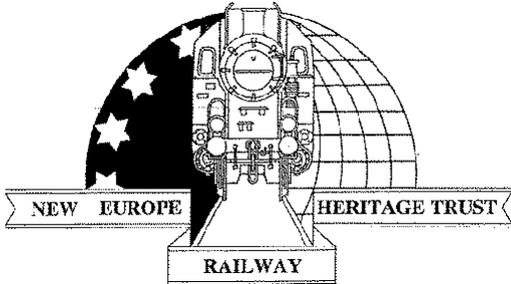


# Eastern Star



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## Russian Preservationists Get Together



No VP-4 1425 restored to working order, on view at Ekaterinburg in February

It will be particularly gratifying to our members to learn of the All-Russia Forum which met recently in Ekaterinburg, because it was a wish to help Russian preservation in the early post-soviet years that gave birth to the UK group that later became NERHT. Since that time the pioneer Pereslavl' enterprise has survived and developed, in often

very difficult social and economic circumstances, and has been joined by several promising newcomers.

The Forum, described in the following article, took place in the Urals rather than in the Moscow or St Petersburg areas. In the Sverdlovsk region and its capital Ekaterinburg, in recent years, meaningful resources have been put into railway preservation and it is good that in such a vast country historic assets are well distributed. The Forum was devoted to the narrow gauge (broad gauge assets tend to be handled less by informal groups and more by institutions, which probably helps to concentrate minds).

## All-Russia Forum on Narrow Gauge Preservation

The first All-Russia Forum on Narrow Gauge Preservation was held in Ekaterinburg on 5-6 November, hosted by the Sverdlovsk Railway. The idea had begun to hatch several years ago when a young team of Ekaterinburg railwaymen and railway enthusiasts ventured into creating a working narrow gauge museum at the grounds of the Sverdlovsk children's railway. As the project received support from the management of the Sverdlovsk Railway, good progress was gained. A most representative collection of rolling stock was soon assembled and several steam locomotives were saved from plinths around Russia, including an ancient vertical-boiler Cockerill from Volgograd and P24 0-8-0 from Moscow, the only survivor of the Kolomna trial 1941 batch, which later matured into the world-famous PT-4 0-8-0s.

Following some achievements, collaboration began between Ekaterinburg and other preservation societies in Russia. 'Eastern Star' readers may recall expeditions to the Ural mountains and Siberian woods in search of railway relics, organised by Ekaterinburg in partnership with St.Petersburg and Pereslavl teams. Following this, in 2016 it was decided that the time had come for a major public event.

The conference was aimed at bringing together preservationists from different parts of the country, unifying efforts and promoting cooperation in saving railway relics, exchanging

experience in restoration, organising expeditions and working out common approaches in relations with public and official boards. Most key persons of the narrow gauge movement and steam preservation scene were invited, including delegates from private societies, state-owned museums, railfan organisations, tourist lines and Russian Railways.



The Forum (*pictured above*) was chaired by Evgeniy Zdrovenko, the Head of the centre of technical information, libraries and museums of the Sverdlovsk Railway. High railway officials were present and delivered reports, including Ivan Kolesnikov, the Deputy Head of the Sverdlovsk railway for economics, finance and corporate coordination; Alexey Pidyashov, the Chief Engineer of the Sverdlovsk Railway and others. The session was held in the newly opened educational centre of the Sverdlovsk children's railway, which provided a most homelike atmosphere.

The full two-day programme included a special steam train on the children's railway, headed by ex-Mansfeld O&K 0-8-0 no.9 (*below*), some sightseeing and a trip to the Alapayevsk narrow gauge line, where a diesel train took the participants 26 kms to Verkhnyaya Sinyachiha, an ancient centre of the metallurgical industry.



