

Eastern Star



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

NERHT AGM

UKRAINIANS TO ATTEND 2025 NERHT AGM

All are welcome to attend next year's Annual General Meeting which will be held on Saturday 3 May 2025 at the Model Railway Club, Keen House, 4 Calshot Street, London N1 9DA (near King's Cross station), starting at 2.00 p.m.

At the meeting we will be joined by visitors from Ukraine who will be on their way to the Fedecrail conference on the Isle of Man, and after the formal business Antonina Kopaieva of the Lviv Children's Railway will give an illustrated talk on children's railways of Ukraine.

CROATIA

Neil Vlacic reports:

It was reported in Eastern Star #89 (March, 2023) of a diesel hydraulic shunter acquired by the Croatian Railway Preservation Society (CRPS). It is a Belgian copy of a British Ruston 44 shunter which was chain driven with these Belgian copies being hydraulic driven. From a discussion with the Mões locomotive society in Belgium, it is believed that this is the last surviving locomotive of this series of which, according to their records, only around 28 were ever made. The engine is said to be a Gardner diesel with 4 cylinders, with the transmission being an in house design by Mões locomotives.

Latest news on this item is that once the locomotive is moved to in Labin it will be given a detailed inspection with note taken of all necessary details.

The British Croatian Society has awarded a grant of £500 to the Croatian Railway Preservation Society, based in Labin, for the acquisition of the locomotive, as well as society members making donations. So far 2,000 euros in

a total out of the 6,000 euros required to purchase the locomotive have been obtained.

It is very fortunate that the local transport company, "Tera-Kop Labin", have offered to transport the locomotive for free. Therefore it is only required for a small crane in Split where the locomotive is currently located, and in Labin at the "Tera-Kop Labin" depot, where the on site mechanic will help with an inspection of the loco and help to get it running.



Located at Cement Croatia at their Zagreb factory. It weighs 12 tons. It is a Jenbach diesel-hydraulic shunter, built under licence by the renowned Đuro Đaković works in Slavenska brod in 1973.

In other news there has been a successful public presentation on the 9th of November which also included an interview on the local radio to promote the society and its activities to the local area. Both were met with positive feedback.

The railway heritage from the local shipyard Uljanik in Pula has been located and there is now a written contract for long term usage with the new owners of these items. These items include two saddle tank 0-4-0 steam shunters built in house at the shipyard in 1896, and a diesel-hydraulic shunter of the Jenbach JW400 series built under licence by Railway vehicles manufacturer ĐURO Đaković in Slavenska Brod. Built in 1961 it is the only one in a custom dark green and yellow paint scheme which is the colours of the shipyard and Pula city.

Also in this package are various railway items such as hand operated signals and various small pieces of infrastructure. This was given by the state to the state owned naval museum in Pula, which as the director has said has neither the interest nor space for railway items in the museum which is in an Austrian-Hungarian hilltop fort. All these items will remain within the ship yard in a warehouse until a suitable location is found. It has been negotiated that these items will go into the CRPS railway museum as part of the national collection, to which the museum director has agreed to transfer the Uljanik railway items as soon as possible.

The CRPS is in contact with the Ministry for Culture and Heritage which supports our society. After the New Year we will begin with a talk by Mr. Miroslav Miškič who is Secretary to the Ministry for Culture. Speaking on the phone to the Secretary it transpires that the CRPS cannot own state owned railway items, however, a partnership to operate them together is very possible, it has just never been done before.

ROMANIA

Neil McGregor reports:

Work over the winter period is concentrating on the currently-operational section between Cornăţel and Hosman. During 2024 two working parties by the UK supporters' organisation SARUK were held to assist the Romanian preservation society Asociația Prietenii Mocăniței ("APM"), dealing with the re-sleepering of the point leading to the loop at the western end of Hosman station and also with the dismantling of the sleeper-built temporary loading ramp at the junction to Vurpăr at Cornăţel and the insertion of the sleepers released from the ramp into the adjacent curve of the running line towards Hosman.

The APM volunteers have continued this work at the start of December one of the SARUK volunteers travelled to Romania to assist them with the continuation of the work from the re-sleepered point at Hosman along the main line into the station and the loop. This work was considerably assisted by a hired-in mini-digger one day and has seen the main line through Hosman station dug out and replaced with new ballast laid on geotextile, new sleepers and new (to the project) rails previously recovered from a standard-gauge siding in the Sibiu area. The rails which were removed from the main line are of a different weight from the "new" ones and are to be reinserted in the running line next year to allow the extension of a section which is already laid with the same weight of rail.

The work done involved the packing of the main line to height leading north from the point and the correction of some gauge defects, but more work is required to complete the re-laid and re-railed section through Hosman station. This will require the acquisition of more ballast. Unless a source of better ballast can be found, it is also likely that a permanent (preferably mechanically-powered) riddle or sieve arrangement will be needed to separate unsuitably-small material from the ballast before it is used on the line. Consideration is being given to this, particularly since it would allow the cleaning of the existing ballast on the line with consequent savings – to some extent – in the costs of purchasing and delivering new "clean" ballast.

