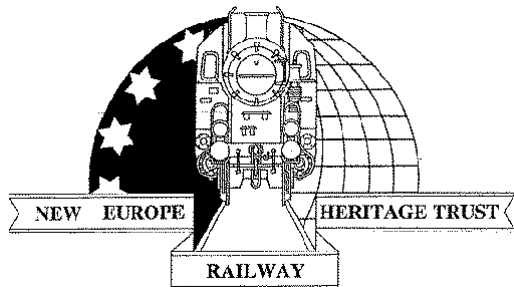


Eastern Star



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helping railway preservation
in the New Europe

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The Borzhava Valley line soldiers on



NERHT has long been interested in this Ukrainian line, whose current situation is described on page 6. This picture by Mike Lister shows TU2-098 running round the daily train at Irshava last September.

NERHT Supports Lviv – Rochdale Links

For some years NERHT consultants have been helping with plans to develop the Znesinnya Railway, the broad gauge goods line running through the Regional Landscape Park in the City of Lviv, as a tourist attraction. Lviv is twinned with the Borough of Rochdale, one of the local authority sponsors of the East Lancashire Railway, a highly successful public-private sector venture. The Znesinnya project too is a public-private sector partnership between the Carpathian Tramway Forum (the enthusiasts' umbrella group) the Znesinnya Park administration and the Lviv Railway (the regional division of Ukrainian State Railways). With all these things in common it seemed logical for us to bring two delegates from the Park Office and the Forum, Oleksandr Zavadovych and Yaroslav Horodchuk, on a fact-finding visit to Rochdale which took place last Autumn. Oleksandr takes up the tale:

Following our arrival in Rochdale we were received by the Mayor and then visited the Museum of Transport in Bury in a converted warehouse. We were very impressed by the Museum and the quality of the restoration work we saw, and quickly became acquainted with the technical heritage of railways in the North West of England. The Museum has on display a large number of perfectly restored exhibits ranging from steam cars and locomotives to cars, buses and fire engines. We were also impressed by the hands-on and educational emphasis at the Museum. On our visit to the East Lancashire Railway the same day we were impressed to learn how the railway is promoted during festivals such as Christmas and Easter and by the facilities for the disabled. All this chimed well with our thoughts about the development of the Znesinnya railway.

We were also glad to attend the 'Thomas the Tank Engine' weekend. The ELR runs restored trains on 19 kilometres of standard gauge (1435mm) railway and was opened in 1864, closed in 1982 and reopened in 1987 as a historic railway. It has 6 stations, locomotive depots and repair shops, 9 locomotives, 140 carriages and wagons all in excellent condition and many fully restored! Abiding memories of our visit to the ELR were of pride in the country's national railway heritage and its truthful interpretation to visitors and the commitment to the project displayed by the large numbers of mostly volunteers who work on a regular basis alongside full time employees.

NERHT would like to thank the Mayor and Council officers of Rochdale, the East Lancashire Railway, the Bury Transport Museum, the Rochdale Ukrainian Club and also the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways (visited later during the tour) all of whom kindly welcomed our Ukrainian friends on their recent visit.

The Romanian Narrow Gauge Today

(Mihai Blotor concludes his survey of the Romanian narrow gauge. The first part, on still-active lines, was published in our last issue).



A 1949-built 0-8-0 tank locomotive preserved at Sighisoara, near Sibiu.

Photo: Frank Cooper

Restoration projects

1. Covasna - Comandău

Opened in stages between 1891 and 1954 and finally closed in 1999, the vast Comandău network stretched for 120 kilometres through deep mountain valleys, at some point even crossing the mountain, which was the Austro-Hungarian border at that time, to meet another forestry line at Nehoiu, in Romania.

