is closed at the moment. It appears to be a temporary closure as according to the Ostseizeitung there has been a legal objection to PRESS taking over the service - a disgruntled competitor. This will obviously take some weeks to sort out but the intention is to get the line up and running again asap. The paper also reports staff as saying things could be difficult this year as several locos running certificates expire.

Up date to item in IN1055 - Huffenhardt branch closure was only just avoided this summer - cant see it lasting too much longer (not least as half the SWEG drivers have left to join other companies apparently...) The latest up date is that the service has been reprieved until July 2009

A Tunnel Boarding Machine broke through on the City Tunnel on Leipzigs first Underground Line in early December (from the Guardian 11/12/2007) The line is due to open in 2010.

(80). North/South Korea - Regular Freight Train started running between the two countries in early December for the first time since 1950. The 10-mile track crosses the demilitarised Zone at the 38th parallel. Although Test Trains started in May 2007 this was the first regular freight service, and should be followed in the next 12 months by passenger service (Statement by the leaders of both countries). Item from the Guardian 12/12/2007.

(81). Poland (PL) - T 515 Szczynno - Pisz reopened on 1.1.2008 but the one pair currently runs in the dark, requires an overnight stay at Pisz and the connections at Szczynno to and from Olsztyn are terrible. Szczynno 17.00 - Pisz 18.33 Pisz 4.57 - Szczynno 06.29 On line only shows it as running daily but only until 31 January at the moment! Connections are Olsztyn 10.50 Szczynno 11.39 or Olsztyn 14.40 Szczynno 15.35 SsaU Szczynno 09.40 Olsztyn 10.28 Don't all rush at once!

(82). Poland - The new timetable posted on the website of the NG operator SKPL confirm services were withdrawn between Sniaty and Wielichowo commencing on 1 January 2008. <http://www.skpl.kalisz.pl/SKD-rjp-2008.pdf> Another of their lines looks likely to reopen as their news section advises of plans to reopen Pleszew to Pleszew Miasto from 11th February.

(83). Spain - Observed whilst on the Costa Brava [ED] Electrification complete to Benidorm, but not switched on beyond Creueta, re-alignment between Terra Mitica - Benidorm. Old track still in situ, but only connected at Benidorm end. Although laid out, double track not laid in some places, but all bridges for double track are in place, new platforms are complete for Low Floor trams (line 1), temporary platforms in place for the present DMUs. So Line 1 will finish at Benidorm and line 9 will start from there. The line northwards was closed and substituted between Altea - Calpe (But trains actually ran on to Gargames to reverse). Bustiton started on 17/01/2008 but there was no finish date shown on Temporary Timetable.

Line 4, continues from the previous terminus at La Marina (FGV depot is here and contains the hauled stock and Locomotives [3] that work the Limoni Express during the Summer) to Puerta Del Mar (about 250m from La Marina)

(80). Switzerland (CH) Not all the Brig - Iselle services leave from the main station platforms in Brig, the through Domodossola Trains do off course, both IC/EC/CIS and Regional. However there is also a regional service every 90 minutes from Glines 90 (Platform 90) . This platform is in the yard complex, to reach it you have to leave the station via the subway as far as the steps to Glines 9, then carry on to the next set of steps, these lead to a roadway. At the top of the steps carry on walking following the yard/sidings for about 150 metres, the platform is on your right and is also the loading point for the Car service, using the same train that you will board, there are several car flats + 1 passenger coach, the train is a push/pull set using a Auto Trailer (DVT) one end and a SBB class Re 4/4. Train take about 30 minutes to Iselle. If continuing to Domodossola you need to take the Bus from the station car park, this connects with each train in both directions. Trains run a 90 minutes intervals (www.sbb.ch) Trains run form early morning till late in the evening 7 days per week.

There is in existence a special emergency timetable that comes into effect if there is a blockage in the LBT (Lotschberg Base Tunnel) A Copy of this Timetable can be obtained from the Editor.

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Imminent Possibilities

(55). 16/02/2008 COPEF - France. From Paris Nord - La Ferté-Milon - reims - laon - Montcornet (end on Line) returning from Laon to Paris Nord via Soissons. Price 120€. Further details from: 9, Rue du Chateau-London, 75010 Paris. Tel: 01 45 81 11 06

Record of Openings & Closures of Lines to Passenger Services

(56). OP Austria (AT) - New Funicular railway opened from the Centre of Innsbruck. The Nordpark Cable Railway or Hungerbergbahn. The Bottom station is underground at Congress Station, the first station after emerging from the tunnel is at Loewenhaus, after leaving here it crosses the River Inn, climbing to the next station at Alpenzoo after entering another tunnel the funicular emerges into Hungerberg Station at 1,000 Feet above Innsbruck and at 3,000 feet a.s.l. The length of the funicular is 1.8KM and top speed is 13 kph (from the Guardian 18/12/2007).

(57). CP Czech (CZ) The significance of the withdrawal of services between Skalica na Slovensku and Sudomerice nad Maravou is that it marks the end of another cross border passenger service.

