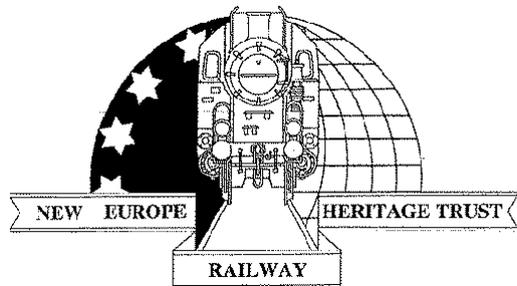


Eastern Star



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

Number 49

March 2013

Narrow Gauge in Ukraine

The Current Situation



On the Vyhoda line: a 'snow special' organised for Wolfram Wendelin's group in February
(Photo Wolfram Wendelin)

(continued overleaf)

(cont'd)

We are indebted to Wolfram Wendelin for the following notes on the Ukrainian narrow gauge:

On the state railway's Rudnycja-Hajvoron-Holovanivs'k line, the section from Hajvoron (Gaivoron) to Holovanivs'k is endangered by closure whilst the other section Hajvoron-Rudnycja will keep running since more passengers use it now, because Hajvoron in May 2012 lost all broad-gauge connections except for two weekly trains to Vinnycja (Vinnitsa).

On the Smolyn peat railway, the factory is bankrupt and no trains are running and there is a similar situation with the Irdyn' peat railway with bankrupt factory and absence of trains but there is some hope that services will be resumed in mid-April. On the Prylisne peat railway there is considerable anxiety following the unexpected replacement of its well-liked director. On the state Antonivka-Zarichne line there has been no operable TU2 since the end of 2012. One engine was sent off for attention but a serious accident happened during repair and the engine still is not back from Shepetivka works. Since the end of 2012 the only loco in Antonivka is TU7-0767, which belongs to the track rather than the passenger department. It is running irregularly, in general on about 3-4 out of 10 days; on the other days there is no traffic at all! In this way they are losing passengers quickly...a definite end may be not far off...

On the Vyhoda forestry railway all is well. From Monday to Friday four locos are working. The endangered branch to Burmach is still in service. 200m of line from Jalovyj onward have been taken back into operation. One kilometre of line towards Chorna Cykhla has been repaired and is already operated again. On 24-25 February spectacular snow-clearing specials were organised for Wolfram's groups.

Move to Save Ukrainian Railway Heritage Site

Earlier this year Europe's leading heritage organisation Europa Nostra – of which Fedecrail are members – launched the 7 Most Endangered programme designed to identify monuments and sites which are at risk, and mobilise public and private sector partners on a local, national and European level to find a sustainable future for these sites. A number of railway locations are likely to be targeted under this initiative and NERHT has given its support to the nomination by AZIZU (the Ukrainian Railway Heritage Association) of the Tsarist era Kyiv Tovarniy complex of buildings; this is believed to be the last surviving example in the former Russian Empire of a major goods depot dating from before the Revolution and as reported in ES has been identified as a possible site for a new railway museum.

KIEVPASTRANS, The Museum of Kiev Passenger Transport.

Twenty years ago, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Kiev trams, the Kiev tram/trolley-bus management opened a Museum of Electrotransport, which successfully functioned up to 2010. The creation of the museum was supervised by a veteran of the company - Lidiya Arkhipovna Livinskaya. She did this perfectly and the museum was opened for a few days for the jubilee date of 14th of June 1992. This cultural establishment Lidiya Arkhipovna supervised and developed to a high level up to her death. Many enthusiasts visited her with pleasure and helped to expand the collection with interesting new items. Specialists of electrotransport from all Ukrainian cities, some cities of the former USSR, nearly 30 cities of foreign countries visited the museum. Schoolchildren of Kiev's schools were constant visitors of the Museum too. In 2001 electrotransport was amalgamated with autotransport and on this base was founded the KIEVPASTRANS company.