Ever since its closure, the Covasna County Council has been seeking to take it over and turn it into a tourist attraction. However bureaucracy and uncertainties related to property rights prevent it to this day from a desperately needed restoration. Meanwhile quite a lot of rolling stock has been bought (steam and diesel locomotives, passenger carriages and timber wagons), although none in working order, a few times each year volunteers are tidying up the depot and clearing the tracks, mostly the unique inclined plane, and there's even a short mini-train (diesel loco-tractor plus several open mini-carriages) that carries tourists for a few kilometres at Covasna, thus keeping the railway alive. Each year for the Days of Comandău Georg Hocevar brings one of his steam locomotives to haul one open carriage on a stretch of line up at Comandău. Sometimes they also carry a load of logs, for the sake of photography.

To my knowledge, their closest thing to a website is a page ('Kommando') on the www.kisvasut.hu website, which is mostly in Hungarian.

2. Abrud - Câmpeni

Hidden deep in the Apuseni mountains, the nearly 10 kilometres of track between Abrud and Câmpeni are at the far end of the Turda - Abrud state railway, closed in 1999.

The entire length is lately subject to a Local Council proposal for tourism development, however Georg Hocevar has maintained and operated sporadic trains since 2004 between Abrud and Câmpeni, usually once a year during the Days of Abrud. There is yet no volunteering organization and works are limited to replacing what has been stolen since the last run, prior to every special train.

Details prior to special trains are displayed on the company's website - www.cfi.ro

3. Sibiu - Agnita

Closed as recently as 2001, Sibiu - Agnita was the last narrow gauge railway operated by the state railway company. Running through the Hârtibaciu valley in the hilly landscape of southern Transylvania, it links the European Capital of Culture 2007, Sibiu, with the Saxon medieval town of Agnita.

Fuelled by the Mayor of Agnita and the Mihai Eminescu Trust, patron HRH Prince of Wales, a timid restoration scheme took off in 2004. Although no major funds have been sourced so far, a handful of volunteers are taking the opportunity to turn the project into a volunteering scheme, based on the proven and successful Welsh model. Since summer 2011 they are helped by a group of British enthusiasts named the SAR UK Supporters Group.

Although four authentic carriages have been saved for a tourist train, they have no locomotive yet, but can offer rides with a bicycle trolley. Their greatest success so far was to celebrate the line's centenary in September 2010 by running a train on 2 kilometres of track at Agnita, using a partially restored carriage and a loaned steam locomotive.

Check out the news on this project at www.sibiuagnitarailway.com

4. Berzasca

Another Mayor-driven project has been submitted for EU funding and aims to rebuild the former forestry line at Berzasca. It will surely make for a wonderful trip, running from the banks of the Danube into the mountains, should it ever happen.

5. Hunedoara - Govăjdia

This industrial line used to carry marble as recently as two years ago. It features incredible viaducts and tunnels, wonderful landscapes while travelling on the forested mountain slopes and a splendid view over the Hunyad castle at Hunedoara. However, the last remaining kilometres of track have been lifted and also many of the viaducts, while all rolling stock is sold or scrapped. A couple of volunteers have convinced the local authorities to come together to rebuild the line as a tourist attraction. Recent news announces that funds have been sourced and rebuilding will start in 2012.

Museums and collections

1. The CFR museum in Bucharest

The only official museum of Romanian railways is located beside the North Station in Bucharest. Although featuring a large collection of equipment and scale models, it was last updated in the 80's and has no real scale rolling

stock. However it is worth paying a visit any day from Wednesday to Sunday between 10 AM - 4 PM, for an entrance fee of only 3 lei.

2. The steam locomotives museum at Sibiu

Inaugurated in 1994, this is more of a collection than a museum, as it was never finished. Some twenty historic steam locomotives, both narrow and standard gauge, including a snow plough and a steam crane are on public display by the turntable in the Sibiu locomotive depot, while many more hide in the back of the depot, waiting for available space for a proper display. This steam enthusiast's heaven can be visited any day from 8 AM to 5 PM at no charge. However don't expect any guidance or information panels.

3. The locomotive collection at Dej

This constantly growing collection of steam, diesel and electric locomotives is certainly worth visiting inside the locomotive depot at Dej. Unique rolling stock such as the first diesel units, the most powerful Romanian steamer and an interesting little electric engine can be seen each day from 8 AM to 5 PM and you can also ask for a guided tour from one of the depot workers, while if you're lucky you might come across Mr. Florin Nan, the mastermind behind the collection.

