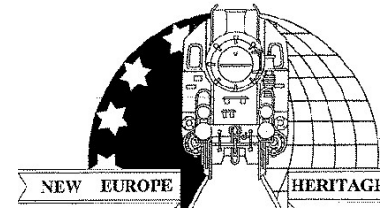


Eastern Star



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

Our 2019 Annual General Meeting



The Korostiv narrow gauge project in Ukraine receives future motive power (see p.4). NERHT has long had an interest in this enterprise and its steady progress.

*Photo
Maksym Slobodian*

As in previous years, the Model Railway Club in London provided a location for the AGM, and we are grateful for this help.

Our Chairman's report follows overleaf.

Annual Report 2018-2019

Over the past 12 months the leaders of NERHT have continued to pursue our objective of helping railway preservation in our area of benefit, that is, the former USSR and the ex-Communist states of Eastern and Central Europe, working with our long-established partners and with new contacts. As always, we have made visits to railway sites in the New Europe - as it is known - and have received guests from the East on work experience and study tours.



In 2013, when this picture was made, *Siaurukas* was entering a period of unpredictability, from which it now appears to be emerging.

Photo

Tony Olsson

On our expedition to Lithuania last June we re-established links with Siaurukas, the country's last surviving narrow gauge line, and met politicians, officials and others who are making plans for the future of this attractive line. In July we went to Ukraine, where we visited several lines and took part in a conference in Lviv where we met representatives of Line 102, following which we visited Poland in October and had discussions with the leaders of this interesting cross-border project, which has been mentioned in recent issues of Eastern Star.

Some of our friends from the active Russian narrow gauge scene came to Britain twice in 2018, and we were pleased to host a large group in September who visited some of the Welsh narrow gauge lines. As well as activists from the Pereslavl Narrow Gauge Railway Museum, the delegation included those concerned with developing the Alapayevsk narrow gauge railway for tourism and with the Ekaterinburg narrow gauge railway museum, who were glad to see railway preservation in the places where it began.

Our network of contacts continues to grow, and our more recent links include the Croatian railway museum whose director is with us. Other new links include the Kosovo railway museum - which we hope to visit soon - and through our links there we have been approached from Albania where a surviving steam engine and other items are being preserved.

International co-operation often involves travel, and in 2018 we were pleased to make grants from the Jonathan Sutton Memorial Fund to a number of young people to enable them to attend the Fedecrail youth camp, a highly commendable venture which has become an

established feature in the railway preservation calendar. Fedecrail is perhaps our main partner, or rather maybe our parent body, but it is only one of a long list of organisations with which we co-operate, both in the field of railway preservation and otherwise. One ambitious venture which we are supporting is an application under the Danube Transnational Programme (one of the Interreg programmes) for European funds to promote co-operation and the exchange of know-how between historic narrow gauge railways in the Danube region.



An early example of railway preservation in Albania: a Polish-built tank locomotive on display. (see p.9)

Photo Mira Mansaku

As always, railway preservation is challenging, and this is no more true than in Eastern Europe. Obviously our friends there face problems which would daunt activists in the West, yet it has to be said that these are sometimes exacerbated by disputes and by situations in which different groups work separately - and indeed sometimes in competition- rather than co-operating. Of course similar issues arise in Britain! Despite our best efforts we in NERHT have our share of disappointments, and in the past year our plans to bring guests to Britain from Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Ukraine in 2019 have not yet come to fruition, but we hope that we will be able to welcome these groups before long.

It must be remembered that NERHT is a small charity, so we owe an immense debt of gratitude to a large number of organisations and individuals without whom our work would not be possible, as well as to our own consultants and members. On behalf of the Committee I should like to thank everyone who has helped us over the past year for all the support and assistance which we have received.

Stephen Wiggs

Chairman, NERHT

The formal proceedings were followed by an illustrated talk by Tamara Stefanac, Director of the Croatian Railway Museum in Zagreb. This aroused a good deal of interest, and for the benefit of those members unable to attend we hope to publish a full report of it in our next issue.

Ukraine

Eastern Star has over the years reported the steady progress of the Korostiv narrow-gauge project (working-parties should be restarting there in mid-July). A recent landmark has been the acquisition of a diesel locomotive which, in due course, is to haul tourist trains. This is No Tu8-0472, which formerly served a now-closed factory at Maidan Vyla. These photos by Maksym Slobodian show (top three pictures) its transfer from the factory to the project's depot at Antonivka, where it awaits its turn for a thorough restoration (bottom picture).



