

Eastern Star



Journal of the New Europe Railway Heritage Trust,
Helping railway preservation in the New Europe

NERHT AGM

All are welcome to attend our Annual General Meeting which will be held on Saturday 18 May at the Model Railway Club, Keen House, 4 Calshot Street, London N1 9DA (near King's Cross station), starting at 2.00 p.m.

After the formal business an illustrated talk on the Wolsztyn steam depot in Poland will be given by the Director, Waldemar Ligma, starting at 3.00 p.m.

BOSNIA

Dragan Jovanović reports:

Steam Tour of Bernd Seiler (FarRail Tours), February 2024.

In the period from Saturday, February 10, 2024, to Friday, February 16, 2024, FarRail Tours organized a steam tour in the Tuzla region in the north east of Bosnia. There were 34 participants from several American countries and many European countries.

KREKA Mines warned us that the condition of their Kriegslocomotives was not very impressive and assigned us 33-248 (Borsig 16277/44; Henschel 28370/44) for charter train traffic. That locomotive was still reliable and successfully transported our charter trains, which enabled the successful realization of our tour.

In the Banovići mine, due to formal reasons - the new price list was not approved, we could not implement the planned run of the charter train on the narrow gauge with the locomotives 83-159 + 25-30. The operation of the railway transport of this mine still enabled the operation of these locomotives, although on shunts, as well as 62-125 on the standard gauge.

There were also many run pasts on the eight rides.

By the way, the stay of the participants was traditionally in the nice hotel Senad od Bosne, and we had the appropriate buses at our disposal the whole time so that we can carry out all the planned visits and activities on the railway.

The program went like this:

Saturday	Arrival of participants from the airports in Belgrade and Sarajevo, then by private and rental car vehicles.
Sunday	Steam charter train on the route Srebrenik - Bosanska Poljana - Lukavac. Locomotive 33-248 + 15 open and + 2 closed freight cars
Monday	<p>Visit to the coal mines in Šikulje and Dubrave, as well as workshops in Bukinje. Carrying out shunting work of locomotives in those mines, as well as several photo-drives to the Lukavac station. Locomotives 33-064 and 33-248. In workshop Bukinje.</p> <p>Locomotive 33-236 is being repaired in Bukinje workshop. Locomotive 33-504 is also waiting for repairs there.</p>
Tuesday	<p>Visit to the Lukavac station where locomotive 33-064 took over 37 empty freight wagons for loading coal into the Šikulje mine.</p> <p>This move was specially made for our group due to filming, otherwise it is not regular. Then a freight train loaded with coal left the Šikulje mine, pulled by diesel locomotive "Kennedy", 661-322.</p> <p>After that, we visited the narrow gauge depot and workshop in Banovići, and continued the visit at the Oskova narrow gauge station, where the steam locomotive 25-30 was working on shunting, while the 740 class diesels were in regular operation.</p> <p>Night photography in the Dubrave mine.</p>
Wednesday	<p>Steam charter train on the route Šikulje mine - Lukavac - Bosanska Poljana - Banovići.</p> <p>Locomotive 33-248 + 15 open and + 2 closed freight cars</p>
Thursday	<p>Steam charter train on the route Šikulje mine - Lukavac - Dobošnica - Lukavac - Bosanska Poljana - Dubrave mine.</p> <p>Locomotive 33-248 + 15 open and + 2 closed freight cars</p>
Friday	<p>The morning was spent in Banovići, where a shunting was filmed on a narrow gauge with locomotives 25-30 and 83-159.</p> <p>Steam locomotive 62-125 was also on shunting on the</p>

	<p>standard gauge.</p> <p>In the afternoon, a visit was made to the Lukavac station, where we repeatedly filmed locomotive 33-064 on its way to the Šikulje mine with empty wagons.</p>
	<p>That was also the end of the program, because later part of the group was supposed to travel to Belgrade airport, and the part to Sarajevo airport and other destination travelled on Saturday, February 17, 2024.</p>