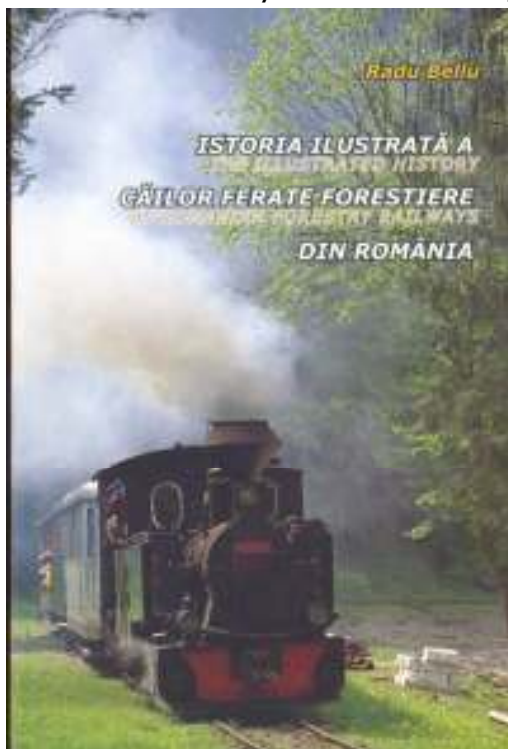
4. The electric train depot at Ghioroc

Filled with ancient train sets, this makes for a peaceful and light visit before leaving the country towards Hungary. Make sure to ask for visiting permission from the public transport company in Arad, so they send somebody to open the gates and guide you around.

Book Review

Radu Bellu, *The Illustrated History of Romanian Forestry Railways*, pp,141 + xxvi, Brasov, Pro Corona, 2007.

This beautifully illustrated large-format hardback is in English and Romanian.



The Brasov local authorities helped to finance it, which partly explains its high production standard. Apart from general introductory chapters, bibliography and glossary, the main part of the book deals with each of the 150-odd lines, province by province. Typically there is for each line an attractive coloured map, enumeration of sections (length, and where appropriate the date and original company). Locomotive stocks are listed, and gauges indicated (there were six gauges ranging from 600mm to 1000mm). Most lines are accorded one or more pictures, some of which are fascinating. For the most part captions are lacking; this seems a pity, for while the subject is usually obvious there are times when some explanation is needed.

Would-be purchasers of this exhaustive study should contact Richard Tapper. The price is £35.00 + p&p.

The Borzhava Valley Railway in September

During a four-day visit to this 750mm gauge line, TU2 098 was in sole charge of the passenger services. Generally the track is in poor condition so speed is limited to 15 km/hr. The engine never seems to go beyond idling!

Each of the branches of the 'Y' shaped railway is single track throughout. Loops and sidings are only provided at the extremities - Beregovo depot, Irshava, Vinogradov - and at the junction station of Hmel'nik.

The only other serviceable locomotive, TU2 034, was in use on track relaying duties near Nyzhnie Remety, between Beregovo depot and Hmel'nik. The rail was being replaced by heavier second-hand rail from the broad gauge. This branch was only used on Tuesdays and Thursdays to exchange the locomotives. All work was being done manually as there was no machinery, apart from a drill. A drasine was available for transporting several personnel, but most had arrived on site by road. Nearly 40 persons were in the track gang!

The passenger service comprised four daily return trains between Hmel'nik and Vinogradov and was well used. The first morning train from Vinogradov continues to Irshava. This single return train operates on five days per week (not Thursdays and Sundays), but only remains at Irshava for a few minutes. Needless to say it is not of any great use, so is lightly loaded. All passenger duties use Pafawag coaches. There is no freight service, but there are many wagons stored at Irshava and some at Hmel'nik. Several of the earlier Russian-built coaches are also stored at Hmel'nik, but these are in very poor condition.