Donetsk Railway Museum: A local correspondent informs us that the exhibits damaged by Ukrainian missiles in the course of military activities in the current crisis have now been restored and the museum is slowly returning to normal functions. For example, there was recently a group visit by World War 2 veterans. Further damage is not considered likely, as although there are sporadic missile attacks that make the life of those living in the outer areas somewhat uncomfortable, and bombs are sometimes planted in the city, the museum itself is not located in a sensitive area.



In happier times; an Su type 2-6-2 in the Donetsk museum just before hostilities broke out.

Poland/Ukraine

Line 102

This group, intent on re-instituting cross-frontier border services in the interest of tourism among other things, was described in our last issue. It has now received a big boost from an external source. This was the result of success in a competition for funds from a Poland-Belarus-Ukraine programme which recognised its 'soft' contribution to tourism, based on the popularisation of tourist sites linked with the first Hungarian-Galician railway.

NERHT was not involved with this matter until a late stage, but hopes that its support of the application (together with Fedecrail) may have contributed to this successful outcome.

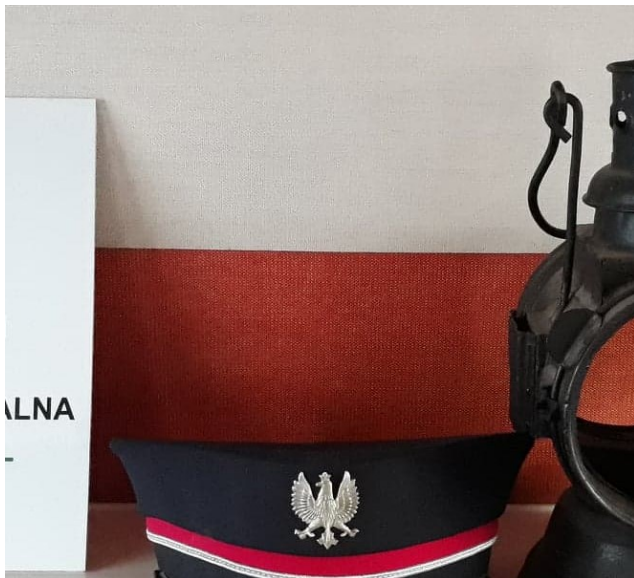
Meanwhile, here is a Soviet-era reminiscence of the line by one of our members:

I was part of a rail enthusiast group that visited Poland in August/September 1986. Some of the party, me included, formed a splinter group with the intention of travelling on Line 102 and thus enjoying a visa-less visit to the Soviet Union. The party was based in Krosno for a few days but we left them at Rozwadow on this occasion. We found that we could travel on the 11.52 to Przeworsk, thence on the 14.10 to Przemysl, with a train

through the corridor leaving Przemyśl at 15.40 to Zagorz and then on a late evening train from Zagorz at 20.15 back to Krosno, rejoining the main party there. Realising that sustenance would be required, we raided the local market in Rozwadow, obtaining bread, cheese, some chocolate and a quantity of mineral water. Rozwadow was busy and we saw examples of classes Ol49, Pt47, and Ty2 before our train left hauled by Ty2-776, one of the Kreigslok 52 class common in Poland. Przeworsk was equally steamy with more examples of Ty2s and an Ol49 present but our onward train to Przemyśl was hauled by BB electric ET22-335. The train was described as an express but stopped at all stations. Nevertheless, with hard acceleration and quick stops quite creditable running times were achieved.

From Przemyśl the corridor train was hauled by CoCo DE ST43-56, built in Romania and consisted of just three coaches. Soon after Malhowice we saw the Russian border marked by a barbed wire fence and a gate across the track barred our forward progress. Two Russian soldiers and an officer boarded the train. The squaddies propped themselves in the end doors, resting on special brackets that allowed them to lean out without falling out, and they also wore safety glasses; after all, someone might want to defect..... They were distinctly shabby but the officer was very smartly dressed indeed. The drill was that all non-Polish travellers had their details recorded on a sheet of paper and the train guard arrived, brandishing a clip-board accompanied by the army officer. They were somewhat taken aback at the sight of a party of Brits and passports were studied in some detail but there was no real hassle. However, shortly after these formalities were completed the officer returned and asked for my passport in extremely good English. He took it away and I had brief nightmares of frozen Siberian wastes but need not have worried. He, and one of the squaddies thumbed through it and it was returned shortly after. Upon reflection, I suspect that they had never seen anything like it before: I had been travelling widely both on business and pleasure at that time and my passport had stamps from several south American countries, Australia, India, and for numerous European countries and it was well filled with visas and so on.