In Ekaterinburg, the participants had an opportunity to examine the first-restored items of the new narrow gauge museum. Star exhibits were Votkinsk VP-4-1425 0-8-0 steam engine of 1956, saved in 2014 from an abandoned plinth in the Moscow area and now restored to full working order, and a workshop wagon of 1952, which has a separate interesting history. At the session, news and experiences were reported from various parts of

the country. Many participants commented that railway preservation in recent years received more and more support from both state and public, and everybody expressed a will for developing collaboration. Problematics were also discussed, such as the absence of a proper legal field for exploitation of steam locomotives and narrow gauge tourist trains, uncertainty with the current status of monuments of technical history and other similar subjects. Official part over, discussions vividly continued at the evening banquet. Some delegates remained for the third day, when discussion moved to the workshops, with primary attention paid to technical matters, restoration practices, and, of course, steam boiler questions. Some sketches for the 2017 expedition and rescue plans were also made.

The Forum turned out to be a comfortable platform to meet personally and share ideas, and as a preliminary it was decided to make it an annual event.

Evgeniy Zdrovenko  
Sergei Dorozhkov

## Elsewhere in Russia

**New passenger line.** Sharya Forest Museum Railway opened for passengers in 2016 . This is part of the forestry museum and consists of a circular layout, with passengers hauled in a single coach by a diesel locomotive. Details of the forestry museum can be found on Wikipedia.

**Pereslavl'.** Sergei Dorozhkov writes that despite various delays to the summer's projects, time has been made up. Notably a water column has been finally assembled. The October visiting figures were very close to those of the last year, thereby proving they are more related to weather than to economic or public reasons. Final event for the year was to come on November's first weekend, with public holidays for three days, (the former anniversary of the October revolution, and 'now marked as a very strange "Day of people's unity"'. The results of these three days would determine results, but there seemed no reasons to complain.

There has also been a restoration programme for a specialised wagon, which soon turned into a massive, even international, project. We expect to report on this in the next issue of *Eastern Star*.

## Ukraine

Ukraine Railways recently issued an order to its subordinate divisions seeking to ensure the preservation of vintage equipment, and notably locomotives, in the interests of a future museum. This order seems to have brought some kind of organisation into railway preservation. However, citing previous experience, the Ukraine railway preservation group AZIZU is very wary, and has asked for NERHT support. NERHT has expressed its interest, in conjunction with Fedecrail, and is keeping an eye on the situation.

AZIZU meanwhile has received little response to its request for the transfer to it of workshop facilities at the former steam depots of Tsvetkovo (Tsvitkove) and Tshors. The appeal of Tsvetkovo becomes clear from the following background prepared by AZIZU:

Tsvitkove (Russian spelling – Tsvetkovo) is a municipality and railway junction known as Sloboda until 1961. Station and settlement are named after Mitrophan Tsvitkov, a local landowner who owned surrounding land. Construction of the railway line between Znam'yanka and Fastiv through Tsvitkove was finished in 1876. That year the station building, small locomotive depot and four residential buildings were erected too. Despite usage of heavy and powerful steam engines of FD (2-10-2) and IS (2-8-4) classes in Soviet times which used repair and maintenance facilities in Shevchenko depot, Tsvitkove depot was still used for the repair and maintenance of steam engines like the Su (2-6-2) and E (0-10-0) classes. It had all necessary facilities for full scale repairs of intermediate class steam engines, including repairs of wheel sets. During World War 2 Tsvitkove depot and railway station were heavily destroyed because of fighting which took place in the area in 1941-1944 between German and Russian armies. Also it is necessary to mention that Tsvitkove depot facilities were used intensively by the German Army because most weapons and ammunition for the front lines passed from Romania through Odessa Region lines. German military engineers decided even to enlarge Tsvitkove shed area by building an additional block. It is still standing over there and could be used for AZIZU steam engines repairs and maintenance. After WW2 Tsvitkove depot and station were repaired and returned back into use for repairs of various classes of steam engines. Depot water and coaling facilities were also used for steam engines. After electrification of the Znam'yanka-Fastiv line Tsvitkove depot was transformed into place for repairs and storage of reserved steam engines of all classes which were used within the Odessa regional railway division

and of other equipment. Since independence and because of lack of freight traffic, it now serves as storage for electric engines of different classes.