A visit to Beregovo depot revealed a third TU2 class locomotive, TU2 020, residing outside, but minus its engine. Also outside the depot were three TU7A class locomotives, 3278, 3281 and 3282, also devoid of engines, but appearing to be in reasonable condition. The power units were all kept under cover in the depot.

There is talk of the possible revival of the closed section between Pryborzhavs'ke and Irshava. However, a re-opening may prove expensive as floods have washed away a small bridge just west of the former Pryborzhavs'ke station, leaving the rails suspended in mid-air. The proposal is to use the TU8 class locomotive, TU8 0276, that remains out of use on the branch to a building materials plant at Pryborzhavs'ke.

Mike Lister

The First Company of Feeder Railways

(Sergei Dorozhkov concludes the account begun in our last issue. It is hoped to show more photographs in our next issue)

The first locomotives for the First Company were ordered in Belgium. Between 1894 and 1899 St. Léonard supplied 14 class A 0-6-0Ts and 13 class M 0-8-0Ts, which proved very reliable in service.

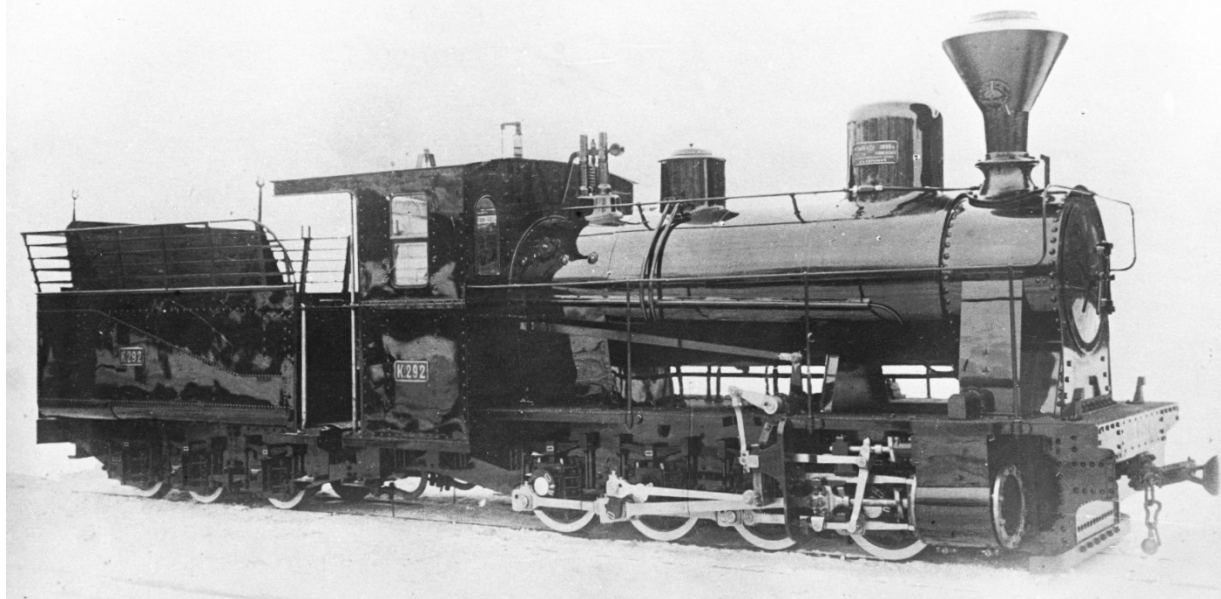
Following rapid expansion of the network it became apparent that tank engines were not suitable for long runs and heavy trains. In 1895 the Technical Department of the First Company designed a tender locomotive with four coupled axles in a rigid outside frame. Externally it looked like a scaled down version of a standard broad gauge engine of the time, but technically was a product of careful thinking and engineering. An order for these engines was placed with Kolomna, which in 1895-97 built 16 locomotives designated as

class R (R.201–16). Class R engines performed well and proved successful in operation. It was, however, noted that they worked satisfactorily with freight trains but were too slow for passenger traffic. In 1897 the First Company ordered further locos of this type from Kolomna but incorporating certain modifications.

