



# EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF MUSEUM & TOURIST RAILWAYS

Fédération Européenne des Chemins de Fer Touristiques et Historiques

I. V. Z. W.

Europäische Föderation der Museums- und Touristikbahnen

## **UPDATE NR 31**

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**WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE HERITAGE RAILWAYS AROUND EUROPE NEWS ♦  
VIEWS ♦ ARTICLES ♦ CURRENT EVENTS ♦ OPINIONS**

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### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

On Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May this year we will hold our 24<sup>th</sup> AGM, which will take place in Antwerp. As usual it will be preceded by our one day conference on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> May, with presentations on the underlying themes of the importance of outreach to other organizations with similar aims (but possibly in other sectors) as well as to those bodies with a regulatory or legislative role. The other main topic concerns the threat to steam operations from outside our control.

The AGM itself will include a presentation on FEDECRAIL's Strategic Plan which a working party has been working on during the last two years. It will also receive

reports from the Working Groups, including the Heritage Operations Group (HOG) which has recently obtained for FEDECRAIL members the right of access to the website of the Group's Representative Body (GRB), which is consulted by the European Union's Rail Agency (ERA). John Fuller has also been representing FEDECRAIL and WATTRAIN on the UIC's TOPRAIL project which is hoping to boost rail tourism and John will present a report on their discussions. There will be a report from the Environmental Working Group and the Youth Group. FEDECRAIL Youth Group has been developing with the support of our younger members who have helped to compile a handbook providing guidance for future organizers of the Youth Exchange Programme. There will also be a report on EU funding opportunities, as well as from Europa Nostra and WATTRAIN. We have been developing a policy with the latter to protect the right of members to continue using their traditional fuel, whether it be coal or oil.

I am sad to report that Sten Erson-Wester, the Swedish member of Council is still suffering from ill-health, and we have given him leave of absence for another year, while I have kept in regular contact with Jonas Svartlok in relation to Sten's ongoing health and Swedish matters. I am also grateful to Liz and John Fuller, who together with Marco Meusburger, have stepped into the breach in the FEDECRAIL Youth Exchange organization.

I am also pleased to report that Jaap Nieweg is to be proposed for membership of FEDECRAIL Council at the AGM. Jaap is the former General Manager of Stoomtram Hoorn-Medemblik (NL) and has frequently attended our AGMs in the past as the representative of HRN(NL), the Dutch umbrella organization which he founded. If elected, Council will be proposing that Jaap takes over from me as President of FEDECRAIL at the following Council meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017. I will remain on Council until next year's AGM, which will take place in Scotland, probably in April 2018, to assist with the transition. I do hope that those of you who have supported me and FEDECRAIL so loyally in the past will attend our AGM in May so that I can thank you personally.

**David Morgan**  
**President**

## **Two Swedish locomotives for sale**

Two Swedish standard gauge locomotives are for sale: SJ E4 1827, former BJ N3 66, built in Motala, works number 495/1914 and SJ G9 1842, former GDJ N3 58, built in Trollhättan NOHAB, works number 996/1912. Both are in unrestored but reasonable condition. For more details contact [svartlok@fedecrail.org](mailto:svartlok@fedecrail.org)

## **FEDECRAIL Youth Exchange 2017 in northern Italy**



The 11. FEDECRAIL Youth Exchange will take place in northern Italy at two different locations starting on the 28th July 2017 to Sunday 6th August 2017. Hosts are member-organisations of FIFTM, the Italian umbrella organisation for heritage and tourist railways: Società Veneta Ferrovie in Primolano and Museo Ferroviario Piemontese in Savigliano. Participants can expect a varied programme consisting of several railway related visits and also some work experiences at the

host heritage railway associations. Also getting in touch with the cultural characteristics of this part of Italy as well as having an international exchange between the participants will be part of the planned programme.

Invited are volunteers on a heritage railway between 15 and 24 years old. Contact and registration – the latest by the end of February 2017 – [youthexchange@fedecrailyouth.eu](mailto:youthexchange@fedecrailyouth.eu) . Further details will be soon available online at: [www.fedecrailyouth.eu](http://www.fedecrailyouth.eu)

## **BUILDING A SECONDARY RAILWAY IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

During 40 years, our association has been preserving the memory of the secondary railways of France that once formed a dense web of local, often metre gauge, lines across the countryside.

MTVS was formed in 1976 and we have, at present, 200 members of whom 30 members participate directly in preservation projects. Over the years we have assembled a rich and varied collection of metre gauge locomotives, carriages and wagons which are unique. 37 are classified "Monument Historique". Our members have so far restored 30 of these vehicles to their original condition and they are in service on the museum line. There are 9 steam locomotives of which 2-3 are in service, 3 are awaiting renovation, 3-4 are on display. 13 fully restored carriages are in service. They date from 1883 to 1913 and represent nine different secondary railway lines. 11 fully restored wagons are in service dating from the beginning of the 20th century. Over 50 other items are in the "reserves" awaiting attention, including 8 diesel railcars and trailers.

