

UPDATE No 20

NEW YEAR 2013

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE HERITAGE RAILWAYS AROUND EUROPE
NEWS ♦ VIEWS ♦ ARTICLES ♦ CURRENT EVENTS ♦ OPINIONS



If you would like to receive your copy of Update in French or German, please let Livius Kooy know (contact details on page 10).

Si vous souhaitez recevoir une version française de Update, veuillez le notifier à Livius Kooy (coordonnés en page 10).

Wenn Sie das Update auf Französisch oder Deutsch erhalten wollen, wenden Sie sich bitte an Livius Kooy (Adresse siehe Seite 10).



PRESIDENT's REPORT

It is my sad task to report the death of Keith Twyman, FEDECRAIL's Membership Secretary and Editor of this Newsletter, who died on 16 November 2012 after a short illness. A fuller tribute appears elsewhere in this issue written by John Fuller, one of our conference organisers, as he knew him longer and better than anyone else, but it would be remiss of me if I were to allow his passing to happen without a comment.

He was a man on whom one could totally rely. He set about his duties as Membership Secretary diligently and without prompting. He just got on with it. Similarly, as editor, he would always send me a reminder well before the deadline.

It was easy to take him for granted; it's only when he is gone that I appreciate the large gap he has left behind him.

Readers may remember that FEDECRAIL joined the World Association of Tourist Trams & Trains (WATTRAIN) a couple of years ago. It held its first AGM and seminar at the National Railway Museum in York in October 2012. Delegates attended from all five continents – I don't count Antarctica which has no railways – and included six FEDECRAIL Council members and officers as well as several FEDECRAIL members. Its theme was "sustainability" – technical, environmental,

financial and personal e.g. through training. It is a truism to say that the conference attracted several world-class speakers, some of whom sparked some intense discussions, particularly on subjects such as how modern technology can assist the restoration, maintenance and operation of traditional locomotives and equipment.

Members may be forgiven for wondering whether such issues have any relevance for those operating trains – or, as we say in English, working at the coalface. I can only say to them that they may not affect them now but if we do nothing, you can rest assured that you will notice the effects of changes to legislation. It may be because I am a lawyer that I am now conscious of the potential impact such changes can have. After all, over the years, largely thanks to the intervention of Brian Simpson, MEP, who is currently Chairman of the European Parliament's Transport & Tourism Committee, we in FEDECRAIL have succeeded in amending 14 EU directives and attaining the complete withdrawal of a fifteenth, all of which would have had serious repercussions for our activities, if they had been implemented in their original form.

Next year we are holding our annual meeting and congress in the French town of Albi near Toulouse from Thursday 11 to Sunday 14 April when we will be inviting representatives of various European institutions to as well as a number of politicians, furthering of prioritising our aim to raise our lobbying profile. It will be followed by the usual study and visit programme.

At our November council meeting, we also accepted the resignation of our Treasurer, Marie-Thérese Beunckens, following the death of her father and illness of another close relation. Our German Vice-President, Heino Echensperger, has kindly stepped into the gap and will take over as Treasurer with effect from 1 January 2013. I would like to thank Marie- Thérèse for her hard work since her appointment, during which time she successfully retrieved several arrears of subscription.

I am also pleased to announce that Thomas Lange of MRO, Sweden, has kindly agreed to take on the role of Membership Secretary.

David T. Morgan, MBE, TD
President



KEITH TWYMAN

Keith was well known electronically to our members from his work as Membership Officer and also Editor of Update, but as a very private person only a few of us had the pleasure to know him personally.

He had been actively involved with Heritage Railway preservation and management for over 40 years here in Kent. In 1969, he was with me as one of the initial team who were invited by Bowater UK Pulp and Paper Company to take over a part of their narrow gauge industrial railway. We joined the Sittingbourne and Kemsley Light Railway Board together and he was the Administration Director of the railway for our first 6 years after which he retired from the Board in order to have more time for active hands-on participation in the railway's operations.

Keith's first love was as a steam locomotive driver and he was always happiest driving or working on his favourite locomotive "Triumph", one of our 0-6-2T locomotives dating from 1934. He was one of our first steam drivers and continued driving until a few months before his death.