The new engines became works type 63 and were designated classes T and K. Their production continued with some changes until 1912, initially for the First Company and then for the Moscow Company of Feeder Railways. The first 32 engines were built in 1897-1898 and assigned to the Southern Division, where they were numbered T.217–248. Later in 1898 Kolomna built 15 engines of class K (K.249–63) and in 1899 a further 31 locomotive (K.264–94). In 1900 three engines were delivered to the Pernov-Reval Division (K.295–97) and five to the Southern Division (K.298–K.302). In 1908 five more locomotives were built, nos. K.303–07, and the last engine of this type was constructed in 1912 (no. K.308).

The First Company used continuous running numbers for all its Kolomna 0-8-0s: R.201–R.216, T.217–T.248, K.249–K.302 and K.303–K.308. The locomotives were constantly transferred from one division of the company to another.

Towards 1910 the traffic on the Pernov-Reval and the Southern Divisions grew to such an extent that standard 0-8-0s became underpowered. With this



K-292, one of the eight-wheelers destined to develop into a standard Soviet design

and the projects for new lines in mind the company engineers together with Kolomna Works began to develop more modern and more powerful locomotives. Following successful trials of a superheated version of a standard 0-8-0 on the lines of the Moscow Company of Feeder Railways in 1911 Kolomna delivered a similar engine for the Southern Division of the First Company where it was presumably numbered K.309. A project for an enlarged version with bogie tender was soon drafted. Simultaneously a superheated 2-8-0 was designed for mixed freight and passenger service. Finally a powerful 0-6-6-0 Mallet in oil and coal-fired versions was offered for handling heavy

traffic on freight-intensive routes. Due to the Great War and 1917 Revolution all projects were suspended. With certain modifications and fitting with Belpaire firebox and a six-wheel tender, the superheated 0-8-0 evolved into the extremely successful Kolomna type 157 of 1928, while the main features of the 2-8-0 formed the basis for the design of the famous Estonian class Sk locomotive of 1931. The Mallet remained only on paper.

The Technical Department of the First Company was also a trendsetter in the development of rolling stock, closely collaborating with manufacturers, the military, and fellow railway engineers. Covered vans, flat and tank wagons and passenger carriages, designed for the lines of the company, quickly spread to most other narrow gauge railways all over the Russian Empire. All stock was bogie and highly standardised. Initially the load capacity of most freight wagons was determined at about 400 *puds* or 6.5 tons which was approximately one half of the capacity of a '*normalny tovarny vagon*' or 'NTV' – standard freight wagon of the Russian broad gauge network. However it soon became apparent that the load could easily be the same as of the NTV, and freight wagons of up to 1000 *puds* (16.4 tons) capacity went into operation.

Coaching stock consisted of two main classes – II and III, while a small number of I/II mixed carriages were also in service. Carriages had metal frames, wooden bodies, candle lighting and hot water heating.

Most rolling stock was delivered by Kolomna, supplemented by other manufacturers as '*Dvigatel*' in Reval and the South-Russian plant in Kiev.

For station facilities the company developed a series of standards, most often a variation of the modernist style, based on the availability of local construction materials. Thus, in Ukraine buildings were usually constructed of stone, while in Estonia wood predominated. All structures, locomotive sheds, workshops and water towers of the station formed a unified architectural ensemble. The bigger passenger buildings were quite fashionable.

The First World War, the 1917 October Revolution and subsequent turmoil brought stagnation, division of the system and closure of the company. All plans were abandoned. Parts of the Sventsyany branch were rebuilt to the broad gauge during the war. The remaining section was later incorporated into the new narrow gauge system built by bourgeois Lithuania. The Pernov-Reval Division, becoming part of the Estonian State Railways (EVR), was considerably extended and modernised. The Southern Division in the territory of Soviet Ukraine was nationalised in 1919 and continued operation under the aegis of MPS but, although several additional branch lines were built, the development was never as rapid as before the Revolution.