In the town of Tinja on the Srebrenik - Bosanska Poljana - Lukavac railway

(Photo : Dragan Jovanović)



Lukavac station - switch block

(Photo : Dragan Jovanović)



Šikulje mine :
33-248 – left and
33-064 right

*(Photo : Dragan
Jovanović)*



Bosanska Poljana
station : 33-248
with charter-
train

*(Photo : Dragan
Jovanović)*



Dubrave mine :
33-248 + 33-503
with coal train
especially for
photographers

*(Photo : Dragan
Jovanović)*



Workshop
Banovići: 83-158
undergoing
major repairs

*(Photo : Dragan
Jovanović)*



Banovići: 25-30
on shunting

*(Photo : Dragan
Jovanović)*



Lukavac - 33-
248 on the signal

*(Photo : Dragan
Jovanović)*

CROATIA

Neil Vlačić reports:

Latest news

"PTG tours UK" have agreed to help us purchase Croatia's "Flying Scotsman", Ličanka number 2062 055 which is currently up for disposal with 4 seized traction motors in the Varazdin Depot. Once this locomotive is restored to its former glory she will lead our rail tours for which, as agreed, with PTG tours they will have priority of ticket sales.

The photo below shows the locomotive that HŽPP Croatian Railways Passenger Division has kindly agreed to provide us with for our events/special trains. It worked daily sold out Christmas specials from Rijeka to Zagreb during the Christmas period and provided much enjoyment to both the general public and train enthusiasts alike.

HŽPP reported of sold out excursions that averaged 300 passengers per daily train. We also ran a smaller excursion on the Istrian Railway line Pula-Buzet, where the Society gave all children a free chocolate bar as a Christmas present. Both trains were sold out and we gave out 200 chocolate bars and provided another inexpensive day out with the family ticket being 15 euros return for the 4 hour excursion.



HŽPP Class 2044
#004, type A1A-
A1A, with Neil
and Bea Vlačić

POLAND

Wolsztyn

Editor reports:

Humble apologies from the Editor:

The photographs shown in the previous issue in Eastern Star, in the article about Wolsztyn, were wrongly attributed to Andrew Goltz. They should have been attributed to Kasia Tomczyk.

NERHT at the Przeworsk Narrow Gauge Railway Conference

Andrew Goltz reports:

The Przeworsk District Council hosted a conference on March 15 to mark significant progress in the restoration of the Przeworsk Narrow Gauge Railway. This event attracted attention from various stakeholders, including representatives of 8 Polish narrow gauge railways and a delegation from the New Europe Railway Heritage Trust.

Agenda

The conference agenda offered a broad spectrum of presentations, shining a light on different aspects of narrow gauge railway preservation and operation. Among the notable contributions was a talk by Małgorzata Wołozyn, the curator of the Lubomirski Museum, detailing Count Andrew Lubomirski's foundational efforts for the railway and regional industry.

The regulatory framework within which Polish railways operate were clarified by Ignacy Góra, the UTK (Polish ORR) chairman, offering critical insights for understanding the operational landscape. The technology and approaches used in the railway's reconstruction were shared by a representative of the project's contractors, highlighting the pragmatic solutions brought to bear on the restoration challenges.

Steve Wood presented Fedecrail's role in supporting heritage railways amid evolving European legislation and underlined the importance of collective expertise and shared learning in the heritage railway movement. Andrew Goltz made a presentation on financial stewardship within the narrow gauge sector.

Insights and Discussions

A trip on the Przeworsk Narrow Gauge Railway to the newly restored station at Kańczuga, followed by an exploration of the famous railway tunnel, was a practical demonstration of the restoration's outcomes. The evening reception and subsequent discussions offered fertile ground for conversations about potential future collaboration among narrow gauge railways in Poland.

The visit concluded on Saturday with a private tour of the line and workshops led by Waldemar Hołowaty, offering an in-depth look at the restoration progress.