We were happy to welcome him back as a Director in 1994 when he also became Chairman of the Board and steered us through a period of re-organisation. He took on additional responsibilities with the role of Managing Director in 1998. After 10 years in the driving seat he retired from the Board in 2004 in order to return once again to the steam locomotive driving and engineering that he had always loved. His extensive experience and advice was always freely given and he continued to work with our Operating Safety and Standards Team until this year.

Retirement from our railway Management Team left Keith with some spare time and in 2006, looking for homework, he readily volunteered to join the Fedecrail team as Membership Officer. Two years later he followed this by taking over the additional responsibilities of Editor from me. Both of these tasks he carried out diligently right up to his death last month after a short illness.

Keith will be missed not just by his close friends on the Sittingbourne and Kemsley Light Railway but in our wider community of Heritage and Tourist Railways in the UK and across Europe. The loss of 40+ years of experience leaves a hole in our fraternity.

John Fuller

Vice President, SKLR

Conference Manager, Fedecrail



AFFILIATE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Representatives of Rail Events Incorporated- an American company- attended the WATTRAIN Congress in York, in October. They organise events themed on well-known movies such as the “Polar Express” and have good success also in Europe. The advantage to our members of having these Americans involved, and their active engagement with two American steam railways: the Silverton & Durango, and the Smoky Mountains railways, made Council decide that Rail Events Inc. could be proposed as affiliate member (without voting rights).



NEWS FROM THE SECRETARY

As some readers may have heard, there will be some changes in the organisation from January 2013 due to the retirement of our Treasurer.

The fact that our Constitution demands a legal seat in Belgium spurred our President into action. He found a colleague of long standing the lawyer Joseph van der Perre having followed him as a President of the Federation of European Bars.

From 1st January 2013 our legal seat will be:

Advocatenkantoor J. Van der Perre, Ganzenstraat 57, 8000 Brugge, Belgium.



“FRANCE 2013” - CONFERENCE and GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Work is progressing on next year’s conference which will be held in south-west France in mid-April. Dates will be **Thursday 11.4.13 - Saturday 13.4.13** for the working group meetings, business sessions and General Assembly followed by a visits programme which will cover the period **Sunday 14.4.13 - Wednesday 17.4.13**.

The venue for the business sessions will be the historic mediaeval town of Albi, north-east of Toulouse. Albi has good public transport links to the city of Toulouse and onwards to its airport which has a good range of flight connections with various European countries. For those participating in the full Fedecrail programme (and possible extensions) a “one way” flight to Toulouse may be logistically appropriate with return travel from an airport further south, such as Barcelona or Gerona.

It is planned to offer all delegates (not just partners) an opportunity to visit the magnificent cathedral of Albi mid / late afternoon on Thurs 11.4 before we plunge into our railway business at our opening reception! As in previous years, main business sessions will follow (Fri 12.4) and conclude with the General Assembly (Sat 13.4 morning). Venue will be the Moulins Albigeois, a restored former mill on the north bank of the River Tarn which has been restored to new uses, including a conference venue and exhibition space.

Study visits will be made to members of our conference hosts the French national federation, UNECTO. Firstly, the narrow-gauge Chemin de Fer Touristique du Tarn (Sat 13.4 afternoon) followed by a main line steam journey (Sun 14.4) northwards along the 'historic' Paris - Toulouse main line for a visit to C de F Touristique du Haut-Quercy near Brive-la-Gaillarde.



CFTT: Decauville in optima forma.

On Mon 15.4, our plan is to relocate from Albi to a second base at Rivesaltes, a small town just north of Perpignan. As in 2012, we should have our own preserved diesel railcar for the entire journey Albi - Toulouse - Rivesaltes to take the hassle out of luggage transfer! The Rivesaltes base will allow us to make visits to tourist railways in Roussillon including the Train du Pays Cathare et du Fenouilledes and possibly also to the SNCF operated "Le Petit Train Jaune" close to the Spanish frontier.

This year's programme will include a non-railway "something different" element - a behind the scenes tour of the A 380 production line at the Airbus Industrie manufacturing plant at Toulouse. When this proposal was mentioned casually in informal discussions during our 2012 conference, the idea received a resounding vote in favour!