Tsvitkove depot is interesting for AZIZU in many ways. First of all it is old depot which contains everything (machinery, cranes, rails etc) which came to us from the early 1950s and sometimes even from the 1940s. It is the steam locomotive era in a frozen state. Also its manpower is unique because only two depots in Ukraine (Tsvitkove and Tshors depots) can provide professional repairs and maintenance on steam engines. But only one,



Tsvitkove, depot can do full-scale repairs on steam engines including wheelset repairs. It is a mini-Meiningen. Also, it has the necessary facilities for steam locomotive supply of water and coal. Few old buildings still exist on the territory of the station and they were constructed at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Unfortunately the main station building was demolished by order of the Railway Minister a decade ago.

The rectangular locomotive depot (*above*) was erected in 1929. Four steam engines can be stored here. There are two pit tracks and additional equipment for wheel set dropping and lifting. An additional rectangular depot building was added by German engineers to the locomotive depot during WW2. It had three sheds capable of storing nine steam engines. But at the end of the German occupation this new building was destroyed so heavily that only walls without windows, rails and inspection pits survived.

Within the last three years AZIZU has applied many times to the different Ukraine Railways official structures with the proposal to give this building long-term status for an active facility for historical engines. But no answer has yet been received. According to AZIZU's plans this building could receive a new lightweight roof to provide a better shelter for historical steam engines.



Under temporary roofing. AZIZU's Su 2-6-2 under restoration at the Tsvetkovo facility a few years ago.\_

Photo Ivor Harding

## Donetsk Railway Museum

The new director of the Museum, succeeding the late Vladimir Donchenko, is Boris Litvinenko. The Museum exhibits themselves are in good order but for the time being, according to Vladimir's widow (who still works at the Museum), it is closed to the public. It makes an exception for Donetsk Railway university student visits.

### Obituaries

#### Vladimir Donchenko, Director of Donetsk Railway Museum

I was very sorry to learn of Vladimir's (Vlad's) death in the September Eastern Star and asked the Editor if I might contribute my memories of working with him when, in 2005, he asked Stephen Wiggs (SW) for museum guidance from NERHT.

I first met Vlad when SW brought him to York on 31 March 2005 to see the NRM where I had been Deputy Head and Project Development Director. Vlad was in England to deliver a lecture about the Donetsk Railway Museum at NERHT AGM in London on 02 April and I attended that too.

SW asked me to accompany him on a visit to the Donetsk Railway Museum Project which we made from 26 September to 01 October. Vlad met us at the station, took us to the Ukraine Railways Donetskyia Division Guest House, showed us a pair of sumptuous guest rooms, and proposed a Project meeting. I was keen to discover what sort of advice Vlad needed, or wanted, and at what level of the Railway hierarchy we were working.

I soon learned that we were working for Chief Lukhanin – CEO of the Donetskyia Division – who was, incidentally, an ardent stamp collector. Vlad who had trained as a rocket scientist was also a stamp collector and had first met Chief Lukhanin at a collectors' stamp market; they got on well so Vlad was appointed to direct the Chief's Railway Museum at Donetsk. Although Vlad spoke no English SW initially, and then several excellent translators ensured that Vlad could explain his ideas to us and I learned what had been achieved when we visited the Museum. I knew that Donetsk was originally called Hugheskova, a Welsh enterprise in Imperial Russia; the Tsar wanted an integrated iron & steel works and John Hughes from Merthyr Tydfil was persuaded to create a Government-sponsored works, collieries and town in the Ukraine. I suggested, from my UK museum experience and

contacts, that we could build on the Welsh connection and the idea of a museum celebrating railway development and progress in the Donetsk area began to grow and was welcomed by Vlad and Chief Lukhanin.