Although considerable progress was made (which should be very evident when running resumes next year) and muscles were developed by hand-packing, it became clear how more productive the efforts of the APM and SARUK teams are when suitable mechanical plant is available. This is being considered in plans for next year, but offers of financial assistance for the acquisition of mechanical plant and of suitable ballast will be most welcome (as of course will be physical assistance at next year's planned working parties, details of which will be published shortly).



Ballast cleaning in action.
December 13, 2024

(Photo : David Rowbotham)



Cleaned ballast awaiting use.
December 13, 2024

(Photo : David Rowbotham)



Shovel packing the main line. December 13, 2024

(Photo : David Rowbotham)



APM volunteers hard at work, December 13, 2024

(Photo : David Rowbotham)

POLAND

Fourth Congress of Polish Railway Enthusiasts and Friends of Railways

Andrew Goltz reports:

Founded 11 years ago by Andrew Goltz, "Fundacja Prokolej" has established itself as one of Poland's leading pro-rail advocacy organisations. The foundation works to promote the greater use of rail transport by engaging with legislators and the public, as well as monitoring legislative developments in Poland and the European Union. Recognising the value of grassroots support, Fundacja Prokolej organises an annual "Congress of Polish Railway Enthusiasts and Friends of Railways", which not only explores issues of importance to railway enthusiasts but also seeks to engage their support in advancing the foundation's mission of promoting rail transport.

This year's Congress, held in Chojnice, brought together a mixture of formal presentations, site visits, and special events, providing participants with opportunities to engage with Poland's railway heritage and its current challenges.

The formal presentations reflected key areas of interest and concern among railway enthusiasts, and included:

1. A National Railway Museum for Poland

Piotr Nowicki, Railway Enthusiasts Club, Wrocław – Exploring the issues surrounding the establishment of a National Railway Museum and its potential role in preserving Poland's railway heritage.

2. The Need for Urgent Action to Preserve Poland's Railway Archives

Piotr Kazimierowski, Stacja Kwidzyn – Addressing the challenges and urgency in safeguarding Poland's railway archives for future generations.

3. Miniature Railways of Poland

Michał Pakuła, Museum of Railways, Kościerzyna – Discussing the heritage and tourism value of small-scale railways.

4. The Potential of Regional Railways

Maurycy Kosewski, Piaseczno-Grójec Narrow-Gauge Railway Society – Highlighting opportunities for reviving narrow-gauge and regional services.

5. The History and Future of SU45 Locomotives

Kamil Cesarz, Railway Enthusiasts Association, Chojnice – Celebrating and preserving an iconic class of diesel locomotives.

6. Revitalisation of Railway Heritage Sites

Radosław Konieczny, PKP Group Foundation – Examining efforts to restore disused stations and technical infrastructure.

7. Railway Disasters in Pomerania

Paweł "Kuracyja" Makowiec, Railway Historian and Publisher – Lessons from historical accidents and their significance for rail safety.

8. Żuławy Narrow-Gauge Railway: 20 Years Since Restoration

Filip Bebenow, Pomeranian Railway Society – Reviewing two decades of achievements in reviving and operating the Żuławy narrow-gauge railway network.

9. Building a European Coalition of Railway Organisations

Ian Leigh, Heritage Operators Group, European Federation of Museum and Tourist Railways – Highlighting the importance of international collaboration to advance the cause of railway preservation.

10. Development of Public Transport in Pomerania

Tomasz Myszk, Pomeranian Public Transport Enthusiasts Association – Discussing advancements in integrating and improving regional public transport.

11. Draisine Adventures in Kashubia

Marek Czerlik, Bytów Draisine Railway – A presentation on promoting rail tourism through draisine rides in Kashubia.

In addition to these discussions, the programme included guided tours of railway sites, special train journeys across regional lines, and interactive events that highlighted both Poland's railway heritage and modern railway development.

Through the offices of NERHT, this year's Congress was able to welcome Iain Leigh of FEDECRAIL, the European Federation of Museum and Tourist Railways. His presentation encouraged Polish railway enthusiasts to look beyond Poland's borders and explore international collaboration as a way of enhancing the preservation of Poland's rich railway heritage.

The Fourth Congress at Chojnice demonstrated how railway enthusiasts and rail professionals can work together to influence policy, promote the role of railways, and underscore the importance of railway heritage.



Participants of the Fourth Congress of Polish Railway Enthusiasts and Friends of Railways at the disused railway station in Pruszcz Bagienica after the arrival of a special train from Chojnice, 13 October 2024.

(Photo :
Fundacja Pro
Kolej)

(Editor's note : Fundacja Prokolej have a website at <https://kolej365.pl/>)

If any of our readers know of similar conferences being held elsewhere, then please tell us about them and we can publish information about them, including the "News" page of the NERHT website.)

Railway Heritage in Great Britain

Waldemar Ligma (Director, Wolsztyn Steam Depot) reports:

In May 2024, I had the honour of undertaking a study visit to the United Kingdom at the invitation of Mr Stephen Wiggs, Chairman of the New Europe Railway Heritage Trust (NERHT). As the Director of the Wolsztyn Steam Depot in Poland, I am well aware of the challenges associated with preserving and presenting railway heritage. This visit was an invaluable opportunity to observe how leading British institutions combine historical authenticity with the need to engage contemporary audiences effectively.