It is envisaged that the detailed programme and booking forms will be available for circulation during January.

Catalonia Visit - Maintaining the tradition of a “second country visit”, the possibility of a brief post Fedecrail tour to Catalonia is also being investigated, including visits to the rack railway Ribes - Nuria in the Pyrenees, re-opened tourist railways at Montserrat and the railway museum at Vilanova la Geltru, near Barcelona. Return from airports in Catalonia are likely to be more convenient logistically for many participants. This extension tour is likely to cover period **Wednesday 17.04 - Friday 19.04**

Peter Ovenstone, Joint Conference Organiser



MOLDOVA SUMMER VISIT

In August 2012 I visited Moldova again during my holidays, with Stephen Wiggs and Jonathan Sutton of NERHT as my companions: this time to see the new Railway Museum in the West wing of the Cultural Palace of the Railway, close to the main station of Chisinau at Bulevardul Decebal. We visited this on Saturday 4th August. It opened a year ago as a small exhibits museum, but as the really enthusiastic Director Aleksej Petrovitsj Samsonov told us, the railway company CFM planned to add a new hall for rolling stock display. We had a full guided tour followed by fruit and drinks- all good for a toast to our health.



The same morning we had also been shown round in the splendid and spotlessly clean station building (perhaps the very cleanest in Europe), including the first floor with its almost brand new, good rooms for guests which can be rented at a low cost- even for those without a rail ticket. The architecture of the station is an interesting mix of regional styles. My favourite were the many aquariums in the station, aimed to let the guests have a relaxed feeling while waiting for their trains.



1st floor at Chisinau station (MD).

Moldova is quite small and many of the trains are international: Sofia, Varna, Bucharest, Odessa, Moscow. The average price per km of rail traffic was low at near 0,25 Moldovan Lei or 1,5 Eurocent. Very recently a DMU had been modernised much to the enthusiasm of the public, with wheelchair access.

On Sunday we went in the car of our translator to cross the river Dnjester and enter the breakaway province of Transnistria. It is not recognised as a state other than by Russia, so we went past the Moldovan border checkpoint, the Russian peacekeeping one and then the Transnistrian one for filling in a form and showing passports- but we had no stamp in our passports. The whole is quite unique.

Due to the situation there is little information available on the web, but after crossing the river and turning right, right again, we found the station Bender I with its earlier Railway Museum of Moldova. It is in fact an exhibition train

consisting of steam engine Su 206-77 and four old coaches, of which one is the first to be built after the Russian Revolution. Our access there with CFM help failed because the museum had been transferred from local railway offices to the Transnistrian Ministry of Culture, and it was never open on Sundays. The station Bender I itself was interesting as it has no passenger anymore, but it keeps selling train tickets and was doing good business when we came there. Bender II is the station where people can actually board trains...



Moldovan- now Transnistrian Railway Museum at Bender I station, Transnistria (MD).

Yana our guide told us that sending mail with Transnistrian stamps was only possible within Transnistria- this is not a recognised as a state and therefore not a member of the Postal Union either. Even if a stamp of Moldova would be glued next to it, the Moldovan Mail would not send that mail abroad.

Monday morning saw us in the headquarters of CFM again, where we met Mr. Zaika the Head of the CFM Technical Department. After our explanations on Fedecrail and NERHT we understood that CFM with its new Railway Museum may be interested in Fedecrail membership.

NERHT very kindly offered to let two or three Moldovans come over to Western Europe as was their practice: making contacts, offering help and encouraging interaction. This offer was accepted with both hands, we may see further contacts developing in the near future.

In the late afternoon, at a temperature of +38C in the shade, we boarded our well sunbathed sleeper train back to Bucharest, happy to have visited this little-known corner of Europe again to make progress.

Livius J. Kooy.



FEDECRAIL YOUTH CAMP – NORTH OF ENGLAND 2012

Following the success of previous youth camps having been held in Sweden, Latvia, Germany, Hungary, Poland etc, the venue this year was the North of England and was held in August.

