

## Update No. 37

December 2019

### On New Year's Eve; review of the president and expectations for the future.....

At the end of 2019 I look back with you on the 25th anniversary in Wernigerode (FRG/Harz), the elections to the European Parliament and the annex to the formation of a new European Parliament and the new European Commission. This retrospective certainly includes a look into the future, the expected development of the museum and tourist railways sector in Europe and thus the role of FEDECRAIL and its relationship with its members.

Around 100 guests, including members, friends, volunteers and board members, travelled in the early morning of the actual founding date in 1994, on 16 April, with a special steam train (departure 4.10 a.m. from Wernigerode) to the highest point of the Harz Mountains, the Brocken, to commemorate the foundation 25 years ago and above all to catch the first rays of sunshine of the next 25 years. (See also the picture on the Brocken taken by one of the participants shortly after 06:00).





During the anniversary period, the members of FEDECRAIL demanded that a more member-oriented attitude be developed. This was expressed above all in discussions on how our sector can maintain the necessary existing relations and win new ones after the European elections. In order to formalise this, proposals have now been formulated to amend the Statute, which will be discussed with members in Leuven (B) on 11 January 2020.

There are three main points that will require our attention in the coming period:

- \* the development of the European railway network (including the introduction of the 4th railway package) and its consequences for the operation of the main European public network with historic rolling stock;
- \* Achieve a stable position for the management of the industrial and mobile heritage within the framework of the Paris Environmental Agreement, managing and presenting the conceptual authenticity of the heritage that we preserve as core cultural and educational values, and thus allowing for exemptions for the use of fossil fuels;
- \* The ultimate consequences of a possible passage of Brexit or not.

After the European elections, in which a new Parliament was elected and the parliamentary committees were set up, a new European Commission was also set up.

The implementation of our Strategic Plan 2017 - 2022 and the "Paris Plan" is mainly done through Parliament's committees and in cooperation with the European Commission, using different European funding programmes such as Erasmus +, Europe 2020 and Creative Europe. Much closer cooperation with the members is needed in this process. At its heart is the fact that FEDECRAIL's staff often lack the ability to perform these complex tasks and need the support of staff from the members involved. Furthermore, the European (financial) support programmes can only be used if several countries work together and these countries prepare and submit the applications jointly. The support of the national governments is very welcome and must be provided by the participating national umbrella organisations for the jointly developed European projects.

In this respect, 2020 will be a very important year to go down this stronger common road.

I would like to thank everyone very much for the hard work that many have put in over the past year. I hope that in 2020 FEDECRAIL will be able to play the real and much needed platform role to preserve the heritage we have together.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a healthy and successful year 2020.

Jaap Nieweg  
President of FEDECRAIL

## ***Messages from society and what do we do with them?***

During our Jubilee Congress in Wernigerode in April of this year, attention was drawn from various quarters to the changes in the world and their impact on the members of FEDECRAIL or its affiliated organizations. It was a reason for HRA (UK) chairman to ask the members of FEDECRAIL to make our organisation more "member orientated".

This idea was also felt within FEDECRAIL and has led to a modernization plan. The core of the plan was discussed on the basis of a starting memorandum from the president during the board meeting at the end of September in Bilbao, at which it was decided to take the initiative to amend the articles of association and to increase the influence of the members within our organization as a basis for modernization.

Our current articles of association stipulate in article 7 how an amendment of the articles of association should take place. At the end of November, the council adopted the final texts for the renewal proposal, which are now being prepared for dispatch to the members via the notary and official translators. These Articles of Association will be on the agenda of the General Members' Meeting to be held in Leuven, Belgium, before 11 January 2020. In the morning preceding this meeting, the members will be invited to discuss with the board the first implementation plans within the framework of "Plan Paris" and the role of FEDECRAIL and the members in this first new "member orientated" project.

At the end of the General Members' Meeting, a short public board meeting is planned, to which the members are cordially invited. It will focus on issues such as the draft budget for 2020, which will be submitted to the members for approval at the Annual General Meeting on 25 April 2020 in Bilbao.

Article 7 of the current articles of association states that, in order to take a valid decision for amendments to the articles of association, two-thirds of the members must be present or represented. In the latter case, the secretary of FEDECRAIL sends a proxy form in which the member indicates who is authorized to vote on behalf of the member at the meeting on the item on the agenda. It is essential that the two-thirds of the members are present or represented. The proposal can only be adopted at this meeting if two-thirds of the members are present or represented and that with two-thirds of the voting rights. If this is not the case, a second meeting shall be held after one month at which decisions can be taken by a simple majority of the members present.

