



I.V.Z.W.

European Federation of Museum & Tourist Railways

Fédération Européenne des Chemins de Fer Touristiques et Historiques

Europäische Föderation der Museums- und Touristikbahnen

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## **FEDECRAIL CONFERENCE 2018** **EDINBURGH SCOTLAND UK**

This year we were based for the main conference in Edinburgh UK, Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> – Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> April, organised in collaboration with HRA and HRA Scottish Committee, with representatives from 19 countries.

Heritage Operations Group (HOG) met following Fedecrail council meeting on Thursday afternoon, (Jonas Svartlok's separate HOG Group minutes). Business sessions were held in the auditorium of the National Museum of Scotland, an excellent venue with Victorian heritage and a vast collection of artefacts ancient and modern. Visits were arranged to Hopetoun House, the Royal Botanic Gardens and the Royal Mile for guests not participating in meetings.

Opening reception was held in the City Chambers with a Civic Reception on behalf of the Lord Provost of Edinburgh.

### **Friday 20<sup>th</sup> April - Business Sessions:**

Richard Gibbon OBE and Nathan Wilson from UK's Boiler & Engineering Skills Training Trust (BESTT) gave an overview of the Trust's activities. Richard explained the background to boiler apprenticeships and advised that further Heritage Lottery Funding has been gained to develop modules covering maintenance to the remainder of a steam engine. Nathan explained that he is a graduate of the BESTT training programme and now works as a Mechanical Engineer at Locomotive Engineering Services in Loughborough.

Mark Watson reported on the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, speaking on behalf of E-FAITH, the European Federation of Associations of Industrial & Technical Heritage and promotion of cross-border twinning of sites.

President of HRA, Lord Richard Faulkner of Worcester, followed with presentation of activities of the UK's All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG), and how elected representatives can help heritage railways. He also emphasised the importance of engaging with members of the next generation to encourage new volunteers.

Afternoon session commenced with Mark Adamson (Scottish Railway Preservation Society - SRPS) recalling experiences as a young volunteer on the Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway. Despite being only 19 years of age, he has participated in many volunteer activities, and explained how he got to his present position. He would like in the future to work on the main line railway. He is also a member of the HRA Scottish committee.

Finally, Miles Oglethorpe Head of Industrial Heritage at Historic Environment Scotland gave a fascinating presentation of how the Forth railway bridge obtained its status as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

(Details of papers presented at the meetings will available on [www.fedecrail.org](http://www.fedecrail.org) in due course).

Conference Dinner was held on Friday evening in the National Mining Museum of Scotland at Newtongrange, which was preceded by a guided tour of the Museum. During the evening a presentation was made to David Morgan to mark his retirement from Fedecrail Council.



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Jeff Johnson -Railevents

Foto; John Crane



Kathleen Wallis

Foto; John Crane





Book presented from Jaap Nieweg to Davis Morgan

Foto; John Crane

**AGM – Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> April:**

Besides regular business of the AGM, the following items were transacted:

Four membership applications from Detska Zeleznica Kosice Slovakia, Agrupacion de los Ferrocarriles Historicos (AFCHE) Spain, Museum of Industry and Railway in Silesia in Poland, and HZ Infrastruktura, Croatian Railway Museum were considered and approved.

Both David Morgan (UK) and Sten Erson Wester (Sweden) retired from the Council and were not seeking re-election. It was noted that Sten has been ill for some time, and the meeting's best wishes were sent to him.

Peter Ovenstone (UK) and Jonas Svartlok (Sweden) were unanimously elected to Council.

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Fedecrail Council

Foto John Crane

# FED\*EC\*RAIL UPDATE

An update on the Fedecrail strategic plan was presented and approved by Council. Reports followed from the various working groups, including HOG and the renamed Tramway Group (TG). Updates were also given for the Youth Exchange in Sweden to be held later this year and reference made to the Wattrain Conference to be held at the end of October in Dallas USA (Frisco – Museum of American Railroad).

2019 is the 25<sup>th</sup> year of Fedecrail - our Conference and programme of celebratory events will be held in Wernigerode (D).

