

The most delayed train in history

By Erland Egefors
egefors@yahoo.dk.

Rail traffic between Denmark and Sweden has tripled in five years since the opening of the Oresund bridge between the two Scandinavian countries.

The service between Copenhagen and Malmo has been run jointly by Danish State Railways, Swedish State Railways and the regional company Skanetrafikken.

About 2.5million people crossed the Sound by train in 2000, last year it was 6.5 million.

In 2005 the Danish parliament decided to invite other companies to run the trains.

The bidders were German DB Regio, Arriva Skandinavia together with SJ and MRT Corporation plus DSB and First Group.

In June it was announced that DSB First will run the trains from 2009, with a seven-year contract worth £700million.

One of the advantages of the new changes are that DSB drivers will run the trains throughout.

Today Danish and Swedish drivers change at the link, which very often causes delays.

The Swedish part of the service is limited to the boundaries of the region of Scandia but later there will be negotiations about extending trains to Göteborg, Kalmar and Landskrona.

Dual-voltage trains were developed to run over the Oresund bridge which is also served by X2000 trains from Stockholm.

Copenhagen Airport at Kastrup is served by its own train station close to the western bridgehead.

The Great Belt

Twenty years earlier IC3 diesel multiple units were designed to be used on train ferries on the Great Belt, between the islands of Funen and Zealand. The length of the trains was limited to three coaches so they could get on the ferries.

A four-coach electrical "sister" train was later developed by Scandia (now Bombardier).

A system was also devised to run the electric ER4 and the diesel IC3 together as one train.

Now Bombardier delivers trains for both diesel and electrical mode. Years ago, the Danish Parliament passed an Act calling for electrification of all main lines.

One result is that the main line linking Helsingør, Copenhagen, Odense, Fredericia, Kolding, Lunderskov, Tinglev, Sønderborg and Padborg is now equipped with 25kV catenary.

But in 2000, the government decided to invite tenders for a new generation of diesel multiple units. Alstom, Adtranz, Ansaldo, Bombardier and Siemens were among the bidders. The order was for 90



CONTRAST: A new four-car IC4 diesel train, left, which is taking over services from the 1980s-designed IC3 diesel on the Danish route between Arhus and Alborg Picture: Asger Christiansen of Arhus

to 100 trainsets and was worth around £500million. DSB chose Ansaldo Breda to build a completely new IC4 train designed by Pininfarina, powered by V8 diesel engines from Iveco.

The IC4 trains were planned to be in service by 2004 and were assembled at Arhus where part of the DSB workshop has been converted into a mini Italy with 50 Italian workers and Italian working hours. DSB staff are not allowed to enter the area.

DSB staff work from six in the morning to 2 pm and have a half hour lunch break. The Italians work from 9 am to 6 pm with several breaks and a two-hour siesta.

The trainsets are shipped from Italy to the port of Arhus, where Italian hauliers and lowloaders take the bodies by road just over a mile to the workshop. Of course there are tracks to the port and the port has

almost 30 kilometres of tracks, but the Italians do not seem to realise that. Between loads, the lorry is parked at the port and occasionally transports other new trains from the Bombardier factory at Randers which is still producing trains for Israel.

The new IC4 trains though were not ready for 2004, partly because the "engines and the computers could not communicate".

If the politicians had sustained the original plan for electrification, the main lines could all have been electrified by 2004, and DSB could have been equipped with electrical multiple units.

There were many promises but the new IC4 diesels were not ready for traffic in 2005 or 2006.

In June this year, they were finally certified for traffic and demonstrated to the press. Four years late, the IC4s are now running nor-

mal services between Arhus and Alborg. IC3 and MR diesels are kept in reserve in case of failures.

Each train has two driving coaches with two low-floor-access trailer coaches sandwiched between them. There are 207 seats in each train, one seat for disabled people, plus 22 tip-up seats.

The noses are streamlined and therefore it is not possible for passengers to move between sections when the trains are run together.

The older IC3 trains are instantly recognisable because they have flat fronts with removable driver cabins. When coupled together the outside surface is smooth and streamlined.

But when IC4 units are coupled together nose to nose, there is so much turbulence between the units that it cancels out the advantage provided by the streamlined fronts.

By Roger Bacon
rbrail@btinternet.com

Rail campaigner Roger Skilton has died, shortly after moving from Leicester to Yorkshire.

Roger had been actively involved with the East Midlands branch since 1988 and from 1990 had been either secretary or chairman.

East Midlands branch committee members attended his funeral in Wensleydale on 9 August.

He moved with wife Mary to North Yorkshire in November and was already very involved with the Wensleydale Railway. Roger's interest in railway campaigning began shortly after he

Roger Skilton

moved to Leicester Polytechnic to teach electrical engineering and had to travel throughout the UK to visit his students during their year out in industry.

Roger chose specifically to travel by train and realised that much work was needed to improve the railway network after years of decline.

That the East Midlands branch is a successful rail lobby group is due largely to his endeavours over the years and the unassum-

ing way he encouraged many of us to become active railway campaigners.

Both the current secretary and treasurer were brought into the committee by Roger and many others were encouraged to become involved.

Our thoughts are with Mary, daughter Penny and son James.

If anyone who knew him would care to make a donation in memory of Roger, the family were very grateful to Herriot Hospice Homecare, Zetland House, Friarage Hospital, Northallerton, North Yorks DL6 1JG.