Soon after crossing the border, indeed at the border itself, we were joined by a 5'-0" gauge track and the track onwards to Chierow (aka Kirov) was gauntleted. Chierow is the only sizeable settlement on the line and there was a triangle here with the broad gauge going off into Russia proper. Beyond Chierow, our line was standard gauge only. There was a small steam loco depot at Chierow but all we spotted was TE-8028, another of the 52 class kreigsloks but with a peculiar number well outside the normal range. It seems that locos in the 8000 series were assembled from several war-damaged locos and were thus numbered in a new series.



Relics of Line 102, destined for its museum

The line passed through largely agricultural country and the next excitement was crossing back into Poland. Note that we had travelled non-stop through the USSR and our arrival at Kroscienko was very early. We had to wait some time for our train to depart. Meanwhile 2-8-2T Tkt48-19 arrived to take a later departure but had we caught this train we would not have made our connection in Zagorz. Thus we continued with the diesel as far as Zagorz. There was more to see in Zagorz with examples of Ty2 and Tkt48 locos in evidence and our onward train was hauled by Tkt48-91. Our train consisted of 7 coaches, quite a good load for a 2-8-2T but the loco did not seem unduly pushed by this load. We arrived back at the Hotel Nafta in Krosno in high spirits having achieved all we had planned for our excursion. Unfortunately, I have no photos of this day's outing, prudence suggesting that any attempt at photography would have been swiftly followed by a visit to the local fuzz, an experience familiar to the author of these notes!

James Ballantyne

Kosovo

Further to the mention of the European Stations Association in our last issue, we have now received a more detailed survey by its prime mover, Nata Zivanovic. We are grateful to our member David Gowan for this translation from the Serbian original.

HOW CAN THE 'EUROPEAN STATIONS' ASSOCIATION CONTRIBUTE TO THE RECONCILIATION OF SOCIETY IN THE WESTERN BALKANS?

Where there is desire there is good will, and where there is a will for cooperation between people, a campaign will start! In this way begins cooperation and contact between people with similar and identical interests. How can we make connections unless we have the desire to see something, to get to know new people and to acquire new experiences? But, how do we link up? Easily - by train, bus, boat, ship or aeroplane. Thanks to the initiative undertaken by the German Chancellor Angela Merkel in 2015 with the aim of reconciling the societies of the Western Balkans, new multi-action plans have emerged, as have new enthusiasts looking for points of contact and regional links. In this context, 'European Station' is one more association with the aim of action and of "making a contribution in its own way."

After ten years of working in the Centre for International Affairs of Serbian Railways, and having heard various proposals, models, schemes and processes, I conceived the idea to found an association 'European Station,' and achieved this last year. My aim is to establish railway museums as points of contact and meeting places for young people, and which can serve as bases for a future through dialogue and cooperation. I chose the title 'European' as the Western Balkans belong geographically to Europe, and 'station' as we are all travellers. Stations are significant in our lives, because they are the places where we meet and take leave of each other. The first initiative of creating a link with the aim of reconciliation of society in the region was realised by means of a joint funding project by the Railway Museum of Kosovo at the end of 2018. We received the first models of 'trains of friendship' from the association 'Europe Station' and from the German Railways (DB), railway uniforms from the Slovenian Railways and a railway lamp from the Croatian Railway Museum. The Railway Museum of Kosovo is composed of a representative technical collection with a single steam locomotive of the 01-043 series. It is unique because it was initiated and created by workers through their persistence and desire to preserve the railway heritage for future generations. Through their good will a door has

been opened for co-operation, creating the opportunity to hear interesting reminiscences of old railwaymen. One of the most fascinating of these retired railwaymen is Mehdi Berisa, who is one of the founders of the museum and who today plays an active role and supports the work of the museum. One ambition of the top management of the railway infrastructure 'Infrakos' is to create a tourist railway in the town of Prizren in the near future.