On the way back to the UK via Kiev SW arranged meetings at the British Embassy and the British Council who also had an office in Donetsk. The Ambassador and the senior BC officer were very interested in this potential development so, as soon as I was home I began to discuss ideas with National Museum of Wales. If Vlad could go to the top we could do the same for him in the UK.

My next visit to Donetsk was from 11 – 19 March and support from National Museum of Wales enabled Steph Mastoris, Head of National waterfront Museum, Swansea to join me and significantly contribute to our visits and meetings in and around Donetsk. I had suggested to Vlad that an opportunity to see a little of railway operation would be helpful so we had the use of the Chief's Inspection Saloon for the day and travelled to Yasinovata Station. More meetings, assisted by British Council, and with Chief Lukhahnin seemed to imply that the Project was likely to succeed and I arranged a visit to the UK for Igor, a Deputy Director of the Donetskyia Railway Division, Vlad and Galina as translator.



Chief's saloon – L to R: Igor Bielousov; Galina Gubraev; Steh Mastoris; Vlad

They came from Monday 05 June to Thursday 08 June 2006 and my (privatised!) railway

connections ensured guest tickets on GNER (as it was then) to London and First Great Western Railway to and from London / Swansea. We visited Shildon, Buckingham Palace, Merthyr Tydfil, Pwll Mawr (Big Pit) Mining Museum at Blaenavon and Steph's Museum in Swansea.

Alas, the Donetsk Project gradually began to suffer the East / West or Europe / Russia conflicts we were aware of in language differences, for instance, when we were planning in Donetsk. More recently the Russia v Ukraine conflict became very serious and *Eastern Star* reported shell damage to Vlad's museum in 2014.

I enjoyed the privilege of Vlad's company, the excitement and goodwill we generated in Donetsk.

Rob Shorland Ball

## IVOR HARDING 1943-2016

As 2016 drew to a close we were saddened to hear of the passing of another loyal supporter of railway preservation in the New Europe, Ivor Harding, who died on 17 November. Years ago when we in NERHT started contacting preservation groups in the East we found that some of them were already being helped by individual expatriates and other well-wishers from Britain and Western Europe who subsequently became our partners. One of these early pioneers was Ivor who, after a career in the rail industry in Britain and elsewhere, met his wife Raisa on a railway holiday in Ukraine where he settled and became an active supporter of AZIZU, the Ukrainian railway heritage association. Ivor acted as unofficial ambassador for AZIZU and worked hard with NERHT to overcome bureaucratic obstacles to enable Ukrainian delegates to travel abroad to Fedecrail and NERHT events where Raisa sometimes acted as interpreter. Apart from their grief at the loss of a dear friend the leaders of AZIZU are concerned that Ivor's death has deprived them of his support, and we in NERHT have promised to do what we can to continue his good work. In the meantime our deepest sympathy goes to Raisa and to Ivor's family.

## Czech Republic

The *Velocipede Newsletter* No 76 (freely available on-line) is devoted to the Muzeum Dresin Cachrov collection of manual track vehicles, including intriguing exhibits known as the *Walking Car* of 1825 and the *Rowboat* of 1888.

## Croatia

To mark his retirement as its Secretary, Fedecrail presented Livius Kooy with an Interrail Pass, from which he extracted a high mileage, including sectors in south-eastern Europe. He has composed an illustrated and lively travelogue of his experiences which is expected to be published elsewhere. Among many other things, he met Tamara Stefanac, Croatian Railway Museum Director, who expressed a wish for closer contacts. The Museum seems to have eleven sub-locations and is short of funds. Livius describes the collection as good but needing care. Although restored items are inside the Museum, from his pictures a tender locomotive, two tank locomotives and an electric locomotive can be made out, all in the open air and with only basic protection from the elements.

