

What's new this month

WELCOME

Welcome to the February edition of the *European Rail Timetable* which includes the latest updates to schedules around Europe with most tables now fully updated following the mid-December timetable change.

ROUTE OF THE MONTH

Nicky Gardner and Susanne Kries, editors of *hidden europe* magazine, take the *Trans Europe Express* from Paris to Berlin. Operated by Russian Railways (RZD), this train currently operates three times a week from Paris to Moskva (five times a week in the summer), but some readers may not be aware that it is also available for journeys wholly within the European Union (provided it is booked through agents with access to the RZD booking system). Therefore, this train now provides the only through service from Paris to Berlin following the withdrawal of the *City Night Line* overnight train. *The 08.28 from Paris (Table 24)* will be found on page 35.

INTERNATIONAL

Engineering work is currently affecting services on the high-speed line between Paris and Lille with many Eurostar services from and to Paris retimed by a few minutes (Table 10). Until July 11 the majority of Eurostar services from Paris will depart up to nine minutes earlier. In the opposite direction all Eurostar trains to Paris may arrive up to 21 minutes later until May 23.

GREAT BRITAIN

Our tables covering *First Great Western* and *Cross Country* services to the south-west of England have been restructured this month. Table 115 is now dedicated to *First Great Western* services between London and Plymouth with a new Table 126 now showing the *Cross Country* service between Birmingham and Plymouth. The complete service from Plymouth to Penzance will now be found in a new Table 117. These changes are part of an ongoing process to bring the British section back into geographical order whilst creating space for additional services.

The Isle of Man schedules in Table 229 have been updated with this year's timings.

FRANCE

There are quite substantial retimings to services on the Toulouse – Bayonne – Hendaye axis this month, and services will be subject to further retiming from May 11 when trains will run up to ten minutes earlier between Pau and Hendaye (Table 325).

ITALY

Rail services between Buonconvento and Grosseto have been restored following a period of bus operation (Table 609).

Table 640 has been amended in order to show the direct trains between Cosenza and Reggio di Calabria.

For the first time we are dedicating a page to the extensive network of local services operated by *Ferrovie del Sud Est* in the Puglia region of southern Italy. We have often received requests to include these services but have never been able to find sufficient space to do so. However, we are pleased that this month we can include a single page summary on page 560, and hope to include it as a regular part of the Italian section in the near future.

SPAIN

Trenhotel 922/921 Galicia Barcelona to A Coruña and Vigo and *851/852 Rias Gallegas* Madrid to A Coruña and Pontevedra no longer run on Saturday nights (Tables 652, 653, 680, 681, 682 and 689).

Trains *MD 10812* and *10814* from Irún to Madrid, run to modified schedules on Sundays (Table 689).

Alvia services *534* Barcelona to Irún and *537* Irún to Barcelona both make an additional call at Altsasu (Table 653).

The Fridays only service from Barcelona to Sevilla (*AVE 3946*) and Sundays only return train (*AVE 3945*) have been retimed (Table 660).

There have been a number of minor alterations to timings between Cabeza del Buey and Mérida (Table 678).

GERMANY

All services to and from Leipzig are subject to alteration from February 24 to March 2 with many trains not serving Leipzig Hbf.

Certain long-distance services to and from Hamburg Hbf are subject to alteration on Saturdays and Sundays from March 21 to 29 and also during the Easter holiday period April 3 to 6.

AUSTRIA

Table 999 has been updated with the 2015 Danube shipping schedules for both internal Austrian and international routes.

SLOVENIA

Cross-border services from the border town of Sežana to Villa Opicina in Italy are now operated by train following acceptance of Slovenian electric trains to run in Italy. These services, which commenced in December, were initially operated by buses (Table 1305).

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA and CROATIA

Not mentioned previously is the withdrawal of services between Dobož and Šamac, which had latterly been served by just a single train pair. Readers may remember that services across the border to neighbouring Croatia were withdrawn in previous cutbacks (Table 1345).

Two routes which have not seen a rail service for some time have been deleted from the European Timetable. They are Novi Grad to Bihać (Table 1350) and Bihać to Martin Brod (Table 1358). The border stations of Volinja and Dobrijač have been added to Table 1350.