Upon my arrival at the airport, I was met with exceptional warmth and hospitality, a theme that continued throughout my visit. I spent my first day in London acclimating and exploring its streets, which offer a remarkable blend of history and modernity. This initial experience deepened my appreciation of the city's transport heritage and the cultural context in which railway preservation flourishes.

On 15 May 2024, I visited the Didcot Railway Centre in Oxfordshire. Established in 1967 and situated in a former Great Western Railway (GWR) repair facility, it boasts an impressive collection of locomotives and rolling stock from the 1930s. Among the 30 steam locomotives, "Pendennis Castle" and "King Edward II" stood out due to their impeccable liveries, high restoration standards, and authenticity. I was fascinated by the workshops where locomotives and carriages are meticulously restored and particularly impressed with the ongoing construction of the "Lady of Legend" locomotive, which ensures the preservation of a representative collection of GWR locomotives for future generations. The

preservation and digitisation of GWR's archival documents and drawings also caught my attention, as did the imaginative use of space, which inspired ideas for adaptation in Poland. I must commend the dedication of numerous volunteers whose efforts maintain these treasures in such excellent condition.

(Editor note : They have a website at <https://didcotrailwaycentre.org.uk/>)

On 16 May 2024, I visited the National Railway Museum in York. Founded in 1975, it holds more than 100 locomotives and items of rolling stock, alongside over 300,000 railway-related objects. Initially housed in a disused steam shed, it has expanded into several purpose-built halls and includes a satellite site in Shildon. The museum safeguards these mechanical wonders while maintaining an extensive historical archive, accessible to researchers and authors. I was captivated by the exhibits, ranging from "Mallard", the fastest steam locomotive in the world, to the legendary "Flying Scotsman". The museum excels in educating visitors about railway evolution, engaging younger generations with interactive exhibits and creative storytelling. After exploring these remarkable displays, I took a walk through York's charming streets with Andrew Scott, a former museum director, whose historical insights enriched my experience.

(Editor note : They have a website at <https://www.railwaymuseum.org.uk/>)

On 17 May 2024, I travelled to the Bluebell Railway in East Grinstead, where I was warmly greeted by the sight of a Polish flag flying at the station to mark my visit. Established in 1960, the Bluebell Railway was the first preserved standard-gauge passenger railway in Britain. It is renowned for its dedication to authenticity and meticulous restoration efforts. The ambitious construction of a new "Beachy Head" locomotive—an Atlantic Class recreation—demonstrated how building new engines can honour the past while inspiring modern audiences. Seeing so many beautifully restored locomotives and carriages in regular use was truly inspiring. A journey through Sussex's picturesque countryside on these splendid trains will remain one of my fondest memories.

(Editor note : They have a website at <https://www.bluebell-railway.com/>)

On 18 May 2024, I visited the London Transport Museum in Covent Garden, housed in a Victorian iron-and-glass building. Founded in 1980, the museum showcases London's public transport history, encompassing railways, trams, and buses. I was particularly impressed by the way it presents the development of transport infrastructure in an engaging and accessible manner. Later that day, I had the honour of addressing the NERHT Annual General Meeting, where I discussed the current state of the Wolsztyn Steam Depot and explored opportunities for future collaboration with railway enthusiasts across Europe.

(Editor note : They have a website at <https://www.ltmuseum.co.uk/>)

Throughout my stay, I encountered extraordinary kindness and professionalism. I am deeply grateful to Stephen Wiggs for organising the programme, guiding the visit, and introducing me to Britain's railway heritage. I also wish to thank Nick Fletcher for his generous hospitality and inspiring discussions about the railway industry, Andrew Goltz for coordinating the visit and daily communication, Sarah Jermyn for hosting us at Didcot, and Keith Raeburn for facilitating our visit to the London Transport Museum. My thanks also go to Andrew Scott for enriching my understanding during our tour of the National Railway Museum and York. I am grateful to Andrew Bereza and Anthony Goltz

for their assistance with translations and communications, and to Anthony for his colourful stories about London.

This visit has inspired me with new ideas and a renewed commitment to the preservation and interpretation of railway heritage. As I return to Wolsztyn, I am determined to implement many of the best practices observed during this visit to ensure the lasting appreciation of our shared railway legacy.



Metropolitan
Railway, Electric
Locomotive #5,
"John Hampden"

London
Transport
Museum

(Photo :
Waldemar
Ligma)



South Eastern &
Chatham Railway
0-6-0,
Class O1, #65,

Bluebell Railway

(Photo :
Waldemar
Ligma)

(Editor note:

Two of the locomotives mentioned above are worthy of further mention, namely "Lady of Legend" and "Beachy Head", in that both are "New build" locomotives. In the case of steam locomotives there are a number of "new build" projects in the UK, a detailed list of which may be found at the following address:

<https://preservedbritishsteamlocomotives.com/new-build/>

Thanks to standardisation of locomotive components, it is sometimes possible to build a new locomotive class member from parts taken from other existing locomotives where such come from a class where more than one example has survived. Where such parts cannot be found, of course, then they have to be constructed from scratch, using original drawings or similar components wherever possible. Just because all the locomotives of a given class have been scrapped does not mean that is necessarily the end of the story. The same logic applies to other item of relevance to other items of heritage railways.