(58). OP Poland (PL) T 515 Szczynno - Pisz (1.1.2008)

(59). CP Poland (PL) Sniaty - Wielichowo (01.01.2008)

(60). OP Poland (PL) Pleszew to Pleszew Miasto (11.02.08)

Prospective Train Services Changes

(61). Czech/Slovak - The main line from Breclav to Kutly crosses the border just south of Lanzhot. There is an obvious difference in standard of track on the Czech and Slovak sides, with the latter being much the poorer. The EMU the writer travelled on was well patronized, with most passengers disembarking at Brodske rather than Kutly. The 07.07 from Kutly to Skalica na Slovensku was a CD railcar, also well patronized. The railcar then waited for the best part of an hour at Skalica before forming the 08.31 to Sudomerice. There seemed to be three potential passengers for this service at one stage, but the two who had been clutching photocopy timetables subsequently left the station. The service departed and arrived without any border formalities and with just the writer on board. There were about half a dozen passengers at Sudomerice for the return working, who had disembarked from the CD Vrbovce- bound train. The Czech police were by then in attendance.

About a dozen passengers with a huge volume of luggage transferred at Vrbovce ZSR to the ZSR railcar for the 09.43 departure for Nove Mesto nad Vahom. This service, connecting with CD trains across the border, is being reduced in the new timetable. Similarly reduced is the service from Horne Srie ZSR -Vlarsky Prusmyk CD. On 1st December only two passengers made the crossing in the ZSR railcar, just in time to catch the 13.10 towards Brno.

(62). France (FR) - The Charleville, Meziers and Epemay avoiding lines are scheduled to be used by global price, all-couchette ski trains 4804 on FO from Calais - Bourg St Maurice and 4830 SAT Only return (calling at Reims 0520- 0524 Sun mornings) between 21/22 Dec and 22/23 Feb.

(63). Germany (DE) - A special train service will run on the Gerolstein - Kaisersesch line during 2008 (1/5 - 28/8 SO/SU, and daily from 1/7 - 29/8).

KBS 12478 Gerolstein - Kaisersesch

Saturdays & Sundays from 1st May - 28th August 2008

Saturdays Only	7.06	9.06	11.06	13.06	15.06	17.06
Gerolstein ab	7.43	9.43	11.43	13.43	15.43	17.43
Kaisersesch an	8.21	10.21	12.21	14.21	16.21	18.21

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Sundays Only
Kaisersesch ab 9.36 11.36 13.36 15.36 17.36 19.36
Daun ab 10.24 12.24 14.24 16.24 18.24 20.24
Gerolstein an 10.56 12.56 14.56 16.56 18.56 20.56

Daily from 1st July – 29th August 2008

Gerolstein ab 11.06 13.06 15.06
Daun ab 11.43 13.43 15.43
Ulmen an 12.01 14.01 16.01
Ulmen ab 12.04 14.04 16.04
Daun ab 14.24 16.24 18.24
Gerolstein an 14.56 16.56 18.56

(64). Germany - The line from Moers to Rheinberg will see passenger trains on 13 dates during 2008:-

01, 11, 22 May
01, 15, 29 June
13, 27 July
10, 24 Aug
7, 21 Sep
3 Oct

(65). Poland (PL) - The PKP timetable has dates and times of these diversions for the in 2008, obviously subject to further change. The dates in the international section do not exactly match the domestic pages, so check beforehand. Trains are shown non stop Rzepin to Kustrin Kietz.

Dates of diversions :

22:05 11/1 to 04:00 14/1
22:05 22/2 to 04:00 25/2
22:05 17/10 to 0400 1/12

Trains affected (original TID's listed, trains will renumber on diversionary dates) :

EC40 : 12/1, 13/1, 23/2, 24/2, 18/10 to 30/11
EC41 : 12/1, 13/1, 23/2, 24/2, 18/10 to 30/11
EC44 : 12/1, 13/1, 23/2, 24/2, 18/10 to 30/11
EC45 : 12/1, 13/1, 23/2, 24/2, 18/10 to 30/11
EC46 : 12/1, 13/1, 23/2, 24/2, 18/10 to 30/11
EC47 : 12/1, 13/1, 23/2, 24/2, 18/10 to 30/11
EC48 : 12/1, 23/2, and MSO 18/10 to 29/11
EC49 : 13/1, 24/2, and FSuO 19/10 to 30/11

246 : 13/1, 24/2, 19/10 to 30/11 (SO off Warszawa)
247 : 11/1, 13/1, 22/2, 24/2, 19/10 to 30/11 (SO off Berlin)

342 : 11-12/1 to 13-14/1, 22-23/2 to 24-25/2, 17-18/10 to 30/11-1/12
343 : 11-12/1 to 13-14/1, 22-23/2 to 24-25/2, 17-18/10 to 30/11-1/12

EN346 : 11-12/1 to 13-14/1, 22-23/2 to 24-25/2, 17-18/10 to 30/11-1/12
EN347 : 11-12/1 to 13-14/1, 22-23/2 to 24-25/2, 17-18/10 to 29/11- 30/11

1248 : 12/1, 23/2, and 18/10 to 29/11
1249 : 12/1, 23/2, and 18/10 to 29/11

(NOTE - Some of the sleeper services to the CIS are not daily)

(66). Poland - It is also confirmed there is a further pair of trains timetabled via the Poznan Freight ring. They are both run anti clockwise and depart from Swardedz at 08:53 daily or Kobylnicka at 16:09 SSuX and have calls booked at Poznan Franowo.