Everything is done to ensure that the 2020 Annual General Meeting can be held under the new regime. This should be the basis for greater participation by members in carrying out the many tasks that are needed at European level in order to achieve better continuity for affiliated members.

Jaap Nieweg

## ***A great loss: Tim Fisher died at the age of 73***



It was with a huge sense of sadness that I learnt of Tim Fischer's death at the age of 73 on Wednesday 21st August 2019. He had been suffering for some time from a rare form of leukemia; I had been aware of his therapy treatment, but each time I feared for his survival, he bounced back, full of vigour and enthusiasm. Literally, he seemed irrepressible. Sadly, this time it was not to be.

Tim was born in 1946 in New South Wales. After university, he returned to the family farm at Borro Creek near Wagga in New South Wales. Later he served in the Australian Army in Vietnam and on his return went into politics as a member of the Country Party, now the National Party, and after becoming a member of the Federal Parliament in 1984, served for three years from 1996-1999, as Deputy Prime Minister in a coalition government. He was also an ardent railway enthusiast.

I first met Tim changing terminals in Sydney Airport. Progress was very slow because he was literally besieged by many of his compatriots eager to shake him by the hand. We were both on our way to a conference on heritage railways which he was chairing. We became firm friends.

Tim attended the WATTRAIN conference in 2006 in Argentina and the subsequent triennial congresses until 2015; he was a very active supporter. He also attended two FEDECRAIL conferences and in 2009, while serving as Australia's First Ambassador to the Holy See at the Vatican, set up a special steam train out of the Pope's private railway station (built and given to one of his predecessors by Mussolini in 1932) in aid of the Catholic charity, CARITAS. Tim achieved this by displaying a typical flamboyant gesture when he presented his proposal to the College of Cardinals and was accused of trying to convert the Vatican Garden into a theme park. Being well prepared, Tim pulled out a photograph of the much-loved Pope John XXIII putting food parcels on a train at the Vatican bound for flood victims in Southern Italy. "So did His Holiness also try to convert the Garden into a theme park". He won the argument, and so asked FEDECRAIL to help promote and organise the train and we had a truly memorable day.

Tim wrote several railway books, which had a fairly international feel about them, as he was knowledgeable about the development of railways round the world. He also knew many of those involved in heritage railways, steam operations and museums. *Trains Unlimited in the 21st Century* gives an overview of railways, both modern and heritage, on a global scale. Indeed, its foreword was written by another of WATTRAIN's Patrons, Lord Faulkner of Worcester, President of the UK's Heritage Railway Association and a former trustee of the National Railway Museum in York, when he paid tribute to Tim's achievements especially on the railway front. The York museum is listed in the book's Top Ten "Greatest Railway Museums in the World" as are the B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore, led for over 20 years by Courtney Wilson, also a Patron of WATTRAIN, La Cité du Train in

Mulhouse and the Italian National Railway Museum in Naples.

Tim displayed a happy knack of coining memorable phrases such as “Low Speed 1” to describe the reinstated level crossing in Sheringham connecting the North Norfolk Railway to UK’s national network when he made a presentation to a largely French audience at La Cité du Train to loud applause.

Tim Fischer stood head and shoulders above his peers both figuratively and physically. He was a man of principle, committed to his deep held beliefs, but who gained the respect and affection of all those who came into contact with him, including his opponents. When he announced his impending retirement from national politics, the leader of the Labour opposition at the time described him as “one of the very genuinely loved people in this place” (the Australian Parliament). A real statesman, unlike so many of today’s politicians, whose like we are unlikely to see again. His departure from this mortal coil marks a very real and heartfelt loss.

David Morgan  
President Emeritus, WATTRAIN and FEDECRAIL

## ***"Cuco" fascinated participants of the youth exchange***

The FEDECRAIL Youth Exchange 2019 was a complete success: In August 2019 young heritage volunteers from all over Europe met at the Railway Museum Móra La Nova, Spain – a diverse group united by the passion for and involvement with heritage railways. What they worked out together exceeded all expectations. The young people, aged from 16-25, came from Ukraine, Poland, Great Britain, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and of course Spain. As in previous years the exchange comprised a combination of work activities, heritage railway and cultural visits, as well as an opportunity for networking and fun.