Lady of Legend

The "*Lady of Legend*", a new 4-6-0 "Saint" class locomotive, #2999, was constructed from parts taken from the "Hall" class locomotive #4942 "*Maindy Hall*" (one of the classes developed from the "Saint" design) as well other locomotives.

See <https://didcotrailwaycentre.org.uk/article.php/63/2999-lady-of-legend> for details of how this was done.



Great Western
Railway 4-6-0
Class "Saint",
#2999 "*Lady of
Legend*"

Didcot Railway
Centre

(Photo :
Brian Hains)

Beachy Head

The "*Beachy Head*" a new 4-4-2 "H2" class locomotive #32424, was constructed from a similar boiler to the original type, with other parts being built from scratch.

See <https://www.bluebell-railway.com/brps/atlantic-latest/> for details of how this was done.



British Railways
4-4-2 Class H2,
#32424 "*Beachy
Head*"

Bluebell Railway

(Photo :
Brian Hains)

Tourism crisis hits Wolsztyn

Gareth David reports:

(Editor's note: The source of the following article may be found at <https://railwayworld.net/2024/11/09/tourism-crisis-hits-wolsztyn/>, and shows the impact a heritage railway can have on its local community.)



2-8-2 Class Pt47, #65 propels its two coaches into platform 1 at Wolsztyn on 7 November 2024, before departing for Zbaszynek at 14.14

Being the last place in the world to operate scheduled standard gauge steam passenger services has not prevented a tourism crisis in Wolsztyn, the attractive town in Western Poland that until mid-2023 was home of the Wolsztyn Experience (WE) and its world-renowned footplate experience courses.

During the 25 years WE operated (1998-2023) countless thousands of overseas visitors flocked to Wolsztyn, but its closure following the death in June 2023 of founder Howard Jones MBE has led to the current crisis facing the town and its devastating impact on local businesses.



2-8-2 Class Pt47, #65 has its bunker replenished with coal on 7 November 2024

One of those badly affected has been Natalia Sroczyńska, owner and manager of the popular *Locomotiva* restaurant in the town centre, who misses the groups of visitors from as far afield as the US, Australia and the Far East, which accounted for as much as 30% of the restaurant's business at popular times of the year.



Natalia has been owner/manager of the *Locomotiva* in Wolsztyn for the past 12 years

"There are no tourists from abroad in Wolsztyn now", laments Natalia, "we used to see people from the UK, the US, Germany, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, but there is no-one now. "During the peak months of May-June and from September onwards they were a vital part of our business.



Another restaurant that proved popular with overseas visitors to Wolsztyn was the *Piwniczna* (Cellar)

“Overseas visitors would often make bookings here for groups of 15 to 25 people, but this has all gone now.”



2-8-2 Class Pt47, #65 storms away from Wolsztyn on 5 November 2024 with the 14.14 to Zbaszynek

That absence of international visitors is in spite of there still being timetabled steam services on six days a week, when the depot's one active main line steam locomotive, Mikado (2-8-2) Pt47-65, operates a weekday afternoon round trip to Zbaszynek, on the Berlin-Warsaw main line, and a Saturday round trip to Poznan, 50 miles (80kms) north-east of Wolsztyn.



In fading light Pt47-65 departs Zbaszynek on 6 November 2024 with the 15.34 to Wolsztyn

While the Zbaszynek service makes it relatively easy to travel by steam to Wolsztyn by connecting there from one of the regular Berlin-Warsaw expresses, the two hour afternoon round trip, running partly in hours of darkness during the winter months, is hardly planned with tourists in mind.

Under the timetable that operated until December 2023, the steam loco worked two weekday round trips to Leszno, 29 miles south-west of Wolsztyn, with its second trip of the day offering the chance to alight en route at the lakeside

resort of Boszkowo or have lunch at a fine hotel near the next stop, Wloszakowice, before an afternoon return to Wolsztyn on the steam service.

Sadly there are no such attractions at Zbaszynek, a large and rather desolate junction station that serves what was once an important railway town, with the current steam timetable seeing the train arrive at 15.04, then hastily run around its two coaches before returning to Wolsztyn exactly half an hour later (15.34).

There are occasional special trains on Sundays and holidays using the Wolsztyn steam locos – there is also a 0-6-0 tank engine suitable for local specials and part of the former line to a place called Nowa Sol as far as Swietno survives as a museum line and sees use by a handful of special trains each year.

Apart from the rather limited steam operation, one recent change to the railway scene in Wolsztyn was the reopening in September 2024 of the section of line to Powodowo, first station along a route to a place called Sulechow, which closed to passenger traffic three decades ago, but survived for use by freight traffic from a now-closed cement works.