Formalities completed delegates were able to focus on a mixed programme of rail and road excursions from our base in Edinburgh. On Saturday afternoon we boarded the first of our Scotrail services, this one taking us from Edinburgh Waverley to Linlithgow, where we joined an SRPS charter train covering the Forth Circle, on a fine, sunny and warm day, steam hauled by LMS Jubilee class 45690 “Leander”. This included two crossings of the Forth Bridge and routed via Inverkeithing, Glenrothes, Dunfermline and Stirling. Brilliant sunshine illuminated Scottish landscape and heritage sites in an area where evidence of coal-mining has almost been obliterated. Afternoon tea was enjoyed on the train, with dinner taken in a restaurant overlooking all three Forth bridges, setting sun creating wonderful images.



Stirling LEANDER

**AGM – Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> April:**

On Sunday we crossed the Firth of Forth via the newest road crossing en-route to 2 museums based within a former supply depot for Rosyth Dockyard at Lathalmond. Shed 47 is a small railway museum / workshop with a section of rehabilitated line, members aspiring to extend operations along some of the disused sidings. A small replica station is nearing completion and work started on converting a wagon into a passenger vehicle. The society operates a pair of ex-Rosyth Dockyard diesel locos and is supporting SRPS in repairing and restoring small steam and diesel locos. Adjacent to railway operation is base of the Scottish Vintage Bus Museum, where we inspected various buses, a restored horse-drawn Edinburgh tram and memorabilia from an aera many of us are old enough to remember being used in daily service! The visit ended with a ride around the site in one of the buses.

Returning to the south side of the Firth of Forth, crossing by the fourth and oldest bridge, the Kincardine Bridge, we arrived at the former industrial town of Borrowstounness, now better known as the commuter town of Bo'ness and home of the Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway. The welcoming party escorted us aboard one of the double-headed service trains, 2 ex-LNER coaches having been allocated to us. Climbing up the steep hillside, the line having been used on occasions to refresh mainline drivers of the effects of 'leaves on the line', we soon arrived at Manuel station, where, on a clear day, there are excellent views along the Forth. This station is adjacent to the main Edinburgh – Glasgow main-line but there is no interchange. Returning to Bo'ness, some colleagues sought solace in the buffet, whilst the majority were escorted into various sheds to see a selection of museum exhibits, and restoration and commercial activity not normally open to the public. Plenty to see and a plethora of enthusiastic staff to guide us and answer questions.



Falkirk Wheel



. Railway curiosity satisfied, our final visit was opportunity to enthuse about older industrial heritage. Falkirk is where Forth – Clyde and Union Canals meet. For some 70 years there was decline and disconnection, but revival of canals and a recognised tourist potential saw the innovative Falkirk Wheel opened in 2002. Reuniting the canals, this rotating boat-lift has become a popular visitor attraction, along with short rides along sections of both canals We also had a view of another local attraction. Alongside the Forth-Clyde Canal, The Kelpies are 2 enormous statues of horses-heads, both tourist fascination and memorial to working horses of yesteryear.

Monday was our Glasgow day. Transfer by rail enabled arrival at Coatbridge, home of the Summerlee Museum of Scottish Industrial Life. This extensive museum complex is on the site of Summerlee Iron Works, with heavy engineering, a massive Garrett loco built by the North British Company, a locally-built industrial loco and canal exhibits amongst the attractions. Workshops had tram and steam-boat restoration projects and a keen team of volunteers to meet our inquisitive team. Trams from Lanark, Glasgow and Dusseldorf provided rides.

Road transport across Glasgow to the Riverside Museum, Glasgow Museum of Transport, which opened in 2011 as part of dockside regeneration. The range of transport items from the region is extensive. Tram and railway exhibits are central to some scenarios. Assorted artefacts are also displayed on wall-mounted arrays. Shipping is represented by a large collection of models. Alongside the museum is 'Glenlee', a barque owned by the Clyde Maritime Trust. The 'Tall Ship', built on the Clyde in 1896, saw service around the world before being preserved. Plenty to see at this museum, complete with views downstream towards the remaining Clyde shipyards. Paddle-steamer 'Waverley' is based across the river upstream of the museum. Skyline near to the museum is overshadowed by the massive Finnieston crane which once loaded railway locomotives, and other heavy engineering, on to ships for export around the world.

