

What's new this month

WELCOME

At this present time, varying levels of coronavirus restrictions continue to affect the provision of public transport across Europe with a reduced service level running in many areas. International travel restrictions remain in place between many countries so readers should continue to consult official government advice before planning any future trips. However, as national governments cautiously plan a pathway back to some form of normality, we retain the hope that leisure travel will once again be permitted in the not too distant future.

We continue to publish our own tables based on the latest information available to us in the lead up to publication. However, in the current circumstances, we are unable to check every single table each month so timings should always be confirmed before undertaking any journeys based on schedules published in this edition. The availability and type of data varies between countries with some operators providing full schedules (with cancellations or alterations indicated separately) whilst others are only showing trains that are currently running, sometimes for only limited periods of time. Where possible we have tried to show full schedules with known service suspensions indicated by either a note and/or a shaded column.

Owing to considerable uncertainty surrounding service levels during the summer period on various international routes, we will not be producing a full Summer Supplement this year. However, on pages 585 to 588, we have included a small selection of international tables with advance summer timings.

INTERNATIONAL

We await to see if Eurostar will increase its service level to Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam from May 17, the earliest possible date from when non-essential international travel from and to the United Kingdom may once again be permitted, albeit with strict virus testing requirements. An official statement regarding this possible easing of travel restrictions will be provided a few days beforehand. Eurostar is still planning to recommence its service between London and Mame la Vallée - Chessy (station for Disneyland) on three days a week from July 16, reducing to two days a week from September 10 (Table 17).

All international overnight services operated by ÖBB *nightjet* remain suspended as the plan to resume services from April 28 (as we reported last month) was postponed. A staggered return to normal service is now expected to take place between May 24 and 27.

The *Kulturzug/Pociąg do Kultury/Culture Train* between Berlin and Wrocław will not now restart until June 11 at the earliest (Table 58).

As reported last month, the *Alpen-Sylt Nachtexpress* is scheduled to run twice a week between Westerland and Salzburg this summer and will convey an additional portion between Westerland and Konstanz. The service is now expected to start running from July 15. Timings will be found in the summer version of Table 78 (on page 585).

GREAT BRITAIN

Caledonian Sleeper reinstated its full service between London and Scotland from April 29 (Table 161).

Last year Rail Charter Services operated a series of special trains along the scenic Settle to Carlisle line utilising InterCity style carriages adapted to provide a safe socially-distanced environment. Branded *Staycation Express*, the service will return this summer running twice a day (except Fridays) from July 17 to September 9. This year the service will be operated by a 5-car first-class only HST set with at-seat dining options available. We have added the schedules to Table 173, although readers should note that special fares are payable (regular National Rail tickets are not valid).

Another popular tourist service that will be running again this year is the steam-hauled *Jacobite* between Fort William and Mallaig (Table 218). Two return services are available each day from April 26; the morning train runs until October 29 while the afternoon service operates until October 1. Both services run daily, although the afternoon train has been retimed this year on Sundays to Fridays departing Fort William at 1245, returning from Mallaig at 1655.

Isle of Man schedules have been fully updated in Table 229, although they are only confirmed until July 18 at present.

IRELAND

Our Irish tables have been updated with amendments that Iarród Éireann issued from March 21 (which were received too late for inclusion in the April edition) together with further changes valid from May 4. These amendments see the restoration of nearly all services on Mondays to Saturdays.

FRANCE

The eagerly anticipated return of an overnight service between Paris and Nice, originally scheduled to recommence from April 16, was postponed owing to the latest coronavirus restrictions (Table 361). Hopefully, conditions will allow the service to start running soon.

Engineering work between St Denis-près-Martel and Aurillac sees trains replaced by buses until August 27 (Table 311).

Corsican Railways recently issued another amended timetable valid from April 12 with a slightly reduced level of service than shown in the timetable released two weeks earlier (Table 369).

