

Update No. 36

July 2019

Fedecrail Jubilee Conference:

Hearts to Harz



16.April: Jaap Nieweg and Pierluigi Scoizzato unfolded the FEDECRAIL flag at Brocken
Bild. Heimo Echensperger

2019 is the 25th anniversary of Fedecrail. For this year's AGM and Conference, we travelled to Germany to be based in Wernigerode (12 – 17 April) in the Harz Mountain region, an area popular with rail enthusiasts. Billeted in hotels around town we had easy access to the tourist historic centre, including the railway-station.

This year the AGM was held on the Sunday, preceding the conference Business Sessions the following day. The formal Report of Council was approved. The Finance Report was discussed and, following a proposal from HRA with support from other members, a modified budget was adopted holding subscriptions at 2018 levels, in place of a suggested increase. To help balance the budget, a smaller increase in the allocation for Fedecrail's lobbying work was adopted. The Auditors report and

recommended discharge of Council from liabilities was adopted. The 2018 year accounts were approved. Current Auditors Guido Rossi and Jean-Paul Lescat were re-elected for another year. This year long-serving Vice-President Jacques Daffis (F) retired and was thanked for his diligence over 15 years. Secretary Kees Wijnobel (N), Pierluigi Scoizzato (I) and Josef van der Perre (B) were re-elected for a further 3 years. In place of Jacques Daffis, Bruno Fleury (F) was elected as a new member (Bruno was also later appointed as a Vice President).



Bruno Fleury (F) and Jacques Daffis

Photo: Ingrid Schütte

Updated versions of the Fedecrail Business Plan and Strategic Plan were presented, discussed and approved. Reports were also received from main working groups: Heritage Operations (HOG), Tramway (TG), Environmental (EG) and the organising team for the Youth Exchange. The President highlighted some funding opportunities within Europe which would be explored further and there were updates on other organisations with whom Fedecrail works closely, Europa Nostra and WATTRAIN.

The Business Conference initial theme was the first 25 years of Fedecrail , opening with a presentation by David Morgan on the Federation’s history from the days of the preparatory Morgan Commission in the early 1990s. He also noted that several original Council Members are still active within Fedecrail. Brian Simpson (Chairman, HRA) (UK) then explained the past history of lobbying within the European Parliament, and urged renewed effort following the elections later this year. Key successes had included many derogations obtained from legislation in past years, and ultimately the acceptance of Fedecrail as a member of the Representative Body of the European Union Agency for Railways (EUAR), the ‘engine room’ in which most of the work on directives and other matters affecting Europe’s railways is carried out.

A welcome to Wernigerode by Peter Gaffert, Oberbürgermeister - Stadt Wernigerode, preceded a Panel discussion on the future of Rail Heritage. Mediated by Michel Dispa (N), a Board member of the Dutch umbrella body HRN, Matthias Wagener, General Manager of the local host company, Harzer Schmalspurbahnen, gave an overview of the history, operation, and statistical information of his company (which provides both general public transport and tourist railway services), and emphasised the importance of HSB’s contribution to the local economy. Thomas Joindot (UNECTO) (F) gave a presentation on work with Fedecrail’s HOG working group, UNECTO and SNCF in particular during the recent years in which Fedecrail has had a voice within the European rail agency. This session

concluded with a view from the tramway sector in Germany by Harald Elsner (G).



Hans Jurgen Crede (G), Chairman of the national umbrella body for Germany, VDMT Verband Deutscher Museums und Touristik Bahnen, explained development of heritage railways in Germany from the earliest days to the present. After an update from the Environmental Group, Steve Oates (CEO, HRA) (UK) gave a presentation on the issues relating to the future use for heritage purposes of coal and other fossil fuels, reflecting very strong concerns on this issue within the UK. Fossil fuel issues cover not only coal, but also diesel engines. We might only use a small amount of fuel in relation to total production, but collation of accurate details regarding our operations is essential and needs to be handled sensitively if both national (and international) lobbying is to be successful. It was agreed that this is a strongly shared concern for all Fedecrail member countries. A Member's Forum session reported on Youth Exchange last year in Sweden, and proposed plans for this year's exchange in Spain in August. Practicalities of a Human Resources Survey Project were reported and discussed. Finally, one member raised the importance of wills and inheritance. So much history is thrown away by people not realising significance of books and papers because owners do not define beneficiaries of their memorabilia. (*Conference papers will be posted later this year on to the website - www.fedecrail.org*). Fragility of our heritage was highlighted by the fire at Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris.

Colleagues not wishing to attend Business Sessions had alternative action, with walking tours of

historic Wernigerode (Sun) and the nearby World heritage town of Quedlinburg (Mon). Castles, cathedral and timber-framed houses, many painted in bright pastel colours. Our visits coincided with 3 bitterly cold and windy days accompanied by snow, followed by 3 days of warm and very pleasant weather.

Built around formalities was the annual study tour, a large element of which focussed on the host metre-gauge Harz Railway (Harzer Schmalspurbahnen, HSB). On Saturday morning, with swirling snow settling on the ground, we set off by road for Gemrode, a station on the Selketalbahn, one of three constituent lines of the HSB network. The line runs along the eastern and central Harz areas, southwards from Quedlinburg and across to connection with the main Harzquerbahn at Eisfelder Talmühle. We covered all but the last section westwards. Photo and pathing stops punctuated our excursion train, headed by 2-6-2T loco 99-6001.



The western part of the HSB network consists of the main north – south aligned Harzquerbahn, which runs from Wernigerode to Nordhausen; unfortunately, our timetable precluded a trip on the full length of this line.