Delegates had opportunity to visit the under-ground chambers of Glasgow Central station. As with many large city-centre stations, Central station has an array of vaults that once hummed to numerous activities associated with wide range of hotel and railway operations. Part of the tour is adjacent to Low-Level platforms serving Cross-Clyde services. And more underground displays are planned. History is fascinating, and creation of underground tours has been a success story for one employee - booking ahead for these tours is necessary.

A visit to the Glasgow Subway was not overlooked. This 4-ft gauge underground railway, 3<sup>rd</sup> oldest in the world, consists of a circular route with trains taking c.30 mins for a round trip. Stations and signalling are being upgraded and automated trains are planned. We returned to Edinburgh by rail from interchange station at Partick, and the end of this year's main programme.

As has become 'traditional', an optional add-on programme of study visits was arranged – April 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>. On Tuesday, with bags loaded onto a coach, 60+ colleagues were whisked northwards by rail, through scenic countryside from Lowlands to Highlands. At Aviemore, heart of the Cairngorm region, members of the Strathspey Railway welcomed us aboard a special service to Broomhill, hauled



by Caledonian Rly loco 828. Lunch was served whilst we watched pheasants, deer and other wildlife enjoying their landscape. Returning to Aviemore, we detrained at the little-used platform beside the stock-sheds. A guided tour of their facilities was undertaken before the day concluded with a coach trip to our base in Inverness.

We returned to rail on Wednesday with a short trip to Elgin, where we boarded road transport for a visit to Dufftown. One group went on a tour of Glenfiddich Distillery. A short film showing history of the distillery and processes, followed by a relaxing walk around the site concluding with a whisky tasting-session - 3 different ages – yes, you can tell the difference in taste! Meanwhile, the remainder of the group visited the Keith and Dufftown Railway Society's facilities, followed by a trip on one of the diesel-units to Keith, where a small museum is housed in refurbished station buildings. Coach transfer from Glenfiddich reunited the party for a rail-trip back to Dufftown – lunch provided. A coach-ride through the Spey Valley was followed by a visit to Scotland's only funicular railway, the Cairngorm Mountain Railway near Aviemore. A 5-minute ride takes you to over 3500ft above sea-level on Scotland's 6<sup>th</sup> highest mountain. Weather permitting you have spectacular views across the region; we watched the seasons go by - sunshine, rain, mist, snow and a biting cold wind during our visit.

On Thursday we headed westwards along the Great Glen, beside Loch Ness and the Caledonian Canal, to Fort William, fleeting glimpses of Ben Nevis between the showers. We arrived ready to board 'The Jacobite' steam train for a trip along the West Highland Extension Line. Once the overnight sleeper-train from London had arrived, we departed with LMS loco no.44871 making steady progress along this scenic route. Glenfinnan Viaduct and Loch Shiel attracted much interest as we ventured west, twisting and climbing on the tortuous line, on through Morar, the most westerly station in UK, before arriving at the fishing and ferry port of Mallaig.



Fort William "The Jacobite"

All Fotos: Nigel Hunt

After lunch we boarded the return working, this time alighting at Glenfinnan, where we were welcomed to the museum. Explanatory talk about signalling and signal-box operation was enlivened by interactive screen displays linked to the levers – something complicated explained in a simple and visionary way.

Invergarry Station by comparison is still very much an embryonic project, train services to Fort Augustus having ceased in 1947. In the intervening period land around Invergarry has been under Forestry Commission management. The group has obtained lease of the land to re-establish the station and environs from derelict state to something recognisable as a station and track-bed. Management aspire to add this small project to the local economy – there is much still to do before a successful conclusion. By the end of our visit it was deluging down in true Scottish style, which encouraged us to retire to the warmth of the adjacent Lodge Restaurant for dinner and a final gathering before returning to Inverness and the end of our Scottish travels.

As is usual on these occasions we must thank everyone associated in organising and coordinating our visit. A very enjoyable few days, with hospitality to match. Our final thanks must go to Liz and John



Fuller who, along with Peter Ovenstone, have decided to retire from the constraints of being Conference Managers. After many years of cajoling, chasing and chivvying delegates, organising venues, speakers, speeches, and the myriad of associated tasks, we express our grateful thanks for what they have achieved. Their attention to detail has been one of the reasons these Fedecrail events are so popular and successful.

**Steve Wood, (UK FEDECRAIL Representative) and Nigel Hunt (UK Friend of Fedecrail)**  
**May 2018**

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