Railcar SA139-009 stands at Powodowo on 8 November 2024 with the 10.50 service to Poznan Główny

Travelling there on a near empty railcar it is not immediately obvious why this section of line was reopened, but it is a pleasant way of spending an hour and travelling through more of the local forest, with the line seeing four round trips on weekdays only, two of which are through workings to or from Poznan.

Wolsztyn is a very easy place to reach from the UK, either travelling via Berlin or Warsaw and connecting with the steam service at Zbaszynek, as mentioned above, or by taking one of the regular economy flights to Poznan from a number of UK airports. It is a delightful place to visit, with an attractive old town and museum dedicated to its most famous son, Robert Koch, as well as an impressive folk museum. There are two large lakes to walk around, some fine restaurants, and a decent hotel (Kaukaska) a short walk from the railway station.

UKRAINE

A visit to a steam gala in the Ukraine, run on 26 & 27 October.

Bill Parker reports:

An invitation to visit a steam gala in Ukraine with two broad-gauge and two narrow-gauge 0-8-0s was too good to miss. Dmitry Babarika, who is behind the developing little 750mm railway museum at Korostiv, in the former Austro-Hungarian western Ukraine, is also engaged in promoting steam activities with Ukrainian Railways, to raise morale for old and young alike. So I set out from the Forest of Dean, and after three car journeys, three bus rides and a train arrived at Luton Airport in time for the 7.10 Wizzair flight all the way across Europe to Chisinau in Moldova. From there it was only another 24 hours to Haivoron, a railway junction roughly half-way between Odesa and Kyiv, sleeping in Odesa overnight, with the occasional interruption of air-raid sirens.

Haivoron used to be the centre of the longest narrow-gauge network in the world, and up until the end of Soviet times had a major repair facility. That's now all gone, other than the empty buildings, but the narrow-gauge depot remains, from which diesel and steam locomotives operate. This time the resident 0-8-0 tender engine, Gr-280, which had performed for me on my first visit in February last year, was away having a much-needed overhaul, so two more 0-8-0s had been drafted in, Gr-336, built in Podolsk, USSR in 1951, and the little 159-4-95 also built there, but in 1938.

The broad gauge (Russian gauge, originally 5', now 1520mm) was represented by two of the largest class of locomotives built anywhere, Er 798-71 and Er 799-18, both of which had been built in Budapest, Hungary in 1953. I saw my first examples of these nearly 60 years ago on the Trans-Siberian, and never tire of seeing them, with the design clearly dating back to the early 20th century!



Class 0-10-0
Er #798-71
at Haivoron

*(Photo : Bill
Parker)*

Getting off a bus four hours out of Odesa, Dmitry met me and drove me to Haivoron. I had first met him in July 2022 after I resolved to go to Ukraine to see if I could help in any practical way. Stephen Wiggs suggested that I contact the Austrian enthusiast Wolfram Wendelin, who put me in touch with Dmitry and assured me that it was safe to go to the Ukraine – at least the western part – although it was against the Foreign Office advice. More than two years later this was my fourth trip to see him, and as recently as September he had been driving my Manning Wardle 0-6-2 on the Sibiu-Agnita Railway, the 'Mocanita'.

We went first to the depot, where all four engines were in steam, simmering more or less gently, having had been tested in operation before the next day's events. And events they were. Three different routes – one narrow gauge, one broad gauge, and one both. And all of the steam engines in operation, supplemented with the odd diesel.

Saturday morning we started on the narrow gauge, heading the short distance to the bridge over the River Bug, which is locally iconic and has become a symbol of Haivoron, behind Gr-336. We weren't there long – but long enough for the usual welcome from enthusiastic locals selling food, drink and souvenirs, before returning to Haivoron and climbing into an old 'heritage' broad-gauge passenger carriage, with sets of four seats, two opposite two on either side of a central corridor, much the same as the traditional American railroad car. Off we went to Dzhulynka behind Er 799-18 in style, returning to Haivoron for lunch.



Class 0-10-0
Er #799-18
at Dzhulynka

*(Photo : Bill
Parker)*

Lunch came from various little stalls set up by local people. The weather was bright and sunny, women and girls danced on the platform, and steam engines simmered in the background – what more could you want?

One more trip followed, behind Er 799-18 again, to Khaschuvate, with yet more entertainment, and a return to Haivoron, where Gr-336 was in the depot with a team of Ukrainian Railways fitters attending to quite a large hole in the main steam pipe leading to the right-hand cylinder.



Class 0-8-0
Gr #336
at Haivoron
Depot

*(Photo : Bill
Parker)*

The following day before the events started I was given a tour of Haivoron, including the war cemetery, an overview of the quartzite quarry that provides most of the wagon loads originating here, and a walk over the big hydro-electric dam holding back the River Bug, with the trees in the valley below gloriously colourful in the autumn sunshine.