FYRO MACEDONIA

It is reported that all Skopje to Kičevo services, and one Skopje to Bitola train pair, are currently suspended owing to a lack of suitable stock (Table 1385).

BULGARIA

In last month's *Newslines* we reported on speculation suggesting that there may be significant cutbacks in Bulgaria from February 1. There then followed an official announcement early in January listing a number of regional trains that were to be withdrawn from January 12. These included one service in each direction between Mezdra and Vidin (Table 1520) and two services in each direction between Gorna Oryakhovitsa and Stara Zagora (Table 1525). In addition, a number of other local services were retimed by a few minutes from that date. Following these changes, reports continued to circulate indicating that there could be further cuts from February 1, but an official statement has confirmed that this will not be the case as a financial agreement has been reached to ensure the current level of service can continue. In fact, some of the services withdrawn on January 12 may be reinstated from February 1!

In this edition our Bulgarian tables are based on the service advertised following the changes on January 12 as it is not yet clear if the withdrawn services affecting our tables will be reinstated or not. There may also be other adjustments to schedules from February 1, so we strongly advise travellers in Bulgaria to check timings locally before departure.

TURKEY

There have been some alterations to high-speed services in Turkey with Table 1570 updated accordingly.

A new service, *Ada Ekspresi*, has been introduced between İstanbul (Pendik) and Arifiye with connections to and from Adapazarı provided by *Adaray* suburban trains. The service operates four times a day in each direction (Table 1570).

The long withdrawn *Pamukkale Ekspresi*, running from Eskişehir to Denizli via Afyon, has made a welcome return and timings will be found in Table 1587.

ESTONIA

The daily Tallinn to St Peterburg train (*810/809*) has been withdrawn and replaced by a twice weekly service numbered *812/811* (Table 1870).

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What's new this month *(continued from page 3)*

LATVIA

We understand that there may be cutbacks on various routes in Latvia from February 1, but these have yet to be confirmed.

SHIPPING

Table **2695** now shows both Stretto di Messina routes, and Table **2660** has been deleted.

BEYOND EUROPE

This month's Beyond Europe section covers South East Asia, Australia and New Zealand with tables numbered **6000** upwards.

In Australia, Queensland Railways has withdrawn the sleeper services from its *Westlander* and *Inlander* services. Also the on-board catering now only consists of an at-seat snack with self-service tea, coffee and water facilities. The second class sleepers and motorail facility have been withdrawn from the *Spirit of the Outback*. Refurbished first class sleepers along with first class dining and lounge cars will be introduced from mid-April.

There will be some minor timing changes to Great Southern Rail services from April 1 and some of the excursion stops will be altered (Tables **6390** and **6400**).

Because a new transport hub is being built in the Newcastle suburb of Wickham, trains to Newcastle in Table **6350** will terminate at Hamilton with a shuttle service (route 110) operating between Hamilton and Newcastle. Wickham Transport Interchange is due to open in late 2016 and a new light-rail line between Wickham and Newcastle is scheduled to start running later this year. These changes will also affect trains on the *Hunter Line* which is not shown in this timetable.

During our first year of publication regular readers may have noticed that we have added South America and South Korea to the list of areas included in our Beyond Europe coverage. Our plan for this year is that South America will appear in the April and November editions, whilst South Korean schedules will be included in the May and October editions. In November we also plan to feature the railways of California that are not included in the regular North American feature.

RAIL PASSES

Our guide to European rail passes has been fully updated and will be found on pages 561 to 563 this month.

InterRail youth passes are now available for first class travel, and in a further change, one or two accompanied children can travel free with each adult pass purchased. FYRO Macedonia has joined the one-country scheme, and both Italy and Italy-Plus passes have seen a price reduction. Conversely, Bulgaria moves up one price band.

Of interest to non-Europeans, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Poland and Serbia are all now included with the Eurail Global Pass and, as with InterRail, one or two accompanied children can travel free with each adult pass purchased.

It appears that the BritRail Pass + Ireland is no longer available.

NEXT MONTH

In our March edition we will be including the first sixteen pages of our **Summer International Supplement** with updated summer schedules.

Due to the rapidly expanding high-speed network in China we have decided to increase the size of our Beyond Europe China section by two pages so that we can show these services in more detail. The expanded Chinese section will appear for the first time next month.

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