As usual with these events it fell to the national umbrella organisation in this case The Heritage Railway Association (HRA), to host and make arrangements for the camp. These events are intended to be about 50% work, and 50% social in order to exchange cultural ideas, and interact with young people from other railways and countries, and this year was no exception.



FEDECRAIL Youth Camp: fence painting at Keighley.

I became involved as I am Chairman of the HRA Member Services Committee (which has the remit for the Youth Camp), the UK representative for Fedecrail,

and a long time serving volunteer on the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway (La'al Ratty). However I would like to say that the credit for the organisation must go to Liz Fuller (HRA Young Volunteers Officer), and her team of organisers Andy Brown, and Joel Pearse, I merely assisted in the background. This summary is being written very much from an R&ER perspective.

Planning began back in January with a meeting held in Network Rail's office in Manchester with, as well as Liz and John Fuller, Sten Erson Wester Fedecrail Council Member from Sweden, who has done so much to ensure the success of all the youth camp's also in attendance. It was decided that the work activities would be based at three centres, Keighley and Worth Valley Railway, Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway, and the National Railway Museum at York, with accommodation provided in YHA youth hostels and travel between the locations by rail. Also the budget for the event was discussed.

Mention here must be made of the generosity of all the host organisations, but in particular Northern Rail who provided free travel for all the participants and organisers, on their train services.

So after the exchange of what seemed like hundreds of emails the programme was finalised and a total of seventeen young participants from seven countries found themselves in Leeds one August Friday evening.

As I said before this is being written very much from an R&ER perspective so I will leave others to comment on other aspects of the programme.

Following work on the K&WVR I met the participants at Ravenglass on the main line platform who had travelled from Keighley by way of the Settle and Carlisle line and the Cumbrian Coast.

Fortunately they were able to enjoy a journey up the valley by steam, as they were staying at the YHA at Eskdale. I think they thought they had been parachuted on to another planet!

A welcoming meal was held in the Woolpack Inn followed by an evening of socialising.

The following day was the work activity and this consisted of line clearance at the Eskdale end of the line. Work on the track itself was not possible due to the high season summer service.

Under the guidance of Permanent Way Foreman David Moseley the line side was completely cleared of vegetation, and ditches and culverts dug out. Everybody worked really well and David's only complaint was he would have liked them to stop a month!

The evening was spent in the railways Dalegarth Café where a meal was served, and this was followed by the showing of the film "The Titfield Thunderbolt" itself 50 years old, but the participants thought it hilariously funny.

Before work commenced the following day, some of the participants were interviewed live on Radio Cumbria. More work followed at the same location until midday. This also marked my return to the P Way after several years.

The afternoon was spent cruising on Ullswater, the boats belong to the same organisation as the R&ER, unfortunately what should have been a pleasant summer evening cruise, turned into a soaking, but no matter everybody enjoyed themselves and thanks are due to Ullswater Steamers for making the trip possible.

The following day I bade farewell to all the participants as they left to go to the NRM at York, however not before they had looked around the facilities at Ravenglass.



Last evening at York.

I travelled to Scarborough for the final dinner which was held at the North Bay Railway at Scarborough. After a ride on the railway the younger element (not me!) had several rides on the water chute. A big thank you to David Humphreys for all the facilities provided.

After the superb food provided by the North Bay Railway in their Bistro, I had the pleasurable task, along with Sten Erson Wester, of presenting each participant with a Certificate of Attendance.

One final word of thanks to everybody who made this possible, I certainly learnt as much as the young people.

Next year the host country will be Austria

Steve Wood – Fedecrail UK Representative/Chairman HRA MSC/”Ratty” Volunteer.



BULGARIA AUTUMN VISIT

Mid-October 2012 I visited Bulgaria with Stephen Wiggs, Gordon Rushton and Alasdair Stewart of NERHT on a request by our Bulgarian member in Fedecrail. Our hosts left their flat apartments as to let us have accommodation for the week. All the travel costs and lunches were paid by them so that was well organised.

The purpose of the visit was to see certain places and also meet politicians and other authorities for lobbying purposes. Planning was often difficult, the saying of the week was: “We have a new plan- for the five minutes to follow”. Tzanko was glued to his mobile phone but got great results in the end.