We didn't travel on Sunday, instead watching and photographing the trains, in the station, in the depot and out in the countryside. Everyone was enjoying themselves wherever we went, and the justification for holding such an event to raise morale and give children a chance for adventure was clear. Again there was entertainment, ranging from rides in a ZIM, a Russian Gorky-built limousine converted to run on rails, to more dancing on the platforms! Plus four steam engines, coming and going, along with two gorgeously painted narrow-gauge diesels, TU7A-3108 in bright red and TU2-263 in bright blue.

Finally, as darkness fell, a drive up to Kyiv for the night, before a twenty-four hour odyssey to Budapest, changing from the Ukrainian Railway's four-berth sleeper to a MAV (Hungarian) standard gauge open carriage at Mukacheve after a very long night.

I never felt at all in danger, although the air-raid sirens at night are scary. But living with it day after day, now year after year, is a different matter. What was an adventure for me must have been quite different to those who organised it and who participated in it, some coming by special train from as far as Kyiv and Lviv. However the wretched war ends, the courage and hospitality of just about everyone I met was extraordinary.

I have offered to bring the one little narrow-gauge engine owned by Dmitry's Korostiv Museum back to England to restore it at The Flour Mill for free as being the most practical way of supporting Ukraine railway preservation, at least for now. At present this is frustrated by Ukrainian Customs, who don't understand this sort of thing, and of course the British Embassy in Kyiv is too busy with

serious matters to help somebody who shouldn't be there in the first place. But we'll keep trying, and I'm sure that NERHT will, in due course, be able to contribute to restoring and promoting the contribution of Ukrainian railways, large and small, to Ukrainian culture.

YUGOSLAVIA

Dragan Jovanović reports:

Trip through the Western Balkans

The German tour operator IGE Erlebnisreisen organized for its clientele a round trip by regular trains through Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia again and finally Slovenia. Here are some interesting details from that trip:

Slovenia - Ljubljana, Pivka and Postojna 24.09, 01. and 03.10.2024.

A visit was made to the Railway Museum in Ljubljana (<https://zelezniskimuzej.si>) which has a very significant collection of exhibits from the field of railway technology. Unfortunately, the management of the Slovenian Railways has no understanding for the traffic of steam locomotives with tourist trains, although the engineering staff is very interested and ready to train the steam locomotive SŽ 25-026 (Floridsdorf 26562/1920) for these purposes. The remaining 2 steam locomotives that hauled tourist trains, 06-018 (Borsig 12207/1930) and 33-037 (Henschel 27943/1944) are no longer in service.



Prof. Mladen Bogič's presentation, former director, during the tour and professional guidance during the visit to the museum.

(Photo : Josip Kajinić)



Steam loco 2-8-0
Class 25, #026
on the turntable
in the museum,
during the
preparation for
the schedule of
special charter
drives for our
group on
01.10.2018

*(Photo : Dragan
Jovanović)*

Interesting visits in Slovenia were also to the Military Museum in Pivka, where a military train from World War II with "Kriegslok" 52 4936, ex JŽ 33-110 (MBA 14006/1943) and one closed G - series and one open wagon of the E series is exhibited.



"Kriegslok"
2-10-0
Class 52 #4936
*(Photo : Dragan
Jovanović)*

A very interesting visit was the one that was made to the Postojna Cave, as well as a ride on the Cave Railway. It was the first underground railway in Cave, opened in 1872. Today, it has a length of 3.7 km and a track width of 600 mm.



Postojna Cave
Railway #7 and
#5

*(Photo : Dragan
Jovanović)*

On the last day of the program, the participants returned home by traveling along the attractive Bohinj railway from Sežana to Jesenice.

Croatia - Zagreb, Split 25. and 28.09.2024.

We traveled from Ljubljana to Zagreb the previous day by international high-speed train IC 221.



During our stay in Zagreb, we had a special charter ride with the historical tram M-24 and the "Pagoda" type trailer.

(Photo : Dragan Jovanović)

Both vehicles are of domestic construction and were produced in the workshops of the company Zagreb electric tram - ZET, 1940.

This was followed by a ride on the Gradska funicular in Zagreb, which connects the Lower and Upper Towns. Its length is only 66 meters, making it one of the shortest urban funiculars in the world, and it has been in operation since 1893.



Gradska funicular in Zagreb

(Photo : Dragan Jovanović)