Reflections

The Przeworsk conference underscored the dedication and collaborative spirit driving the preservation of narrow gauge railways in Poland. As attendees returned to their respective roles, they carried with them enhanced insights and strengthened connections, poised to contribute further to the heritage railway movement. The event served not only as a celebration of the achievements to date but also as a catalyst for future cooperative efforts.



Stephen Wiggs
(NERHT
Chairman)
inspects an old
timetable at
Hadle
Szklarskie
station

*(Photo: Kasia
Tomczyk)*



Waldemar, our
guide, poses
proudly by the
locomotive that
he has restored

*(Photo: Kasia
Tomczyk)*



The brand new mainline alongside the original siding

(Photo: Kasia Tomczyk)

RUSSIA

Original narrow gauge rails discovered

Sergei Dorozhkov reports:

We have just received five cuts of original rail of the Novgorod Railway - one of three pioneering narrow gauge lines in Russia, built largely as a result of consultations at and around the Ffestiniog Railway trials of 1870. (*The city of Novgorod here is also known as Veliky Novgorod, and should not be confused with Nizhny Novgorod.*)

The 3'6" gauge Novgorod Railway, built by private capital in 1871, connected Chudovo on the broad gauge Nikolai Railway with Veliky Novgorod (73 kms), left out when the trunk route from St. Petersburg to Moscow had been opened in 1851. Rails, locomotives, rolling stock and various equipment were mainly supplied from the UK.

The discovered rails were manufactured in 1876 by Barrow Steel for the construction of a second section of the Novgorod Railway, extending from Novgorod to Staraya Russa (95 kms). (*The Barrow Hematite Steel Company Limited was a major iron and steel producer based in Barrow-in-Furness, Lancashire (now Cumbria), England, between 1859 and 1963. At the turn of the 20th century and the Technological Revolution it operated the largest steel mill in the world.*)

When the railway was regauged in 1916 - 1923, some rails, locomotives and rolling stock were transferred to the Solovetskiy Island (*on an archipelago located in the Onega Bay of the White Sea*) where an internal railway was built to serve forestry camps, peat works and various industries.

Simultaneously, the Solovetskiy Monastery power station, built in 1912, was equipped with more modern and powerful machinery. Beams for new bigger windows and generator bases were made of rails.

The island railway operated for only about a dozen years. In 1932 the system was recognised as being ineffective and was subsequently demolished with rails, locomotives and rolling stock sent to the construction of the White Sea canal.

Later a new power station was built on the island. The old building was abandoned and left to deteriorate.

In 2021 a local electric company ventured to conserve the remains of the 1912 power station. When the debris was cleared, several pieces of original Novgorod rails showed up.

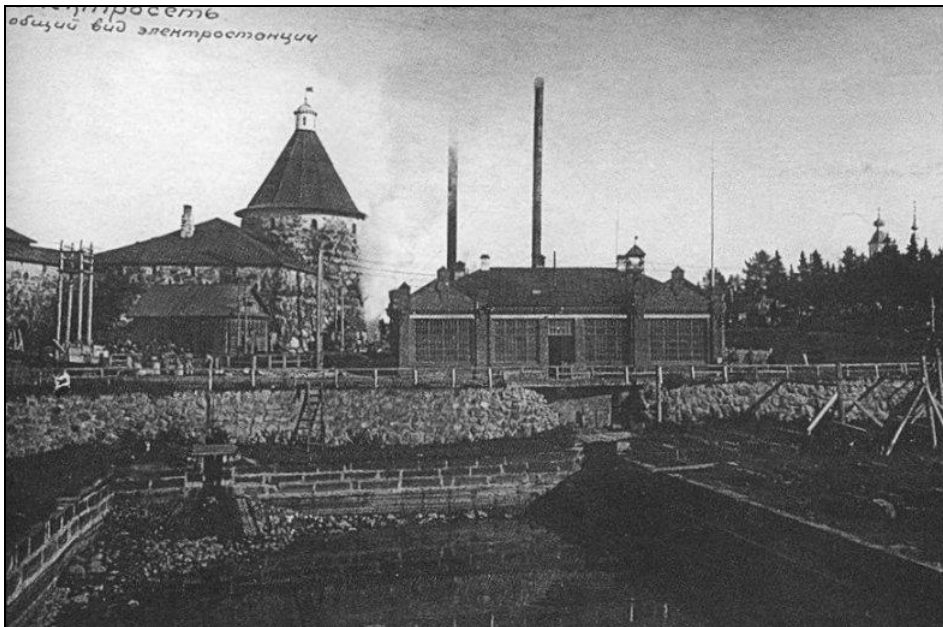
It took some time and effort to organise their collection and transfer to the mainland, as Solovetskiy is only reachable during summer navigation period. Then some more efforts were made to get the rails transported to us.