After the death of Lidiya Arkhipovna (April 2010) the Museum closed, as the new owner of the building where this museum was situated insisted on its removal. Exhibits of the Museum were dismantled and transported to Darnitskoe tram depot. It was planned to open it for the 120th anniversary of the tram. However, because of a large volume of work for the company in preparation for the Euro 2012 football final it was not possible to open the Museum for the jubilee date of the tram. It was opened a little bit later on the 31st of August 2012. The Kiev City administration, the chief of the Main

Transport Department and Communications, and many workers of the company took part in this event.



Shunting loco formerly used at the old Shevchenko Depot, Gorky Street

(Photo: Vladimir Berdnikov)

Because three types of city passenger transport - tram, trolleybus and bus - are covered by KIEVPASTRANS, the name of Museum was changed to Museum of City Passenger Transport. It has two rooms- one for general exposition, the other only for electrotransport.

In the new museum, partially preserved, are the exhibits of the old museum. Entering the museum, the diorama Vladimir Hill attracts the attention of visitors- this was the location of the first electric tram in Eastern Europe. In the hall you can see the map of Ukraine with dates of opening of tram and trolley bus traffic in its cities, a map of Kiev with tram and trolley bus routes, operating in the period celebrated by the 100-year jubilee of the tram, uniforms of transport staff, etc.

In the first hall you can see numerous displays of general exhibits: here visitors learn about the history of the start of public transport in the city, its founders, achievements of the Museum for the last 20 years, brief information about tram and trolley-bus depots, bus garages and executive services. Exhibits in the second hall open with a display devoted to the founder of the previous museum, Lidiya Arkhipovna Livinskaya. And further, in chronological order, is depicted the development of electrotransport. The creators of scientific-technical progress and their achievements, awards of collective and best workers are commemorated. There are many scale models of transport used in the city in different periods. Separately, on the territory of the tram depot, are displayed examples of trams and trolleybuses and special transport vehicles which were used in the city for carrying passengers and servicing the transport infrastructure. Work to improve the exhibits of both halls of the Museum is under way.

(This article was written by Kiev electrotransport veteran Kazimir Bramskiy and translated by AZIZU member Raisa Karchevskaya)

As the Museum is on the territory of Darnitsa Tram Depot, please give notice at least 2 days in advance to arrange a visit. Monday to Friday only. Tel. KIEV 044 292 32 95

News from Romania

(We are indebted to Mihai Botor for the following notes)

The State Railway Tourism Company – SFT – has declared insolvency and is now being run by a third-party company. However, the new Minister of Transport recently said that SFT has been created only to satisfy the needs of certain people, has never been run properly and never accomplished what it was created for, thus it will be dissolved and its assets scattered among the other railway companies under the ministry's control.

The presidential train: SFT together with the *Building Romania* web portal, recently launched an appeal to restore the presidential train of Gheorghe-Gheorghiu Dej, the country's first communist leader, before Ceaușescu. The



train consists of two armoured saloon cars built in 1950 at the Flamura Roșie carriage works in Arad (currently Astra Arad) and it was used as presidential train until 1972.

One of the presidential carriages

(photo from www.construim-romania.ro)

The train is now resting at the Mogoșoaia special depot in a

forest near Bucharest, but although the depot provides plenty of space under cover it is full of other historic trains; thus the Dej train is rusting away in the open behind the depot. The appeal calls for donations and volunteers to cosmetically restore the two carriages starting April, after which they will be on public display at a location yet to be chosen, most likely the Gara de Nord in Bucharest.

Dej museum: Railway enthusiasts from the locomotive depot in Dej continue their efforts to build a railway museum. After having cosmetically restored several steam and diesel shunting locomotives, as well as some of the earliest



surviving wagons, they are now restoring a former postal wagon, to act as exhibition space – inside they plan to display locomotive plates, historic photographs, lamps, books and even a rail tricycle.