The railways in the Baltic region remained in use until the early 1970s, whilst the last section in Ukraine (Podgorodnaya–Gaivoron–Rudnitsa–Kamenka, totaling 232km) is at the time of writing threatened with closure.

It is difficult to compress the more than 100 years' history of the extensive railway system into a short article. Little material has so far come to light on the development of the Southern Division, but a comprehensive account was given of the history of the Pernov-Reval branch and its locomotives (for interested readers the following can be highly recommended: '*The Narrow Gauge Steam Locomotives of Estonia*', Peeter Klaus and Keith Chester, 2005; and '*Narrow-gauge Supply Railways in Estonia 1895-1975*', Mehis Helme, 2010).

(Mehis Helme writes from Estonia that the Estonian Division was second, not third, of the lines, construction starting in March 1895. And regular traffic on the Estonian network did not start in 1897 because the Valga – Pärnu mine line already had regular traffic - two pairs of passenger plus freight trains - from 6 October 1896)

The Naissaar Project

(Barry Worthington concludes his account of this exceptional Baltic line)

The railway that the museum inherited was about 14 km (approximately 8.5 miles) long, though it must be remembered that some of the rest of the track still remains, presumably in state ownership. Two Soviet-era locomotives passed into the museum's ownership. These are TU6A-1930 and TU6A-1904,



Volunteers help clear the line, 2011

Photo Alar Mik

both built at the Kambarka works, and brought to the island in late 1970s for sea-mine and military equipment transportation. One locomotive is in working order, but it is heavy and, because the sleepers are decomposed, it harms the railway every time it is used. There were also five flatcars, which were used for sea-mine transportation (originally there were over twenty flatcars, but metal thieves have destroyed them). In addition, there were various locomotive parts; mostly wheels. There was also an old 159 series steam locomotive mainframe, a survivor of the two steam locomotives which were brought to the island in 1950s, probably originating in Soviet Russia in the 1930s, and another frame made from a former T-54 tank caterpillar tractor, brought to

island in 1958. There was an old ship crane (used to pick up mines) which was attached to a flatcar in 1952. In 1990s this crane was removed from the flatcar and was attached to an MD54-4 locomotive frame (there were four MD54-4 inspection locomotives on the island, but all of them have been destroyed).

In the Autumn of 2010, the Viimsi Rural Municipality together with the Museum inaugurated a restoration project for the railway and its associated context (including topographical land plans, geotechnical research etc) priced at 30 000 Euros. It

is estimated that one kilometre of restored railway will be the equivalent of 63, 911 Euros; the total length of available line thus totalling 894 754 Euros (£778,904).

In Estonian terms, this is a large amount of money. The Municipality and the Museum have considered a range of options, including an application for EU funding, in which

the Rural Municipality contributes 15% of budget, and a similar application involving a private partner, in which the partner obtains an operating franchise in return for its contribution.

In April 2011, the (Viimsi) Coastal Folk Museum applied for funding from the "Small Islands Program". The proposal would have comprised the first stage of the Naissaar railway restoration project, and included restoration of the line from harbour (the ferry terminal) to the main point of junction, and from there to the island's southern part. Unfortunately this application did not obtain any funding. At the same time, the Municipality applied for funding to the 'Interreg Programme', which relates to projects intended to promote small islands and their speciality. In this application, funding was requested for compiling full restoration documentation (land measuring, mapping work, restoration project drawings etc.). This application has passed the first stage of technical evaluation and is waiting for the second evaluation round. It is possible that the harbour will be renovated in 2012 by a government contractor, and the Museum is offering to co-operate in the establishment of a tourist information centre and gift shop on the island. The Museum also wants to lease the Nature Parks Center building, together with its cabins, from the state (if funding is available for an administrator). If this all happens, the Coastal Folk Museum will be able to offer a full tourist service and obtain a much needed income. However, in the meantime, work goes on and the Museum has organised voluntary work sessions on the railway. In May a work gang of students engaged in track clearance, disposing of bushes and trees. Last year the same was done. More recently, there was a regatta to Naissaar island. All the



A TU6A locomotive out of use

Photo Alar Mik

participants spent some time in voluntarily working on the railway; sleepers were changed and more track clearance took place.