On Tuesday March 5th, 2024 the shipment arrived from Petrozavodsk (*in Karelia*) via a transport company, and we can now draw up plans to include the items into a new display.



Solovetskiy
Monastery power
station as built in
1910-1912

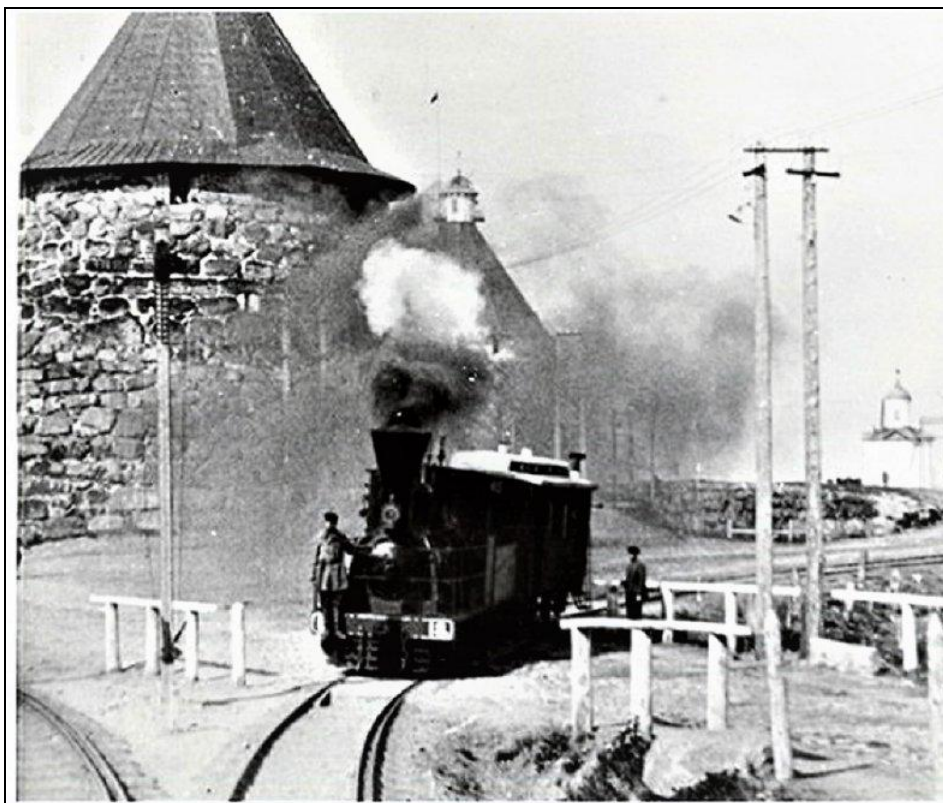
(Photo: 1916
Sergei Prokudin
Gorski)



The power house after reconstruction in the 1920s, beams for which were made out of rails. The tower behind is the same that appears on the railway photo below.

(Photo: Solovetsky Museum Reserve)

The inscription says: "Electricity network, general view of power station".



Steam under the monastery walls at Solovetskiy Island

The railway passed right at the walls of the monastery - a picture shows a local works train with a Schwartzkopff 0-6-0 of 1878 and a 4-wheel coach.