The newly painted postal wagon (photo from pisti91.myfreeforum.org)

Locomotive in custody: The removal of a small shunting steam locomotive from behind the depot in Sibiu started a controversial debate earlier this year.



The locomotive appears to have been owned by a private logging company, which declared insolvency, and the liquidator was selling its assets.

Loading of the N2-302 locomotive in Sibiu

(photo from forum.transira.ro)

As the locomotive is listed they had to ask the Ministry of Culture if the state wants to buy it.

However, the state declined and allowed them to sell somewhere else but not for a lesser price – somewhere around Euro 60k. So they did, to the Local Council of Zlatna, a small town in the Apuseni mountains. Zlatna was linked to Alba Iulia by a narrow gauge railway until the mid-70s, when the line was

upgraded to normal gauge. The new mayor already sourced several narrow gauge locomotives and has them on display in a local round-about, and has bought this small steamer in order to put together a running standard gauge tourist train. All very good. However, the locomotive appears to have been bought with as little as 4,000 Euros, very much less than what the state was anticipating. This is why the head of Sibiu Brukenthal museum – which plans to take over steam locomotives in Sibiu and build a Museum of Industries – raised the alarm and blocked the transaction. Until the court reaches a decision the locomotive is sealed at the Remarul 16 Februarie locomotive works in Cluj-Napoca, where it was to be repaired.

The narrow gauge: In the narrow gauge world, the Moldovita line is attracting more and more tourists; this winter brought the need of a second train running behind the first to accommodate the requests. The Viseu de Sus operation lost its tourist promoter and mind behind today's success – the Swiss Michael Schneeberger, who decided to move to Hungary and deal with Serbian and Ukrainian narrow gauge railways in desperate need of help. The Sibiu-Agnita railway is fighting legal ownership issues, with the local consortium forced to drop the concessioning contract for the line due to high rent, however the volunteers are continuing with their projects, hoping that a legal solution will be found.

Railway Preservation in Hungary

Hungary is not a country that NERHT has had many dealings with. The language, of course, is a major barrier; but the Hungarians themselves have managed to create a railway preservation programme with some success, although it is hampered – as with everything else – by lack of money. The railway preservation scene can be divided into two parts: that appertaining to standard gauge and that to narrow gauge. The standard gauge preservation is a function of the 'MÁV Nostalgia' which was set up as a separate company when the Hungarian Railways was broken down into a set of interlinked operations. They maintain and operate a selection of steam and diesel locomotives on a yearly programme of trips and also run the Railway Museum, created at a former depot in Budapest. As far as I am aware there are no standard gauge locomotives in private possession, nor are there any privately run standard gauge railways; probably because of the political system before the change in 1989. The last steam locomotives were taken out of service in 1983; several survive as 'monuments' at various stations in the country but I don't think that there was ever a Barry 'equivalent'.

The narrow gauge preservation scene is more varied. Narrow gauge in Hungary dates from 1868 with a line between Sopron and Brennberg to serve mines. Fifteen years later there was already a total of 303km of narrow gauge and this figure continued to grow until the construction of the last line in 1952 – although there was one exception, see later. The main period of construction was in the 1920's with an earlier period of major construction at the beginning of the 20th Century; the aim being to improve the economies of those areas of the Great Plain which were too thinly populated to justify the construction of standard gauge railways, for examples the Nyíregyházavidéki kisvasút and the

Gyulavidéki kisvasút opened in 1906, the Bodroghközi kisvasút opened in stages between 1913 and 1930 and the Szegedi kisvasút opened in 1927.

The 'death knell' for the narrow gauge railways in Hungary was the 1968 Transport Policy Conception, which – echoing the earlier Beeching Plan – decided to switch the emphasis from railway transport to road transport; railway lines with low passenger figures would be closed and investment would only be made in those lines which served the long-distance market. As all of the narrow gauge railways which offered public transport fell in to the 'local' category the vast majority were planned to be closed. There was a time gap while a programme of road construction started, but in 1971 the closures started, even if there was local opposition as for example at Sárospatak.

