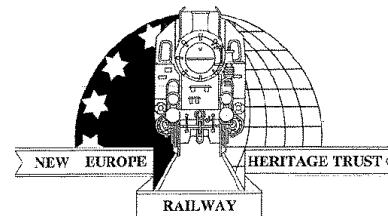


Eastern Star



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



A contemporary scene on Latvia's *Banitis* railway

(Picture by Andris Biedrins)

The Second All-Russia Narrow-Gauge Forum



A major event in Russian railway preservation, the 2nd All-Russia Narrow-Gauge Forum, was held in Ekaterinburg, the capital of Urals, on September 14-16. The conference was hosted by the Sverdlovsk children's railway and the Alapayevsk Railway.

The second Forum was less official than the first one, held in Ekaterinburg in November 2016 (see report in *Eastern Star* No 64). While the 2016 event

was aimed at getting together preservationists from all over the country, sharing ideas and becoming acquainted, the 2017 meeting set specific tasks. The main topic became integration of narrow-gauge railways into tourism.

To put discussions into a practical route, the Forum's Committee distributed invitations to many specialists and official boards, and received ready responses from the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Defence, Russian Geographical Society and other organisations. Due to various reasons, not all delegates managed to make their way to the Urals, and several reports had been sent extramurally. Among the special guests were:

- Bernd Seiler of Farrail Tours, explaining international experience and exploring possibilities to bring groups to the Urals;
- Evgeniy Tryndin of the Polytechnical Museum (Moscow), who delivered consultation on the official registration of technical relics;
- Vladimir Lukin of the Central Military Museum (Moscow). In recent years the expedition centre of the Russian Geographical Society (represented at the Forum by Sergei Dorozhkov) together with the Ministry of Defence made several expeditions to remote islands and among various artefacts removed several railway locomotives, which need attribution, restoration and further public exhibition. Possibilities of co-operation were discussed, including the prospects for searching for more relics;
- Several private collectors and investors, with whom details of further research and terms of exhibiting their stock were talked over;
- Representatives of various town (Ekaterinburg), regional (Sverdlovsk oblast) and local cultural institutions, as well as officials from several state and private tourist boards.

As in 2016, the Forum attracted all key persons involved in narrow-gauge and rail steam preservation in Russia, including delegates from the Pereslavl museum, Tesovo group, North-West preservation group, Alapayevsk Railway, tour operators and private collectors. Also present were several mechanics involved with broad gauge steam restoration (ZhD Retro-service Co.).

The programme was opened by a special steam train (pictured) on the Sverdlovsk children's railway. The train was hauled by Votkinsk VP-4-1425 0-8-0 of 1956, rescued from an abandoned plinth in Moscow oblast and returned to steam in Ekaterinburg workshops. Another loco, ex Mansfeld Kombinat No.9 0-8-0T O&K 12350/1931 was also in steam.

The opening speech was delivered by Evgeniy Zdrovenko, Head of the Centre for Scientific and Technical Information and Libraries of the Sverdlovsk Railway.

Then came a presentation on the success of the Welsh Highland Railway project, kindly prepared by Gordon Rushton of NERHT. This was met with great interest. Reports from Russian-based groups and museums followed, and then came consultations on museum, tourist and research activities.

The second part saw discussions on restoration practices. Sergei Danilov of the Sverdlovsk Railway restoration department reported certain progress with steam legislation, and also showed trial new injectors, being crafted for narrow gauge locomotives. Anton Sharypov described techniques of wooden coach restoration, as implemented during work with the mobile workshop of 1952.

Conversations followed on restoration and expedition plans, difficulties with archival materials and other more routine aspects. Towards the end Pavel Strelkov of the October Railway suggested that the Third Forum should be held in St. Petersburg. The proposal was approved unanimously.

On the second day the delegates moved to Alapayevsk and Verkhnyaya Sinyachiha, where a special excursion train (pictured) ran on the local narrow gauge line. Initially it had been planned to bring VP-4-1425 0-8-0 from Ekaterinburg to Alapayevsk to test-run a steam tour, but certain organisational difficulties prevented this. So the Alapayevsk excursion was diesel-hauled.



and Bernd Seiler took the regular overnight narrow gauge train to the very end of the Alapayevsk system to Sankino (5 hours!), for an extended third-day programme. On September 16, together with representatives of the local community, they explored tourist potential of the area, inspected the little-used branch line to Kalach and a bridge where a class 157 0-8-0 was

rumoured to have sunk many years ago. On the way back possibilities were investigated to run steam photo specials for foreign and domestic enthusiasts.