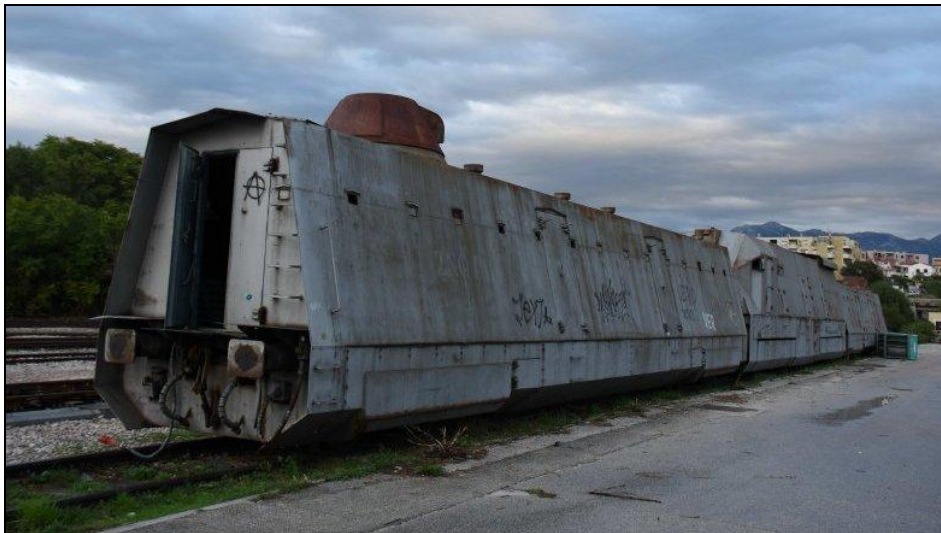
This was followed by a visit to the Croatian Railway Museum (<https://muzej.hzinfra.hr>) where we also had expert guidance during the tour of the museum, led by the manager Mrs. Renata Veličan. In a memory lane at the museum, our group took the following picture:



Steam locomotive 4-8-0 JŽ 11-015 (MAVAG-Bp 5574/1946.) that once served Tito's Blue Train.

(Photo : Dragan Jovanović)

On Saturday, September 28, 2024. late in the afternoon at Split Predgradje station, we visited the armoured train that the Croatian armed forces planned to use for fighting on the tracks, which did not happen.



Armoured train locomotive diesel-electric, marked HŽ 2062-045, ex. JŽ 664-001, (GM A2761/1973).

(Photo : Dragan Jovanović)

Bosnia and Herzegovina - Sarajevo, 27.09.2024.

As always, it was an interesting stay in Sarajevo, during which we had a charter ride with an authentic replica of the original tram from 1895.



Tram #15

(Photo : Dragan Jovanović)

During the visit to the History Museum, among other exhibits, there are two interesting vehicles from World War II, which were used on narrow gauge railways:



1. Railway destroyer – German : Schienenwolf

(Photo : Dragan Jovanović)



2. Armored train car

(Photo : Dragan Jovanović)

It was also interesting to ride the new cable car that connects the Old Town with Mount Trebević, and it is 2.2 km long. It overcomes a height difference of 577 meters.

Among the other news, this one from Serbia is also worthy of attention:

Serbia

Activities related to the collection of locomotives for the future railway museum continue. Steam locomotive 51-052, (Istv 43/1917) which once belonged to the "Romantika" museum train, was taken from Lapovo, and is now parked in the Depot of Tito's Blue Train.

The picture shows the locomotive before its departure from the depot in Lapovo on 24.10.2024, loaded into a special train pulled by diesel locomotive 666-003.



Steam
locomotive
2-6-2T
51-052

*(Photo : Dragan
Jovanović)*



Diesel locomotive
666-003. (GM
EMD 778-019-
3/1978)

*(Photo : Dragan
Jovanović)*

RUSSIA

Engineering heritage preservation issues addressed at the seminar in the Polytechnic Museum

Sergei Dorozhkov reports :

On November 20, 2024 the Polytechnic Museum in Moscow hosted an interdisciplinary scientific and methodological seminar "Preservation of industrial heritage: approaches to the restoration of engineering products".

The co-organisers were the "Association for the Promotion of Scientific and Technical Museums AMNIT", the "Centre for History of Industry and Transport", and the "Scientific and Methodological Center for Railway Heritage".

The discussions were moderated by Stella Morozova, the Honored Cultural Worker of the Russian Federation, Scientific Secretary of the Polytechnic Museum, and Yuri Kuzmin, PhD in Physics and Mathematics, Senior Researcher of the S. I. Vavilov Institute of History of Natural Science and Technology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Academician of the Academy of Aviation and Aeronautics.

The meeting brought together experts from public and private technical museums, technical institutes and high schools, restoration workshops, as well as private collectors, technology and transport enthusiasts, volunteers and technical journalists.

The conversation was unanimous and productive. Many speakers noted the strenuous situation with the preservation of technical heritage, even despite the active efforts made by organizations and enthusiasts. The general opinion was that steps were needed at the state level in the direction of methodological, normative, legal and other types of regulation. A preliminary plan for further work was outlined.



Sergei Dorozhkov of the Centre for History of Industry and Transport gives examples of international co-operation in railway preservation

(Courtesy: the Polytechnic Museum)