And so Naissaar and its railway stand upon the cusp of realising its true tourism potential; as a daytrip destination for visitors to Tallinn; a recreational amenity for the inhabitants of Greater Tallinn; a music festival venue; a haven for nature lovers; and, of course, the first port of call for railway enthusiasts arriving in Estonia. However, to realise these objectives, the supporters of the project will need a great deal of help. Firstly, they need professional administrative and technical help and assistance in defining and documenting the restoration project; everyone from civil engineers to draughtsmen. Secondly, a secure base where locomotives and rolling stock can be housed, maintained, and restored, is of particular importance. Thirdly, an operational steam locomotive would instantly raise the profile of the project, but such engines are like gold dust in the Baltics. Surely there are surplus locomotives elsewhere in Europe that correspond to this gauge, or could be converted? Fourthly, some passenger coaches would help to attract more visitors. Fifthly, an injection of cash is urgently needed, either from grant awarding bodies, commercial sponsorship, or generous benefactors. Last (but not least) wider involvement by overseas enthusiasts as volunteers would no doubt be welcomed. The island is not in the middle of nowhere, but adjacent to a fascinating capital city with all the holiday amenities that one might wish for.

(The author acknowledges the help of Alar Mik of the Coastal Folk Museum Museum for assistance with this article)

Book Review: Paul Engelbert, *Schmalspurig durch Ungarn II: die ehemals ungarischen Gebiete*, published by Stenvalls (ISBN: 978-91-7266-177-6)

This is the second volume of Paul Engelbert's work on Hungarian narrow gauge railways, and deals with lines built in those areas which formed part of the Kingdom of Hungary until the Treaty of Trianon took effect in 1920 (under which Hungary lost approximately three-quarters of her land area) but which now form part of neighbouring countries to the present-day Hungary. It must be noted from the outset that a reasonably good knowledge of German is necessary to get the most from this and the preceding volume.

Paul Engelbert starts his work with a short summary of the Kingdom, followed by a general over-view of the reasons for and the development of the Hungarian narrow gauge railway system in what were the outlying areas of the Kingdom. He then proceeds from modern-day country to country; giving for each one an account of the construction there as a whole and then going on to deal with each line, its history, changes of ownership and final fate; together with a list of all the locomotives which operated there. The book is richly illustrated with photographs and maps and gives a wonderful picture of what these lines were like in their heyday.

After reading through the book this reviewer was left with a sense of sadness that so many of the lines are no more, closed down at a time when the preservation scene in Great Britain and elsewhere was already entering its third decade. It would appear that the idea of preserving lines like these - or even parts of them - as items of historical importance was alien to the

Communist mentality, which saw anything built prior to their taking power as unworthy of attention or preservation; and that this mentality does still exist in some of the former Eastern Bloc countries - how else can one regard the situation where a body set up to bring some stretches of narrow gauge railways back into service as tourism railways did nothing at all to achieve this but instead sold most of the remaining rolling stock on the lines for scrap?

Thankfully some of the lines are still in daily use and private initiatives are attempting to preserve and restore parts of others. It is to be hoped that some parts of a network which totalled over 600km at its peak can be rescued from oblivion, and that this excellent book will not be a memorial to a once-flourishing transport system which finally succumbed to politics, apathy and the road transport lobby.

Jonathan Sutton

BULGARIAN GUESTS TO SPEAK AT NERHT 2012 AGM

Our AGM this year will take place on Saturday 28 April at the Model Railway Club, Keen House. 4 Calshot Street. London NW1 9DA (near King's Cross Station) starting at 2.00 p.m. At 3.00 p.m. after the formal business Tzanko Simeonov of the Union of Bulgarian Train Modellers (the Bulgarian railway heritage federation) will give an illustrated talk on the theme of 'Preserving Bulgaria's Railway Heritage.' All who are interested are welcome to attend.

* * * * *

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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