Looking back it can be seen that this plan did not succeed in improving the economic situation and thus raising the living standards of the Hungarians. There was not the money available to build new roads and in many places the local economy stagnated or even fell to the level at the turn of the Century. Of the state-run railways only those at Nyíregyháza, Kecskemét and Balatonfenyves survived (and subsequently these were also closed to traffic in December 2009, although the line at Balatonfenyves has recently been re-opened).

The narrow gauge lines that still operate today are, with the exception of the Childrens' Railway in Budapest and the Széchenyi Museum Railway at Nagycenk, the remnants of lines built for transporting timber and mineral products and depend on tourism for their existence. From April to October (in most cases) they run a daily passenger service whose schedules are published in the standard railway timetables volume. Several of them have acquired a Reșița locomotive from Romania in order to boost their appeal, for example at Kiályrét and Gyöngyös. The 'Zsuzsi' Railway (pictured below) at Debrecen was able to get a MÁVAG Class 106 locomotive on loan from Nagycenk, and at Lillafüred a "monument" Kv-4 locomotive was brought back into working order.

(To be concluded in our next issue)

Jonathan Sutton



NERHT Supports New Latvian Railway Law

At the request of our partners the Gulbene-Aluksne Railway, or 'Banitis', NERHT has written to the Latvian government urging them to include special provisions to safeguard the railway heritage in the new railway law which is now under consideration. Banitis has already been designated as a historical monument and the management hope that the new law will clarify which lines are to have the status of heritage railways, relax unjustifiable regulatory burdens and at the same time ensure that such railways are placed in a sound financial position.

Lithuanian railways on postage stamps



Unlike Britain, the Lithuanian Post Office *Lietuvos Pastas* likes to illustrate the ordinary aspects and objects of Lithuanian life. Hence the large number of stamps each year that feature the country's daily life, its history, culture, natural history, monuments, sporting achievements, and other important events. But like Britain, Lithuania also has special issues, and trains feature frequently. Unlike on British stamps, these are mainly today's trains, rather than pictures of long-scrapped steam locomotives. As part of the Soviet Union for nearly fifty years, nostalgia for railways past and present was never allowed to flourish in Lithuania. *Baltic Railways Magazine* was started in 2009 to generate an interest in their railways amongst the people of the Baltic States and expats who live abroad, and to give foreigners an insight into the railways of the Baltic States. Since independence, the railways have been undergoing modernisation, and the narrow gauge railway between Panevėžys and Rubikiai has been saved from extinction.

Of particular interest to readers of *Eastern Star* will be the stamps celebrating the ASG or Siaurasis Geležinkelis, the 750mm narrow gauge railway from Panevėžys to Rubikiai in Lithuania. Opened in 1899, this railway is all that remains in Lithuania of a network of narrow gauge railways that up to WW2 covered all of the Baltic States and

adjoining countries. The ASG originally continued into Belarus, but was closed from Rubikiai in 1981, with the section from Švencionėliai to Utena being converted to Russian gauge in 1981. What remained, closed in 2001 after the glass factory in Panevėžys stopped transporting its raw material from the mine in Rubikiai. After most of the freight stock was scrapped, the Lithuanian Government decreed that the railway be restored to working order as a tourist railway. With help from NERHT, the railway was reopened, and today has a regular weekend service from Anykščiai to Rubikiai, together with special trains used for educational trips. For the whole of 2011, the line between Panevėžys and Troškunai was closed for repairs to be carried out to a viaduct at the north end of the line, but it is hoped the line will reopen soon so trains can once more run from Panevėžys. Then it should be possible to hire your own train (with restaurant car if required) and travel the full length of the 60km railway. As with similar railways in Britain, there is now a supporters group assisting to restore and develop the railway. The stamps illustrate the TU2 diesels that power the trains, and a PT4 steam locomotive from earlier days.

