

# AERA

Association of European Rail Agents

**Minutes AERA Meeting**  
**21<sup>st</sup> May 2013**  
**Thistle – Newcastle Station**

***Attendees:***

Bob Hex – Trainseurope  
Enrico Soresini – International Rail  
Philip Barnard – ACP Rail  
Mike Woodward – Life Member  
Don Somerville – HRG  
Tom Lyde – HRG  
David Glover – RailTourGuide  
Scott Wild – RailTourGuide  
Blythe – RailTourGuide

***Guest:***

Alex Nelson – Chester-Le-Track

***Apologies:***

Susan Parsons – ABTA  
Trevor Garrod – EPF  
Lee Davies – The Travel Bureau  
Brendan Fox – Thomas Cook Publishing  
Andy Brabin – Railbookers  
Dan May – Ffestiniog Travel

**Chair Welcome**

- Was noted about disappointing attendance from AERA members.
- Can some AERA Members send substitutions?

**Secretary Report**

- Due to workload minutes will be bullet point format for foreseeable future
- This was approved by members attending
- Apologies will also be noted

## **Treasurer's Report**

- All looking well at the moment
- £1052.13 in current account
- £2567.55 in saver account
- The AGM was a good occasion and the value was great at £272.16
- One member's subscriptions still outstanding

## **Website**

- David Glover has registered AERA a new site online
- [www.europeanrailagents.co.uk](http://www.europeanrailagents.co.uk) (brings you to [www.aera.co.uk](http://www.aera.co.uk))
- We could split the two sites depending on their Google ranking (SEO)
- AERA site:
  - o Could be for corporate usage (journalists, B2B, etc...)
  - o It has had 200 visitors simply only because no-one know who AERA is
- EuropeanRailAgents site:
  - o Could be for public, with a page that says "find your nearest agent."
  - o This site would have AERA branding at the top to know who it is by.
  - o Operators could be charged a fee for being on there
  - o Why not EuropeanRailAgents on domains like .co // .eu // .com
  - o EuropeanRailAgents.co.uk has already had 4 requests
- Enquiry form, for people with booking requests, needs the wording at the bottom changed to "This email has been sent to all relevant AERA Members."
- Can we put a spam catcher on the site?
- News would be good, a copy and paste from suppliers with disclaimers...  
...however the news often comes last minute, so not a great chance we'll be able to upload in time.
- Guest speaker profiles are also a good way of heightening the site's SEO when people search the names of our guest speakers

## **EPF**

- Railteam Meeting:
  - o There is a great opportunity for AERA to send someone to join the EPF in their meeting with Railteam in September... Bob will go.
- ATOC Meeting:
  - o There is a meeting between ATOC and EPF / AERA in July... Enrico will go
- We thank Trevor from EPF for his help in organising us to be at these meetings.

## **FYRA**

- Bob updated us on the latest from Netherlands on FYRA
- The sets are parked up not being used
- A test train ran two weeks ago and broke down
- Train closes down when sun spot comes over or GPS goes down
- The general sense is that the trains will be no more
- The very trains that FYRA brought from Ansaldo Breda, also broke down in Denmark, Sweden and Italy, yet still NS went ahead and brought them for FYRA

### **Chester-Le-Track**

- Alex Nelson from Chester-Le-Track came and gave an introduction of his company to the members present.
- He started 13 years ago at Chester-Le-Street station and became their booking office/rail agency.
- Since then he's gone online with [www.nationalrail.com](http://www.nationalrail.com) and has a link through Trainline, which Trainline fulfil.
- He does the same way of fulfilment with hotel and ferry, through Superbreak and Ferry.to
- He also has now opened up an office at Eaglescliffe station as well.
- AERA Members present voted Alex Nelson into the association

### **Passenger Rights**

- Updates on the latest passenger rights changes were discussed

### **Thello**

- The sales manual is available
- They are still running old stock and it is up for checks from above
- Therefore, because of its old nature, it still may yet go couchette only?
- We will try invite their rep across to the next meeting for an update?

### **Next Meeting**

- The next meeting will be on either 1<sup>st</sup> Oct or 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct
- We hope to host this in central London
- We will be inviting Daniel Mahr for the meeting to congratulate him on his retirement and also to hear from him about how the industry has change dover the years.

### **AOB**

- It was unanimously agreed that Bob Hex be made a life member of AERA for his services to date and now that he has retired officially.