Forthcoming Rail Tours & Charter Trains

(67). Austria (AT) - ÖBB Nostalgie tours in 2008 are already available. www.erlebnis-bahn-schiff.at

(68). Belgium - SAT 29 March 2008 PFT TSP are running specials on lines 126 and 127 (Marchin and Moha from Statte), with 64,169

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(69) Some steam trips around Brussel 16/17 Feb with the P8: <http://www.oftsp.be/index.php>

(70) Germany - On 26th & 27th April, AKE-Eisenbahntouristik are running two trains from Hamm to Ulmen for a Bahnhofsfest.

Saturday 26th April: http://www.ake-eisenbahntouristik.de/fahrten/?reise_id=315&t=2

Sunday 27th April: http://www.ake-eisenbahntouristik.de/fahrten/?reise_id=316&t=2

In both cases, V200 116 works the train on the section from Hamm - Oberhausen Hbf [and the return in the evening] where 41 360 takes over and works the train onward to Gerolstein. At Gerolstein 52 6106 will pair up with 41 360 to work the train over the VEB line to Ulmen. The train returns to Hamm via the VEB freight only line from Ulmen to Kaisersech then on to Mayen-Ost and the Rhine valley back to Köln and so on.

(71). Switzerland (CH) On the following days SBB Historic will run a special trains on the Gotthard Mail Line between Erstfeld - Airolò. 19/04, 28/06, 13/09 & 18/10 2008 (traction is dependant on availability).

Erstfeld	10:00 Train Number 33629
Amsteg-Silenen	(10:05)
Gurtellen	10:15 10:39 Train Number 33633
Wassen	(10:49)
Airolò	11:16 11:40 Train Number 33638
Goschenen	11:54 12:20
Erstfeld	14:32 Train Number 33655
Gurtellen	14:47 15:02 Train Number 33659
Airolò	15:40 16:01 Train Number 33664
Erstfeld	17:13

The special traffic notice covering these trains can be obtained from the Editor. Post (SAE) or e-mail to class458@aol.com

(72). L&CI - 5/6 April 2008 (Tour almost full) Booking form and up-date from class458@aol.com

(73). BLS - Sunday 4th May - Denmark - Full details TBA

(74). Desperate - August 2008 Date TBA

(75). ADL - The Grand Hungarian Depot Tour 20th - 24th April 2008 www.mavnosztalgia.hu

(76). Growlers EuroTours

Starting from Vilnius on 11/10 and finishes in Utrecht on 23/10. This is a private tour, but anyone can join, it used service trains and visits Poland, Hungary, Austria, Slovakia, Germany and Holland and uses Diesel routes wherever possible.

Other News

(77). Australia - Further to notes sent in by a member and published in BLN IN1054, further information has been sent in.

I refer to the notes on Australia - In October 2006 The Indian Pacific (GSR) was running twice weekly Perth - Sydney & vice versa. Leaving East Perth station on Sunday and Wednesday.

I had the good fortune to travel on the train IPAS departing East Perth Sunday 22nd October 2006 booked out at 1155hrs with 26 vehicles behind loco NR27 Pacific National Co-Co DE of variable power output 2126-3000kW built Gomanian -Ge in 1996/97. The loco is one of those dedicated to and liveried for the Indian Pacific. We arrived in Sydney around midday on the Wednesday 25 October 2006. The train paused in Adelaide for servicing on the morning of 24th Oct where NR27 suitably refreshed and assisted by DL48 (a Clyde GM 2350kW Co-Co DE built 1988/89) double headed the train from Adelaide to Sydney. Arrival in Sydney was a couple of hours late and as a consequence (so we were told) the train paused outside Sydney station to be split and taken in in two sections one loco on each part because there was not a platform available which would accommodate the entire 26 vehicles. On the journey from Perth we passed the west-bound train hauled by NR25 at a loop with the 1004km peg on 23rd October.

On the way to Australia we had around 12 hrs in Singapore, I managed to sample the SMRT from Changi Airport (CG2) to Tanah Merah (EW4) - this operates as a shuttle, there being one other station on the branch Expo (CG1). From Tanah Merah I did the line thro' to Boon Lay then back to City Hall where I had to pay the price for my rail pleasure - take my wife to Raffles for a Singapore Sling - I must admit this was a very enjoyable price. I then travelled to Pasir Ris to complete the East West line then back to Changi for the flight to Perth. We were obviously in Changi International, I only recall one station at the Airport and I was not aware of any works to extend SMRT. There is an internal shuttle train within the Airport between two terminals.

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