(Photo: Solovetsky Museum Reserve)



Barrow Steel rail being prepared for exposition.

The marking on the rail is Barrow Steel 1876 Н.У.Ж.Д. (Новгородская Узкоколейная Железная Дорога : Novgorod Narrow gauge Rail Way)

(Photo: Mitriy Kalinovskiy)

THE STORY OF A 'STRENGTHENED CUCKOO', OR THE ORIGINS OF TYPE 157 NARROW GAUGE 0-8-0 – PART 4

Sergei Dorozhkov reports:

Extensive use was made of welding. Unusually for railway practices, locomotive and tender frames were assembled with bolts instead of rivets. Later tender frames became all-welded.

The first three Sormovo type "157" were dispatched to the Apsheronsk forestry railway in the Caucasus.



Sormovo type "157" of 1936.

All-welded enclosed cab, double-level buffers for two types of peat wagons, but still kerosene lighting

(Photo: Sormovo works archives)

Production continued in 1937, with at least 160 machines built in total, most of which were for the 750mm gauge. On special order of the Lena Goldfields Trust, four locomotives were assembled for 914mm (3') gauge.

In the end of 1937 production stopped, again due to administrative inconsistency. Sormovo was being concentrated on river vessels, certain military considerations were beginning to come to the fore, and locomotive construction was shut down, never to resume.

Answering loud pleas for new locomotives, some Sormovo machines were dispatched to NKPS to serve at Tuma and Haivoron MPDs, but the majority all the same went to industry, from Norilsk and Vorkuta in the Far North to the Vaksh Valley in Tadzhikistan and Magadan in the Far East.

On NKPS lines, the locos received designation class "Ш" ("Sh"), while in industry they were known under type "157", sometimes with additional letter "K" or "S" in front or after the type number to specify the manufacturer. As for the nickname, the term "Cuckoo" spread to all types of narrow gauge engines (and sometimes broad gauge industrial locos too), so no specific class byname was known...

Following the end of the Second World War the ever growing need of Soviet narrow gauge for medium-power 26tons locomotives was addressed once again, this time through the reparations order from former O&K Babelsberg factory in Germany. However, the realities of post-war European economics, specific traditions of German locomotive designing (totally unfamiliar with Soviet operational conditions) and many other reasons made the resulting Gr 0-8-0 very different from what was anticipated, to put it mildly. Good steamers and powerful machines for their class, the Grs turned out to be poor runners, with a maximum speed restricted to 35km/h. Of course, 420 engines, delivered by Babelsberg to the USSR between 1947 and 1956 came as a great replenishment (not mentioning the role of their production in restoring the German economy), but technically, being a hasty set of compromised solutions, the Grs couldn't hold a candle to type "157".

Thus, in 1954 another attempt was made, this time by the Votkinsk works. The general idea behind the project of the VT-1 (*Votkinskiy tyazholiy, or Votkinsk heavy*) was to improve type "157" even more, mainly by greater implementation of welding and adding a gas steam dryer to raise the degree of superheat. The design comprised bogie tender, Trofimoff valves for light running, continuous air brakes and pneumatic sanders.

However, this time modernisation did not lead to success. Five experimental locos, erected in 1955-1956 showed mediocre results, proving in most respects inferior to original type "157". In February 1956 the Supreme Committee of the CPSU announced the launch of total dieselization and electrification of Soviet railways, so all further work on steam was abruptly abandoned.

The 'Strengthened Cuckoos' appeared long-living engines. Last regularly active type "157" was observed at Beloretzk in the Urals as late as 1978.

Four members of the class survive today in the museums and on plinths.



Votkinsk VT-1-002 of 1956.

The last attempt to modernise type "157" turned into failure.

(Photo: Votkinsk works archives)

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The New Europe Railway Heritage Trust ('NERHT') is a voluntary organisation established to help railway preservation in the former USSR and the ex-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe (registered in the UK as charity No. 1099229).

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