

**GERMANY**

## Turnout tamping in 3D

Track maintenance specialist Deutsche Plasser has commissioned a second 3D tamping simulator at its training centre in Bingen and recruited an additional trainer to expand the range of courses provided for in-house staff and external customers.

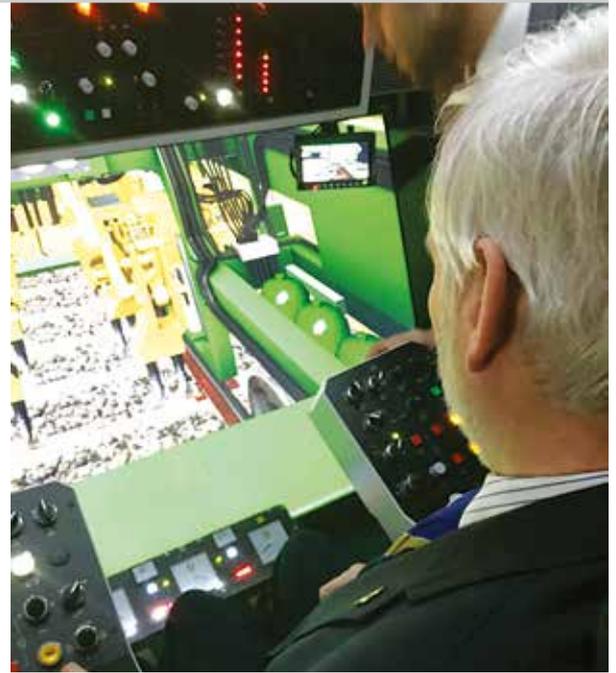
Opened in January 2009, the centre has now been expanded from 150 to 650 m<sup>2</sup>, with more classrooms and a wider range of technical equipment as well as the two simulators.

Deutsche Plasser is responsible for working with customers in Germany, Poland, Switzerland, Norway and the Netherlands. Along with the Plasser & Theurer training centre at Linz, the Bingen team also offers training courses to other international customers. According to the head of the centre Antonio Intini, courses can vary in length from 4 h up to six weeks, depending on the topics to be covered and the prior knowledge of the students.

Joining the 09-3D continuous-action

tamper simulator launched in December 2011 (RG 1.12 p61), the Unimat-3D turnout tamping simulator replicates the three workstations of Plasser's latest 09-4x4/4S multi-purpose machine, including all controls, the latest PIC 2.0 software and 12 screens. Different training scenarios allow students to understand the many work sequences as well as the interaction between the crew members. Developed by Deutsche Plasser, Plasser & Theurer and Austrian simulation specialist Enova, the simulator requires five computers to calculate up to 17 million pixels in real time.

According to Intini, the increasing complexity of track machines and the difficulty of getting track time in the field means that learning 'on the job' can take up to five years, as well as posing the risk of 'doing real damage' or acquiring operating habits that do not reflect current approaches to track geometry and maintenance. Using the



simulators, the training time can be reduced to a few weeks, while ensuring that the trainees are given a good grounding in the core principles to underpin their practical skills. ■

**Group Editor-in-Chief Chris Jackson puts the simulator through its paces on January 15.**