To the north of Panevėžys are lines to Joniškėlis, Pasvalys and Biržai. These lines were also closed after WW2 but the track remains, albeit heavily overgrown, and has been severed by the A17 trunk road on the outskirts of Panevėžys. However they are included in the plans for restoration, and a TU2 locomotive and train are stabled in the station at Biržai.

There is only one railway tunnel in Lithuania and that is in Kaunas at the end of the Vilnius to Kaunas line, and is 1286m in length. Building commenced in May 1859 and was finished in November 1861. During 1944 it was badly damaged when the retreating German army blew it up. It was quickly brought back into operation, but further repairs (including line singling) had to be made over the years, so the tunnel was closed in February 2008 to November 2009 for major reconstruction.

Lietuvos Pastas issued a 3 Lt stamp *The railway tunnel of Kaunas* in its *Technical monuments* series in June 2005. The train is a class ER9M, made at the Riga Carriage Works in the Soviet era. Now painted in Lietuvos Geležinkelis livery.

Not only does Kaunas have Lithuania's only railway tunnel, it had, until recently, the only funiculars in Lithuania. Lietuvos Pastas issued two stamps in 2004 in its *Technical monuments* series.

On the 1 Lt stamp is the funicular of Aleksotas, linking the Hill of Aleksotas with Linksmadvaris. It was built in 1935 on the bank of the slope beside a bridge over the Nemunas river. The 1.30 Lt stamp shows the funicular of Žaliakalnis, which connects Žaliakalnis and Naujamiestis. It was built in 1932 on the small cut of the slope beside A.Mickevičius Street.

A stamp commemorating the 150th anniversary of the first railway in Lithuania was issued in August 2008. The railway from St Petersburg to Warsaw crossed Lithuania between Dūkštas and Kybartai. Building started in May 1859, and in December 1862 the line was fully open.

The 2.90 Lt stamp illustrates an early 0-6-0 steam locomotive, and an EJ575 double deck 3-unit electric passenger train used on the Vilnius to Kaunas route. The train is made by Škoda Vagonka in the Czech Republic. These new trains started work in August 2009.

New single-unit 620M class diesel passenger trains made by PESA in Poland were introduced on lightly used lines for local transport, including the link from Vilnius Railway Station to the new station at Vilnius Airport.

An interesting addition to the stamps are the little stickers which are included on sheets of stamps. Illustrated are a 2M62 diesel locomotive, and an electric ER9M passenger train.

Tony Olsson (*Editorial assistant, Baltic Railways Magazine*)

NERHT and FEDECRAIL Sign Memorandum of Understanding

The long-standing relationship between NERHT and Fedecrail (the European Federation of Museum and Tourist Railways) was placed on firm foundations on 12 January with the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding setting out the basis on which the two organisations will co-operate. The Memorandum was signed at the Fedecrail Council meeting held at Pistoia in Italy at which NERHT was represented by John Jones, Gordon Rushton and Stephen Wiggs. "We have worked closely with Fedecrail ever since NERHT was founded" Stephen remarked "and simply could not act effectively without their support. The Memorandum places on record how we will co-operate in the future". Fedecrail Secretary Livius Kooy said "The Council agreed that NERHT was very useful to Fedecrail by making and maintaining contacts and finding new members in Eastern Europe where railway preservation was often in need of our support". By the time ES appears the Memorandum should be on the NERHT and Fedecrail web sites.

UKRAINIAN GUESTS TO ATTEND NERHT AGM – 27 APRIL

As mentioned in the previous ES, and in the formal notices being sent to NERHT members, our AGM this year will be attended by representatives of AZIZU, the Ukrainian Railway Heritage Association. The guests will include the Chairman Oleksandr Hopkalo, who will give an illustrated talk on Ukraine's railway heritage and the moves by AZIZU to safeguard it. The meeting will take place on Saturday 27 April at the Model Railway Club, Keen House, 4 Calshot Street London N1 9DA, with formal business starting at 2.00 and the talk at 3.00. All are welcome!

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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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