Exciting and interesting events over, the last delegates had to return to Ekaterinburg for flights home – to Moscow and Berlin... Both Ekaterinburg forums turned out most effective in achieving their goals – unifying efforts and publicising of heritage preservation activities. In 2018 the baton is anticipated to be taken by the October Railway. It is hoped that the coming event in St. Petersburg follows the new tradition.

Sergei Dorozhkov

(Pictures by courtesy of Alexey Ivanov and Forum Committee)

The Museum of Russian Railways, Baltic Terminus, St. Petersburg

The year 2017 saw celebrations of the 180th anniversary of Russian Railways. The first public railway in the country had been opened on November'11, 1837 (N.S.) between St. Petersburg and Tsarskoye Selo, becoming the sixth public line in the World.

Since then railways played a key role in the development of the country, taking an active part in eventful Russian history.

Due to many historical and political complications, the country never had a fitting railway museum. This was to be changed, and the year 2017 became the turning point. On October 30 the new Museum of Russian Railways opened its doors to the public to the huge exposition near the Baltic Terminus in St. Petersburg.



In every aspect, this is a modern museum. Very clear, spacious, visitor-friendly and interactive. The structure was designed by the 'Studio 44' architectural bureau of Nikita Yavein, and though the old locomotive shed of the Baltic Railway was incorporated into the complex, all other buildings are brand new. The covered area comprises 16.000 square metres, allowing – at long last! – putting under cover and into proper conditions the most valuable pieces of historic locomotives and wagons. Naturally, some items remain outside, and the area in the open boasts 39,000 square metres more. Altogether, the collection consists of 3500 exhibits, of which 115 are rolling stock. The complex is designed so locomotives and rolling stock can be shunted around, taken out for restoration or changed.

Many bigger items were moved to the new museum from an exhibition at Warsaw Terminus, well known to many readers of *Eastern Star*. Before that, all of them went through thorough and scrupulous restoration, with maximum possible implementation of modern knowledge and techniques. Other exhibits are shown to the public for the first time.

Although the exposition is launched, the museum is by no way completed. Development of interactive installations is announced, and there are more conservation plans as well.

Of course, a short article can't give a full impression, and it is really worth seeing the museum with one's own eyes. So do not forget to include this place into your next trip to St. Petersburg! The website for the museum is: <http://rzd-museum.ru/en>

German World War 2 Relics Unearthed



Narrow-gauge rolling stock once in the service of the *Wehrmacht* has been retrieved in Russia and this example has been brought to Ekaterinburg for restoration.

A fuller account will be found in the next issue of *Eastern Star*.

(Picture by Evgeniy Zdovorenko)

Ukraine

Ukraine and the East Lancashire Railway

For some time NERHT has supported moves to forge links between the Znesinnya railway project in Lviv and the East Lancashire Railway (see *Eastern Star* No 45) so we were happy to help with arrangements for a high-level delegation from Ukrainian Railways and Lviv City Council who wanted to visit the ELR and other railway sites in the autumn of 2017. Sadly, in the event only one Ukrainian was able to make the trip. Our thanks have already been sent to the Mayor and Mayoress of Rochdale who welcomed the visitor and to the representatives of the ELR who cleared their diaries to receive what should have been a large group. We hope that 2018 will see progress with the Znesinnya project.

Donetsk Railway Museum

A correspondent in Donetsk informs us that the museum is open and in good condition in spite of the fighting which continues in the area. When peace returns we in NERHT hope to resume our contacts with the museum, the largest and probably the most significant railway museum in Ukraine.



No TU8 0364 handles an excursion on the Vyhoda line in Ukraine.

(Picture by Wolfram Wendelin)

Poland

Stephen Wiggs and Livius Kooy were in Poland from 30 August to 4 September 2017. During the visit they were accompanied either by the NERHT's Polish contact Andrew Goltz (who arranged meetings and visits) or by Nick Fletcher, a Polish-speaking NERHT member based in Warsaw. As the following accounts indicate, they brought back rather a mixed picture.

Poland's Heritage in Danger

NERHT delegates who visited Poland this autumn were shocked and dismayed to find many of the large exhibits at the Warsaw railway museum in a state of neglect and decay. As will be seen from the photographs, locomotives and rolling stock, in some cases dating back over one hundred years, are rusting and rotting in the open air. While bushes can be seen growing out of steam engines in scrap yards one does not expect this in a museum. At a meeting with our delegates the director of the National Association for Museums and Public Collections and representatives of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and of the museum admitted that the state of the collection was unacceptable. The explanation given is that the exhibits are due to be moved to the proposed new technical museum but nobody can say for certain when this museum will open or indeed where it will be, and it is clear that serious and possibly irreparable harm will result, if these items are left exposed to the elements for much longer. Poland has many excellent and well-kept museums of all kinds, yet this disgraceful sight in the capital city of a major European country does no credit to anyone. Responsibility for the museum has been handed to a new cultural institute jointly owned by PKP (Polish state railways) and the Mazowsze provincial government. We hope that this new body will act without further delay to safeguard this important part of Poland's heritage.



