

The blue trains

- The International Sleeping
car Company in Denmark
- and the DSBs night trains

By John Poulsen, with the assistance of
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240 pages (A4 landscape), approx. 500
ill., many 1:87 drawings. Publisher
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DE BLÅ TOG

Det internationale Sovevognsselskab i Danmark - og DSBs nattog



Night trains with sleeping cars to and from southern Europe had been running in Denmark for 110 years - albeit interrupted during the two world wars - before the last night train departed by the end of October 2014. Heyday in terms of comfort was in 1930, while the number of passengers increased significantly after the 2nd World War and peaked for sleeping car journeys around 1960.

At first the sleeping car services - as in most other European countries - were run by the international sleeping car company, Wagon-Lits. Until the 1970s the company's dark blue sleeping and dining cars were the symbol of the comfortable train journey. From 1971 the western European railways established the TEN-pool for sleeping car operations. But the decline had started, at first business travelers changed to the airlines, then the holidaymakers; and then came the internal competition from an increasing number of high-speed trains to make it even worse.

In Danish domestic traffic we had sleeping cars for more than 80 years, also interrupted during the world wars and a few years in the 1970s. The Wagon-Lits were in charge of the services that

ended in 1971. For some years there were only DSB couchettes, but in 1981 a sleeping car service between Copenhagen and Frederikshavn was reestablished. Domestic night traffic ended in style: From 1987 DSB night trains with dark blue sleeping- and couchette cars decorated with yellow moon and stars was a great success. They connected Copenhagen with several different cities in Jutland, until the Great Belt Link in 1997 made the country smaller.

The large, fully illustrated book explains thoroughly the whole story of the international as well as the domestic sleeping- and dining car traffic in Denmark, with an emphasis on the Wagon-Lits company and DSB's own night trains.

A large chapter describes all the Wagon-Lits and DSB vehicle types that have been used in night trains, as well as the dining cars that Wagon-Lits operated in Denmark. Especially railway modelers will appreciate the many fine drawings of the cars in HO scale (1:87) and the voluminous lists of vehicles.

The book is in Danish, but an English summary is supplied.

