

What's new this month

TOURIST RAILWAYS FEATURE

Our annual feature on tourist and heritage railways describing some of Europe's most popular and interesting lines once again makes an appearance and will be found on pages 33 to 38. As well as brief descriptions, you will find contact details, dates of operation, and also timetables where space permits. An addition this year is the narrow gauge Mariefred - Läggesta - Taxinge-Näsby line in Sweden.

ROUTE OF THE MONTH

Written by Nicky Gardner, our Route of the Month features Estonia and is entitled *Table 1870: Slow Train to Narva*. It will be found on page 44.

AIRPORT LINKS

A new rail link has opened to Szczecin Goleniów airport in Poland, situated between Goleniów and Mosty stations on the line to Kolobrzeg. There are three services a day (two on Saturdays) and the journey takes between 47 and 56 minutes. The bus link continues to run as an alternative.

INTERNATIONAL

As readers will be aware, floods have caused extensive disruption and damage to parts of Germany, France, Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, with the rivers Elbe, Danube, Vltava and Saale causing particular problems. In Germany, the Berlin to Hannover line and services around Magdeburg were particularly badly affected, and a special timetable is in force until at least mid-July (see page 367).

Latterly connections into the southbound *Surex/Sud Expresso* Irún - Lisboa train (**312/313**) have been complicated by the fact that the connecting TGV train from Paris terminates at Hendaye, leaving passengers to make their way to Irún by local train or taxi. Fortunately the *Surex/Sud Expresso* has now been revised to start back from Hendaye, leaving there at 1840. Passengers can now catch a later TGV from Paris, departing at 1227 and arriving Hendaye at 1811, whilst passengers using Eurostar from London can leave later as a consequence. Details are shown in **Table 46**.

A new 2 kilometre rail/road bridge linking Vidin (Bulgaria) and Calafat (Romania) was officially opened on June 14. This is only the second bridge across the Danube linking the two countries, the other being between Ruse and Giurgiu. A toll is charged for motor vehicles, but it is free for pedestrians and cyclists to cross. As yet there are no details of passenger rail services via the new link.

IRELAND

Bus Éireann has issued a new timetable for its Dublin - Londonderry route **33 (Table 234)**.

FRANCE

As announced some while ago, a new international TGV service from Paris to Freiburg will commence on August 26, with one train each way running on six days per week. This will use the recently reopened border crossing at Neuenburg/Mülheim, not far from Mulhouse. Timings for the new train are shown in **Table 370**.

BELGIUM

Our Belgian tables have been updated with schedule amendments valid from June 9.

Services between Gent and Dendermonde are currently disrupted owing to emergency engineering work. As a consequence all Kortrijk - Mechelen trains (route *IRf*) are subject to alteration, with likely replacement between Wetteren and Schellebelle. It is not known how long this situation will continue.

ITALY

Confirmed information for the summer changes in Italy was received just before press date. Timings have been checked for all trains where we show a train number, and some local services, but there may be further changes to days of running (notably holiday cancellations). Our tables will be fully updated for the next edition.

SPAIN

The high-speed line between Albacete and Alacant (**Table 668**) opened on June 18 (following an announcement made on June 10) with new station Villena AV situated 3 kilometres from Villena town. Eight daily AVE services are running between Madrid and Alacant. Additionally a daily *Alvia* is running between Gijón and Alacant (**Table 685**) and Santander and Alacant (**Table 684**), whilst a weekly *Alvia* links Pontevedra with Alacant (**Table 680**).

As reported last month, *Trenhotel 932/931 Pio Baroja* Barcelona - León - Gijón (**Tables 681/685**) was withdrawn from June 1, but a new daytime *Alvia* was introduced in its place. *Alvia 664* runs daily from Barcelona to León and on Sundays to Fridays to Gijón, while in the reverse direction *Alvia 661* runs on Mondays to Saturdays from Gijón to Barcelona.

Also reported last month, *Trenhotel 752/751 Atlántico* Madrid - Ferrol was withdrawn on June 22 (**Tables 681/682**) but a new daytime *Alvia* service has been introduced between Madrid and Ferrol via Ourense.

The four days a week *MD 18332/18333* Linares-Baeza - Almería (**Table 661**), which formed a connection with *Alaris 697/694 García Lorca* Barcelona - Sevilla at Linares-Baeza, has been withdrawn and replaced by retiming daily *Talgo 277/278* Madrid - Almería, which now stops additionally at Moreda.

The two *Media Distancia* services between Linares-Baeza and Granada (**Table 661**) have been withdrawn, severing the connection with the *García Lorca* from Barcelona. However one connection southbound, and two northbound, are available using the Barcelona - Málaga direct AVE (**Table 660**) and changing trains at Antequera-Santa Ana for an onward MD to Granada (**Table 673**).

Sevilla - Granada - Almería and Algeciras - Granada *Media Distancia* services now call at Antequera-Santa Ana and timings have been amended accordingly (**Table 673**).

Table 669 Madrid - Cuenca - València Sant Isidre has been recast with one Saturday journey each way being withdrawn. The only other services on this route is a Fridays only Madrid to Cuenca returning on Sundays, plus a Fridays only València to Cuenca also returning on Sundays.

Madrid to Cádiz and Huelva services (**Table 671**) have been amended. A new morning service from Madrid to Huelva, returning in the evening, designated *Especial*, has been introduced.

Services in the Valladolid area have been altered, with some regional trains withdrawn. Finally, it is reported that drastic cutbacks to the FEVE narrow gauge network are possible in the near future.

ICELAND

There are further changes to bus services in Iceland, with *Sterna* now using a new terminal in Reykjavik closer to the city centre (**Table 729**).

SLOVAKIA

There are minor timetable amendments from June 9 affecting a handful of local services.

BULGARIA

Engineering work between Blagoevgrad and Sandanski will affect services on the Sofia to Petrich/Kulata route until September 23. A change of train is now required at either Kresna (southbound) or Cherniche (northbound). Details of the amended service will be found in **Table 1560**.

TURKEY

Due to on-going engineering work the timings of most long distance trains that touch Ankara, Bandırma, Eskişehir and Izmir continue to alter and you are advised to check locally before travelling.

ROMANIA

There are further changes to the summer schedules following receipt of additional information.

MOLDOVA

The Onița (Moldova) to Chernivtsi (Ukraine) cross border train (number **610/609**) has been withdrawn, along with the daily service between Basarabasca and Cahul. The latter has been replaced in **Table 1730** by the daily service between Basarabasca and Etulia.

RAIL PASSES

Two new rail passes introduced since our **Rail Passes** feature last appeared are worth a mention. In Germany the Deutschland-Pass is available for travel during the period June 10 to August 31 and gives a whole month of travel throughout the country. Second class prices start at 109 euros for those under 18 years of age; those aged 19 to 26 pay 259 euros and adults over 26 pay 309 euros. First class and family versions are also available.

In the Czech Republic a new Network Pass is available giving 14 days second class travel over the summer period from July 1 to August 31. The pass costs 1190 CZK, whilst holders of InKarta discount cards pay 990 CZK. As normal, a supplement is payable for travel by SC train.