Unfortunately some countries of the Western Balkans (Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Northern Macedonia) do not have railway museums as such, but do have technical museums with sections devoted to rail transport. This will not prevent us from opening a dialogue and linking young generations through their railway heritage. In two neighbouring countries on the Balkan Peninsula, Croatia and Slovenia (both members of the EU), the collection of items of Railway heritage is really sizable. Meanwhile Serbia (in addition to having the closed museum in Belgrade and the working museum with narrow-gauge locomotives in Pozega) has uniquely distinguished itself by the construction of the tourist 'Sargan figure of eight' route by the tourist complex at Mokra Gora and by the tourist trains 'Nostalgia,' 'Romance,' and 'Blue Train' (Tito's train). Plans include the construction of a standard-gauge museum at Topcider (in a suburb of Belgrade) and future cultural districts in areas where there are locomotive repair shops in the cities of Nis and Novi Sad.

The plans of the association 'European Station' include promoting ties between the non-governmental sector with young people in the region and railwaymen by means of travelling exhibitions of photographs.

The association will continue work on training to link clubs with similar organisations that are devoted to modernisation and development of multi-modal transport, drawing on examples of good international practice and the transport standards of the EU. This will be undertaken together with a joint campaign with the NGO 'Libere di viaggiare' with the aim of eliminating corruption in the transport sector in Albania and elsewhere. On behalf of the association 'European Station' I shall try to organise a 'Balkan trip tour' in the near future for the management of the New Europe Railway Heritage Trust.

Nata Zivanovic
Founder of 'European Station'

References:
Draft of the association of NGOs
Concept of the museum – NGO and public department
Regional project 'Transport Association'

Translator's note: The precise meaning of the three references is not clear in the Serbian original. They probably refer to documents that may have been provided separately.

With the Kosovo Museum's steam locomotive



In the Railway Museum
of Kosovo

Photos by courtesy of Nata
Zivanovic



Albania

Albania, like its neighbour Kosovo, is a small Balkans country with a modest railway mileage. But there are signs here, too, that railway history is being seen as very much part of the national tradition even though it was only during the Mussolini years that the first line was built. With extensions introduced by the subsequent communist government, this expanded to its current extent, from Durazzo to Tirana and Elbasan. We are grateful to Mira Mansaku for this photo of one locomotive that has been saved for memorial purposes. It is one supplied by Poland and is of the Polish Tkt-48 mixed traffic tank locomotive type, built in 1951 and withdrawn in 1986. From the photo it is evident that some parts are missing, but this seems remediable in the longer term.



Photographs for *Eastern Star*: We rely quite heavily on pictures e-mailed to us by readers, to whom we are very grateful (especially as many pictures are never used!) A pool of potential illustrations is immensely helpful when it comes (for example) to livening up texts such as the Annual Report, when it is not so much hot-news items as pictures of everyday activity that are valuable. Our pool of such pictures is now somewhat low, so some more would be very welcome. Thanks!

J N W

Review

James Waite, *Twenty First Century Narrow Gauge A pictorial Journey*
(ISBN 978 1 47388 767 1)

James Waite's articles and photographs appear regularly in magazines such as *Narrow Gauge World* but less often in *Eastern Star*, so many members might not be aware of James's wealth of experience of a subject much loved by NERHT members, narrow gauge railways.

James has brought together a fascinating volume of his photographs from many years of travelling the world recording narrow gauge railways. Most countries are covered, though with such a wide-ranging survey, the coverage of each is minimal, but many captions include some information about the railways.

Understandably, the railways in which NERHT is involved comprise only a small proportion of the book, so some members might not consider the £35.00 price good value for money, but for those with more wide-ranging interests, the book is an invaluable introduction to 21st century narrow gauge railways.

The countries of specific interest to NERHT are Russia, Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria. Other Nordic countries and those previously part of the former Yugoslavia are also included.

The book is a good quality hardback with 300 colour photos printed on 288 art-paper pages size 290 x 225 mm. It is available from the publisher (www.pen-and-sword.co.uk), and elsewhere.

Tony Olsson

* * * * *

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).

Chairman: Stephen Wiggs sandgw@hotmail.com tel. +44(0) 2085053186

Secretary: Livius Kooy l.j.kooy@planet.nl

Treasurer: Robert Raynor, 2A Avenue Road, Forest Gate, London E7 0LD

Editor, *Eastern Star*: John Westwood, 9 Whitefriars Meadow, Sandwich, Kent CT13 9AS

jnwestwood@tiscali.co.uk