ITALY

A new station serving Catania Fontanarossa Airport opened in March, providing direct rail connections to Catania, Messina and Siracusa. The station has been added to Tables 641 and 645. A shuttle bus operates between the station and the airport terminal.

SPAIN

Services between Cáceres and Mérida have increased from two to three per day (Table 677).

PORTUGAL

Services between Covilhã and Guarda, suspended since March 2009, were expected to be reintroduced on May 2 (Table 691). We have updated the table with the service we believe to be operating but, as we had not received definitive information as we closed for press, the timings should be treated as subject to confirmation.

Schedules in Table 696 have been revised following the completion of electrification work. Trains *IC 731/730* are extended to Valença, and a new Coimbra B – Valença train, *IR 831/830*, has been introduced. Other trains see improvements to their timings.

SWEDEN

Independent operator FlixBus is introducing a number of services between Stockholm and Göteborg from May 6. The planned schedules will be found in a special panel below Table 740.

GERMANY

FlixBus is planning to restart all of its German services from June 24. Our special FlixBus table on page 366 has been updated to show the schedules from this date.

HUNGARY

A revision to the Hungarian national timetable was made on April 11 and all relevant tables have been updated accordingly. Major changes include a new two-hourly Székesfehérvár – Baja *IR* service, shown in Table 1210. The two through *Ex* trains which previously ran between Budapest and Baja have been withdrawn, but the new *IR* trains have good connections at Sárobgárd with *IC* trains from and to Budapest. A two-hourly Szombathely – Nagykanizsa – Pécs *IR* service has also been introduced, timings for which will be found in Table 1235. We have combined previous Tables 1235 and 1237 to form an enlarged version of Table 1235 showing the new service together with connections to and from Zalaegerszeg.

Engineering work affecting services in Table 1225 continues until May 30, after which a temporary timetable will be valid from June 1 to 18. Another new timetable will be valid from June 19 when electric trains are introduced on services between Budapest and Balatonfüred. The new timetable is expected to include hourly *IR* trains Budapest – Balatonfüred and two-hourly *IC* trains Budapest – Tapolca.

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Newslines (continued from page 5)

TURKEY

Turkey has now restarted a limited regional service across the country. Some bus services from Eskisehir to Bursa and from Konya to Karaman are once again running, providing connections with the limited high-speed service shown in Table 1570.

BEYOND EUROPE

This month's Beyond Europe section covers North America which, entirely coincidentally but very appropriately, marks the 50th anniversary of the first services operated by the newly created National Railroad Passenger Corporation (using the famous Amtrak brand). The very first train was a *Clocker* service departing New York shortly after midnight on May 1, 1971, bound for Philadelphia.

Amtrak continues to gradually restore many of its services that were cancelled owing to coronavirus restrictions. As mentioned last month, the long-distance services that were reduced to running just three times a week last November, will gradually revert to daily operation during the period May 24 to June 7.

Downeaster services between Brunswick and Boston (Table 9200) will revert back to normal pre-covid frequencies from May 3, although timings have been amended so that trains operate to the same schedule on a daily basis (except for the last northbound train out of Boston which will operate on a flexible schedule to serve evening sports matches and other events). From May 23 *Hiawatha* services between Chicago and Milwaukee (Table 9270) will also revert to normal service levels. From May 24 the *Cascades* service in Table 9315 will include an additional round trip between Eugene and Seattle and another between Seattle and Portland. Caltrain reissued its timetable on April 26 to coincide with the reopening of one of its stations (Table 9350).

VIA Rail of Canada has announced that the *Canadian* will recommence running along its entire route, between Vancouver and Toronto, from May 17, albeit only once a week initially. Train 2 will depart Vancouver on Mondays from May 17 with train 1 departing Toronto on Sundays from May 23 (Table 9050).

We have recently received an update for South Africa and so have included an updated version of South African Table 4400 on page 584.

AERA

Association of European Rail Agents



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www.aera.co.uk

Email: info@aera.co.uk



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