The Skierniewice Depot Museum

The historic Skierniewice depot (beside the main Warsaw-Lodz line) has been developed as a museum, and is the headquarters of the Polish Association of Railway Enthusiasts (see their internet site at www.psmk.org.pl) When the NERHT delegation visited the museum for talks with the leaders on a Saturday in September, volunteers were hard at work; although the buildings and many of the exhibits require restoration, the achievements to date of the Association are impressive and it is hoped that NERHT will be able to co-operate with them in future.



Inside the Skierniewice roundhouse. It is the Association's top priority and part of the roof has been repaired with the help of subsidies.

(Picture by Livius Kooy)

The Sochaczew Narrow-Gauge Railway Museum

The museum at Sochaczew (a fairly short distance by train from Warsaw) houses the narrow gauge items forming part of the Warsaw railway museum collection. Some restoration work has been carried out, although since most items are kept out of doors further deterioration is likely, especially of the early passenger carriages (historic narrow gauge passenger stock is rare in Eastern Europe). An interesting display of small items is housed in a recently constructed building. The narrow gauge line operated in conjunction with the museum has steam hauled passenger services.



The Warsaw Station Museum's narrow gauge operation from Sochaczew: the end of the line in a forest. (Lunch was sausages grilled over an open fire).

(Picture by Livius Kooy)

Romania

Sibiu – Agnita Progress

On 16 and 17 September the Sibiu-Agnita railway held a steam weekend at Cornatel, with trains hauled by 0-8-0T No. 764-243 (built by Budapest works in 1911) brought by George Hocesvar, operating on the 5-mile section as far as Hosman. Visitors included the British Ambassador, foreign tourists and expats resident in Transylvania as well as large numbers of local inhabitants. Before the event Romanian volunteers, supported by a working party



comprising activists from no less than six British preserved railways cleared vegetation and re-laid sleepers along the restored length, which is already taking on the appearance of an established tourist line. Preservationists still face many challenges but in the meantime our congratulations go to all who made the weekend a success; these two photos by Radu Tompa give something of the atmosphere of this occasion.



Fedecrail Youth Camp

The *NERHT's Jonathan Sutton Fund* helps to sponsor participants in Fedecrail's annual youth camp. We are grateful to one of these participants, *Diana Nita*, for the following account of some of her highlights.

I decided to travel by train to the FEDECRAIL Youth Exchange camp this year. After more than 24 hours in the train we were welcomed in Turin with a welcome dinner.

In the first day of the camp we travelled by train to Savigliano where we visited the train museum in the city. In the afternoon we had a guided tour of the city, and in the evening we returned to Turin. The next day we spent in Turin where I visited the FIAT museum where we saw the first cars produced by FIAT. The afternoon was about trams, and we had a tour on the historic tram route in Turin. The next day we woke up early to travel by train to Alasio where we spent half a day at the sea. After a few hours of swimming, we boarded the train again. This time we chose a different route, so we passed through France to arrive back to



Turin. On the first day of August we worked in Turin. We cleaned the old paint from a locomotive.

Subsequently we travelled to Primolano. We woke up very early to get the first train. We changed five trains this day. After a long trip I went to a small village somewhere in the mountains, I was impressed by the view. When we arrived we had dinner in the village school with a few people from the

village. On the first day at Primolano we worked on a wooden wagon, we took down the old pieces of wood. The next day we traveled to Venice where we visited the city and had free time. On the last day of the camp we travelled to Trento where we travelled by train along the Vellsugana Valley on a narrow-gauge railway line.

* * * * *

The Killamarsh Chronicle: *Eastern Star* now has an exchange arrangement with the Killamarsh Group. This means that their members can now read our issues and *NERHT* members can receive their digital *Killamarsh Chronicle*. Killamarsh is a small town in the Rother Valley, once Great Central territory, and is the site of the workshop where highly professional volunteers have been restoring narrow-gauge steam locomotives for a variety of owners. Their *Chronicle* is densely illustrated, prints a variety of articles, but is notable especially for its detailed accounts of each phase and incident of a restoration process. For those wishing to get a close-up of the technical nitty-gritty of restoration this is an ideal source.

If you would like to receive this publication, just contact the *ES* editor by e-mail



This picture by Wolfram Wendelin, of one of the popular Ukraine excursions arranged by him in 2017, is a reminder that many examples of that stalwart of the Soviet decades, the broad-gauge E class ten-wheeler, are still going strong both in Ukraine and Russia.

* * * * *

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

Membership & Sales:

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