Our first visit on the Monday was to the Headquarters of BDZ, the national railway company of Bulgaria. We met there the CEO Mr. Velik Zanchev- and staff responsible for railway heritage. His view was that any rail activities had to pay for themselves, also “fancy train trips” with old trains because the Company was in bad weather financially: it needed to reduce train services, sell rolling stock and make redundancies.



Later that day we went into the depot of the Royal and Government Trains. These can be hired by you, including the sleeper and saloon coaches of Tzar Boris II, but their long term future was uncertain due to the present lack of interest from BDZ to sell it according to the market demand. The policy of the marketing

department of BDZ based on rising prices for hiring the Tzar's train in 2012 gave this as a result.

Next day we went by a minibus of the Transport University, to Septemvri, where the last Bulgarian narrow gauge railway starts its beautiful five-hour journey through three mountain ranges to Dobrinishte. In the town hall we met local Councillors also from other communities along the line. The little train made great losses and the future was dim. With 250 staff and only four trains per day the only hope was the fact that it served literally as a lifeline for small places without road access, causing big problems in the winter. But the politicians hoped we could bring in experience from Western Europe with tourist trains as a way to raise the revenues of the line. We promised to work that out.



Wednesday morning started with a panic- the taxi driver had dropped the other half of our party at the *bus* station and then we missed the *train* to Gorna Oryahovitsa. But luckily there was a non-stop bus service leaving soon after that to Veliko Trnovo- three nerve-wrecking taxi kilometres distance had still to be covered in the shortest possible time but: on four wheels.

We met representatives from the local Council there and also from Elena at the end of a closed standard gauge line which our member would like to see re-opened for tourist trains. The towns there are great tourist destinations so the passenger potential should be very good. One remark we made very urgently: please leave this line untouched right now (the contract for lifting had already been signed...). We wanted time for developing better plans.

On Thursday morning we visited Stephan Stoitschkoff - the railway historian who wrote a huge book on historic Bulgarian railway coaches. While we had an early glass of wine and plates full of salami slices, he showed us collection items out of the 200,000 in his home. His hope was to find funds for the publication of his life work, of which we saw a proof already.

Then we met a private project manager specialised in railways, Mr. Angelou. But although we expected to have an easy afternoon, we suddenly heard that we were expected in Parliament so we hurried away and were indeed received by the Transport Committee of the Bulgarian Parliament.



Gordon Rushton, Simeon Ananiev, (Martins Kreicis), Tzanko Simeonov. Parliament, Sofia.

The members showed real interest and the Chairman literally said this was just the first of our meetings. They hoped we would be prepared to travel over the narrow gauge railway and see it, experience it. We promised that our plan was to go there next day.

I have described the scenic trip in an UPDATE of about two years ago, but I can say that all were convinced of the real tourist potential due to the very pleasant and beautiful landscape, variety, local tourism attractions (the many spa hotels in Velingrad, the skiing in Bansko) and the winding line with a few spiral or return tunnels in its highest parts. At Tsvetino we saw elderly people carrying huge sacks with food on their backs from the train- their lifeline indeed...

Saturday came, the last coffee together. Venelin and Tzanko had a surprise for us. They said the Bulgarian Parliament would send a request to the Government to stop all line closures and lifting until further studies had been carried out about their potential as a tourist attraction. This made us feel very happy and convinced that our volunteer input could change the preservation scene considerably.

We wished our hosts good success. Since then, Gordon Rushton has drafted a report on improving the narrow gauge line with special coaches and services for tourists as a quick and achievable solution. Perhaps we may detail that later, when the Bulgarians have discussed the suggestions.

Livius J. Kooy.



We should like to produce an UPDATE every three months so that the news is still current when it reaches you, but we cannot do this unless we have items to include; so if you have anything which you think may be of interest to other FEDECRAIL members – an item of news, an article about Heritage Railways, a letter expressing your views, or anything else that you think is worth recording – please send it to me for inclusion in the next edition.

Livius J. Kooy / temporary Editor
FEDECRAIL Secretary

E-mail: kooy@fedecrail.org

UPDATE No20
23.12.12