The line most popularly promoted forms the third element of HSB, the Brockenbahn, which shares the Harzquerbahn from Wernigerode to Drei Annen Hohne before ascending to the summit of The Brocken. Not surprisingly, a significant portion of HSB's income is generated on this route. Our 'Jubilee Sunrise' special excursion departed from Wernigerode very early on 16th April (precise anniversary of Fedecrail's formation in 1994) with us cocooned in pre-warmed carriages! 'Mallet' loco 99-5906 climbed through the snow-covered region to reach the 1141m (3743ft) summit just as the sun was breaking the horizon. With our Fedecrail flag unveiled and the occasion recorded we returned to the train. With daylight we could see the extent of damage caused by a tree bug which is gradually killing many of the pine trees. After return, the group joined the remaining delegates for breakfast, the



very early start having deterred some!

Road transfer was needed later on Saturday to reach Benndorf, base of the Mansfelder Bergwerksbahn, an 11km (6.8mile) line which terminates at Hettstedt. A 750mm gauge 95km (59 mile) network of lines once served an extensive area of copper- mining. Although mining ceased in the 1960's and lines gradually abandoned, a few spoil heaps still dominate the landscape. With loco no.20 heading our special service, we enjoyed a steam-hauled trip along the line where heritage operations began in 1990. Warmth of the carriages was again a welcome relief from the incessant chill of the wind. Stored in open sidings is a diverse collection of rolling-stock, many items awaiting restoration. The workshops have excellent facilities and contained several locomotive projects in varying stages of completion. Employing c.50 staff these workshops are run on a commercial basis. At the adjacent main-line station a 2-car service train stopped en-route to Magdeburg, a diesel railcar occupying a second platform.

Whilst in Wernigerode, our itinerary included an interesting visit to HSB workshops, our guide enlightening us with the intriguing history of HSB. We also had opportunity to visit the local Luftfahrtmuseum (Aircraft Museum) which has a wide range of aircraft and associated paraphernalia covering history and developments of flying. Here too we were accompanied by an excellent guide who had an easy to understand and logical approach to explaining some complex aviation technical matters.

For the final study visits, we ventured onto local main-line rail services run by Abellio, aboard their speedy Alstom-built 2-car diesel-units, to reach Blankenburg and Halberstadt. Although original station-buildings remain, a single-platform at Blankenburg serves both main-line trains and pick-up point for occasional heritage steam-services to Rübeland. The standard-gauge line up the valley, electrified on a different system to that found elsewhere in Germany, remains to serve limestone quarrying, trains of covered wagons being top-and-tailed by powerful electric locos. Steam loco 95-1027 headed our excursion, special permission was needed to operate such a train during weekdays; heritage services normally run on one week-end per month. The line's original steam loco 95-6676 remains in the depot awaiting resources to fulfil restoration.

For our final visit we went for our tramway heritage visit to Halberstadt, where the station buildings have been extended and modernised. The town hosts a 2-route tram network. In addition, a few vintage trams are operational, the oldest dating from 1939. To the accompaniment of excellent commentary, a pair of these trams conveyed us around town. We were also taken to the workshops to see facilities and watch some of the processes which are undertaken on a daily basis. A significant section of track was being replace at a city-centre junction; a chance to see how they do it.

In conclusion, we must thank everyone involved in the seemingly endless tasks involved in organising meetings and visits, and for shepherding us onto transport in order to maintain schedules. We hope you will join us for our next conference, planned for Bilbao (N Spain) in April 2020

(Summary by Nigel Hunt and Steve Wood – May 2019).

Short Infos

Ingrid Schütte

APHTRO-Konferenz 2019 in Amman

APHTRO (Asia Pacific Heritage and Tourist Rail Organisation) lädt zur Konferenz 2019 nach Amman in Jordanien ein. APHTRO ist der Zusammenschluss von Museums- und Touristikbahnen in Asien-Pazifik, das die Regionen in Asien, Australien und Ozeanien umfasst, die im Westpazifik oder in deren Nähe liegen. Europäische Gäste sind gern gesehen. Die Konferenz findet vom 8. bis 11. Oktober statt. Gastgeber sind die „Jordan Hejaz Railways“. Auf dem Programm stehen unter anderem auch (Dampf-)Zugfahrten, ein Besuch des neuen Eisenbahnmuseums und der Werkstatt in Amman. Alle, die sich für historische Eisenbahnen und Museen interessieren, sind herzlich willkommen.

Informationen unter:

<http://www.aphtro.info/news/?cat=4>

Historic joint turntable seeks new owner



Once they could be found every day in railway stations, today they are a relic from the steam locomotive era and can only be found occasionally: Turntables for turning rail vehicles. DB Netz AG in Germany wants to sell a historic articulated turntable from 1948. Length: 23.60 metres, load capacity: 350 tonnes, weight: approx. 50 tonnes, decommissioned since October 2004.

Information at <https://www.dbresale.com/verkauf/suche--xkat4--xid145125.htm>



Riga Charter on the curriculum in Taiwan

The Riga Charter, which was developed by FEDECRAIL as a statement of principles for the handling of historical railway equipment, has not only had an influence in Europe, but has in the meantime even arrived in Asia. This May it will be the focus of an event organized by the Asian Network of Industrial Heritage in Taiwan. The nearly one-week seminar for 18- to 45-year-olds, which deals with railway heritage, aims to convey the principles of the Riga Charter and to promote the preservation of historic railways in the Asia-Pacific region. The Riga Charter was adopted unanimously by FEDECRAIL members on 16 April 2005 at their annual meeting in Anse near Lyon and had previously been proposed at the meeting in Riga/Latvia.

Update Editor

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