MTVS is located in the north-west corner of Ile-de-France at Valmondois in the Oise valley. The museum and workshops are currently located on the site of the terminus of the former secondary line from Valmondois to Marines(1891 - 1949). In 1990, a museum building was erected to protect and display the preserved stock. Due to local circumstances, it has not been possible to complete the original plan to extend the running line along the original trackbed towards Marines. After a long search, an ideal opportunity was found just an hour's drive north of Valmondois near Beauvais in Picardie. The small town of Crèvecoeur-le-Grand (pop. 3 500) was once connected by a standard gauge railway to Amiens, opened

in 1876. This line passed southwards into the valley of Herperie and terminated at St-Omer-en Chaussée forming a junction with the Paris - Beauvais - Le Tréport-Mers line. In 1911, a metre gauge line from St Just en Chaussée and Froissy reached the station at Crèvecoeur. Passenger services were withdrawn from these two lines respectively in 1939 and 1953. The last freight trains ran between St-Omer and Crèvecoeur in 1992. Later, the local communities purchased the track bed from SNCF and created a *voie verte* north of Crèvecoeur. To the south, as far as St Omer, the original track remains, covered with vegetation. The project proposed by MTVS to recreate a railway (metre gauge) from Crèvecoeur, in stages, to St Omer, a distance of 12 km, was presented to the local councils along the line and all were in favour. After many months of negotiations and formalities to obtain authorisations, success was achieved.

Thus it was that our association took residence on the site of the former station at Crèvecoeur-le-Grand in December 2013. It was a jungle !

With the help of the local council, the site was cleared of trees and vegetation and during 2014 service tracks and an inspection pit were created. The original brick station building has been demolished. MTVS could use a walled enclosure of 2 000 sq meters on the site, formerly an agricultural store. There was no roof, but the agreement was that the local council would finance a new roof. This building will become the future workshop/depot of the line. Meanwhile, without a roof, several prefabricated office units (donated to the association) were installed for the local team of volunteers who would lay out the new track. Some mechanical assistance was essential and we purchased a mechanical excavator which proved to be indispensable. Other machines were borrowed locally as required.

The basis of the project was to replace the standard gauge track buried in the undergrowth with a new metre gauge track using new sleepers (financed by donations) and re-using the original rails and ballast. The first stage was to clear the original track, unscrew the track pins and store them, detach the rails and set aside, scoop the old ballast and level. The second stage was to set out the new sleepers at the correct intervals. The original rails were then laid on to the new sleepers and fixed with the track pins. Finally, ballasting was carried out with a specialised wagon. Early in 2014, a diesel locotracteur and wagon were brought from Valmondois and they were parked on track set out inside the hangar.

After the first 400 meters of metric track had been laid towards St Omer a "golden spike" ceremony was held on March 7th 2015. Local mayors and députés together with local residents attended and thereby demonstrated their interest and support for the project. On October 17th-18th an inaugural festival was held with a steam locomotive and 3 carriages brought from the museum. It was a great success.

During 2016, the line was extended for a further 1.2 km, through an over-bridge and up to the D149 main road. In August, a specialised company re-installed the level crossing according to current regulations. The total cost was donated within 3 months of an appeal being launched. Later automatic barriers will have to be installed, the cost of this work being subsidised.

During this winter 2016/2017, in preparation for the imminent opening to the public, a new platform is being created close to the car park. The new roof over the future depot/workshop was ordered by the local council just before Christmas 2016. From May 2017, the line of nearly 2 km will be opened to the public once or twice a month. A steam engine will be transferred to Crèvecoeur to provide trips along the line. In September 2017, a festival will be held over the week-end of 16th/17th for the official opening of the line. This occasion will also provide the opportunity to confirm the twinning of ASVi (Vicinal Museum at Thuin, Belgium) with MTVS.

During 2018, the line will be extended from the level crossing up to Rotangy, a small village 3 km from Crèvecoeur, where a loop will be created to facilitate operations.

News about MTVS can be found at the website here: <http://musee-mtvs.com> and the Facebook account here: <https://www.facebook.com/leMTVS/>

<http://france3-regions.francetvinfo.fr/picardie/crevecoeur-grand-60-bientot-4eme-train-touristique-picardie-456743.html>

<http://france3-regions.francetvinfo.fr/picardie/crevecoeur-le-grand-60-le-train-vapeur-reprend-du-service-ce-week-end-832211.html>

Jaques Daffis

2017-04-17 [josef.sabor@fedecrail.org](mailto:josef.sabor@fedecrail.org)