## Estonia

The modest but longstanding Lavassaare Railway museum is seeking donations to enable its steam locomotive to return to active service. Replacing boiler tubes is the main task. The Museum badly needs an operating steam locomotive to attract public interest. Currently both funds and visitor numbers are very low, and the hoped-for move to the town of Tun will not take place. The Museum can be contacted by e-mail: [museumrail@suhtlus.ee](mailto:museumrail@suhtlus.ee)

## Steam on the Romanian Narrow Gauge



In our past issues we have followed developments on the Sibiu – Agnita and the Covasna lines. It is good to report that two other Romanian lines are still active. These are the Viseu de Sus and the Moldovita lines. Here No 764.449 is seen near Botiza on the Viseu de Sus line.

Our member Dave Whitfield, who took the photos on visits in October, writes that often there are two tourist trains per day in addition to charter

specials, meaning there can be three (perhaps four) engines in steam on a good day. The track appeared better too. There is a big daily timber train, diesel-hauled, which usually arrives at the mill mid-afternoon.

The Moldovita line is also kept busy, and has a passenger timetable. It generally uses two steam locomotives. The line runs for about 5 miles almost entirely roadside with some street running in Moldovita itself. The photo below shows No 764.404R at work.



## Lithuania

*Tony Olsson writes:* Following the investigation (see *Eastern Star* Nos 60, 62 and 63) to establish if Krauss Maffei loco 6968 now operating as 764-247 on the Covasna Comandau Forestry Railway in Romania had been used by the German Army in Lithuania during WW1, another Romanian loco has appeared on the ASG Siaurukas line.

This time, its appearance in Lithuania is not hidden in the mists of time, but it was one of two steam locos (the other being *Ferdinands* owned by the Lavassaare Museum Railway, but currently being used by the Banitis railway in Latvia) to provide steam motive power for the XXVIth International Feldbahn meeting based in Panevėžys between 5 and 9 October 2016. Locomotive 764-431 was built by the Resita Locomotive Works in Romania in 1954. At present it is owned by Georg Hocevar and



usually operates on what remains of the Mocănița Huțulca line in Moldovița. The photo taken by Robert Pettitt shows 764-431 *Bucovina* with the iconic and very long footbridge over the tracks at Panevėžys. During my early visits to this station, nobody used it – passengers and shoppers between the housing estates and the city shops wandered over the tracks at will. Now, as at other locations throughout the Baltic States since they became part of the EU, fences have been erected forcing people to use the bridges and underpasses.

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Elsewhere, north of Panevezys, TY2 locomotives are still languishing, but there are hopes of better days to come. Robert Pettitt's pictures show TY2-051 at Biržai, and TY2-090 at Joniškėlis



**Fedecrail Youth Camp.** Diana Nita from Romania, one of the participants sponsored by NERHT, has sent us an appreciative account and picture:



*Fedecrail Youth Camp for me was the first opportunity to leave Romania. The first two days of camp were very strange because I did not know participants and others had not been put into situation to speak only English before. Saturday,*

*on the second day I went to the museum of steam locomotives Neuenmarkt-Wirsberg where we started with a wooden wagon. Sunday we were visiting a tourist railway line where we had the opportunity to go in the locomotive. Monday we helped scan drawings of cars. Tuesday we continued working on the wagon. Wednesday we were in Nuremberg where we visited the museum of transport and communications and tram museum. Thursday and Friday we continued work on the car and we completed its rehabilitation. Saturday we had a walk through the woods to the nearest town and we returned by train. In the evening we returned to the museum where we held the official closure of the camp. In this camp we had the opportunity to make many new friends, learn more about trains, I could find out what other participants have found as solutions to problems.*

(Another account, by a Ukrainian participant, will appear in our next issue)

**AGM:** the NERHT annual general meeting will be on Saturday May 20 at 2 p.m.. It will be at the usual venue offered by the Model Railway Club near Kings Cross. After the formal proceedings there will be a talk by Tzanko Simeonov about historic trams in Bulgaria and the Balkans.

**Correction:** the photos that illustrated, so well, our article on Georgia in the last issue were by Andris Biedrins, and not as stated. We apologise for this mishap.

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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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