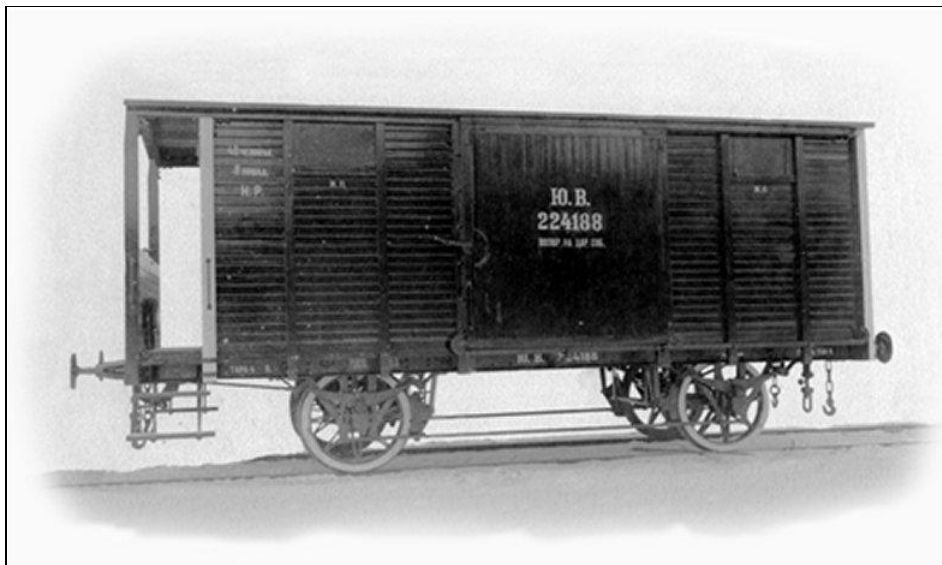
Raising the issue at such a high level allows us to hope that the topic of preserving the technical (and railway) heritage will receive greater attention and a proper attitude.

The 'Cuckoo' Steam Museum expands horizons with the acquisition of a broad gauge covered van

Sergei Dorozhkov reports :

When in December 2021 the narrow gauge museum in Talitsy acquired two 5' gauge spoked wagon wheel sets (see '*Eastern Star*' no.85, March 2022) it became clear that sooner or later a matching vehicle had to be found.

The decision that it should be a 'normal' covered van of pre-revolutionary type was obvious – a symbol of Russian freight traffic for over 50 years, known to many from literature and films, significant in every aspect. But the question was where to get it? Once the most widespread type of rolling stock became nearly extinct towards the turn of the 21st century, and just a few museums could boast it...



What we wanted was a brake version of 'нормальный товарный вагон' – normal covered van of the Tsarist Russia

(Courtesy: the 'Cuckoo' Steam Museum)

After two years of searching a suitable candidate was located in the North of the Kirov Region. However, as the 1898-built van spent the last 70 years as a grounded shed, its condition was pitiful. The roof had collapsed the floor and lower part of the body rotted through. It was evident that the van would not survive the 1400km journey to the museum.



The 1898 van holds shape with the last of its strength

(Courtesy: the 'Cuckoo' Steam Museum)

So a decision was taken to carefully dismantle the wooden parts and transport them in a separate enclosed vehicle. The frames, being extensively out of gauge for road travel, required a special low-loader.



With body carefully dismantled, packed into the van and ready for transportation, there is time to examine the frames

(Courtesy: the 'Cuckoo' Steam Museum)

Dismantling of the body and preparation of the frames for transportation took three days, the Northern weather being unusually favourable. Meanwhile the permission for out of gauge load was received, and a week later the precious cargo arrived in Talitsy.



The van's frames after arrival at the new home. Two matching 5' gauge wheel sets can be seen on the flat wagon on the right

(Courtesy: the 'Cuckoo' Steam Museum)

Some minor parts are still missing and require more searching, and the diligent restoration is ahead, but the 'Cuckoo' team is very enthusiastic about this project.

The Narrow Gauge Club of the North-West goes ahead with the restoration of a German covered van

Andrey Beliayev reports :

Work is steadily moving on a German 4-wheel covered van restoration project in the Narrow Gauge Club of the North-West.



July 2016 - Just arrived from Komsomolsk, lacking roof and all running gear

(Courtesy: the Narrow Gauge Club of the North-West)

Built in 1934 by Wismar of Germany for one of the local 750mm gauge railways in Pommern, the wagon was requisitioned to the USSR as reparations in 1945 and dispatched to the Komsomolsk Peat Railway in the Ivanovo Region. Due to the absence of spares and general design, unsuitable for temporary tracks, the van was soon taken off wheels and put as a shed. In 2016 it was bought by the Narrow Gauge Club of the North-West and moved to their base in Kikerino in the Leningrad Region.



December 2024 – With new roof and back on wheels. Time for walls...

(Photo: Andrey Beliayev)

As the wheels and suspension were all missing, the replicas had to be manufactured. The Club council decided to restore the wagon to Soviet times, so

suitable wheel sets and axle boxes were tucked up, while guide plates and springs were made new. Recently the roof was finished, and work continues on the body planking.

Tram trailer returns to tracks after 50 years in Siberian woods

Maxim Lyadenko reports :

We continue to follow the restoration of class PS tram trailer No.267, recovered in 2021 from Siberian woods by the volunteer team of the St. Petersburg Museum of City Electric Transport (see '*Eastern Star*' No.84, December 2021).



Trailer no. 267 shunted around the museum tracks – back on wheels!

(Photo: Maxim Lyadenko)

In early December the trailer was put back on wheels and even made a short journey around the tram park.



Assembly of the replica ceiling light

(Photo: Maxim Lyadenko)

Meanwhile some of the interior parts are also taking shape. Ceiling lights are exact replicas, made precisely to the original drawings and surviving photos.

* * * * *

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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