The main work project of the exchange was the small steam locomotive 020T MZA606 “Cuco”, with many participants; putting in long hours beyond those scheduled, bringing a wealth of experience from their own railways and making far greater than expected progress. Meanwhile some others busied themselves with infrastructure maintenance and preparing an electric locomotive for mainline testing.



Trips out were numerous, visiting the historic collections of AZAFT (Asociación Zaragozana de Amigos del Ferrocarril y Tranvías), FGC (Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya) and The Catalan Railway Museum, along with the contemporary maintenance depot of FGC and ADIF’s (Administrador de Infraestructuras Ferroviarias) high-speed control centre together with time for a quick trip around the historic centre of Barcelona. The young volunteers still

managed to find time to relax by the pool, share a drink and exchange perspectives and insights into their shared interests and industries.



Much too quickly the last night of the exchange arrived, FEDECRAIL Vice President Heimo Echensperger visited, a farewell ceremony was held, followed by a slideshow of the working life of the railways in and around Móra la Nova. Final 'Goodbyes', 'Au revoirs' and 'Auf Wiedersehen' completed the exchange leaving all with great memories and focused on the shared futures of our industry.

## ***Invitation to the FEDECRAIL Youth Exchange 2020***

The next FEDECRAIL Youth Exchange 2020 will take place in Great Britain, organized by the Heritage Railway Association in conjunction with the Seaton Tramway and the West Somerset Railway. The county of Somerset is located in the southwest of England and the Seaton Tramway in the neighbouring county of Devon. Invitation to the FEDECRAIL Youth Exchange 2020

This will be another great experience: The FEDECRAIL Youth Exchange 2020 will take place in the South West of England from Friday 31st July to Sunday 9th August. The hosts are member organisations of the Heritage Railway Association, the West Somerset Railway and the Seaton Tramway. Participants can expect a varied programme consisting of work experience at both of the hosts. Visits to a road steam and vintage vehicle rally and visits to other railway and historic venues are planned. There will be the opportunity to join in a variety of different cultural and organised events as part of the programme and to have the chance to network with the other international participants. Young people between 16 and 25 years and volunteer at a museum railway and interested in historic railways email at [youthexchange@fedecrail.org](mailto:youthexchange@fedecrail.org) , stating the intention to participate as soon as possible, but at the latest by the end of December2019.

## ***Lively media interest in FEDECRAIL at Tren de Sóller***

The media response to the visit of a FEDECRAIL delegation to the "Tren de Sóller" in Mallorca in October was enormous. Vice-President Heimo Echensperger and Jacques Daffis as liaison officer to Spain accepted the invitation of the narrow-gauge Mallorcan railway in the northwest of the island. The private railway company is applying for membership of the European Federation of Museum and Tourism Railways and met with lively media interest locally with this project. "Ferrocarril de Sóller SA" carries more than one million passengers a year, mainly tourists.

It operates the "Tren de Sóller", a train with historic vehicles on a 27 kilometre section between Palma and Sóller, as well as a five kilometre tramway connected to the Sóller railway station, which leads to

the port. The line was opened in 1912 and electrified in 1929. It is operated by four original electric railcars and original passenger cars too, in the rare gauge of 914 mm. Also the tram still runs with original vehicles. It was electric from the beginning. The line is operated with the original three tramcars and two sidecars from 1913. Open sidecars from Tranvias de Palma were added, as well as five old trams from Lisbon, whose gauge was adjusted from 900 mm.

During the visit there was a lively exchange of experience between the representatives of the private railway company and FEDECRAIL.

## ***Bilbao Conference 2020 with attractive program***

The FEDECRAIL Conference 2020 will take place from 23 to 28 April in the Basque city of Bilbao on the north coast of Spain. Following the six-day main program, there will be the opportunity to take part in an additional tour through the narrow gauge landscape of northern Spain. Preparations are currently underway for an attractive overall program which will appeal to delegates and Friends of FEDECRAIL as well as to partners.



Not all the details have been finalized yet so that changes may still be possible. In principle, however, there will be again two business days: the main conference day for delegates and interested persons on Friday (24/04) and the meetings of the working groups and the FEDECRAIL general meeting on Saturday (25/04). Study tours begin on Sunday. Highlights amongst others will be: a visit to the Basque Railway Museum in Azpeitia, a small town outside Bilbao. On the way back there will be a visit to the UNESCO world cultural heritage bridge Puente Bizkaia and two different cable cars that offer magnificent views over Bilbao

and the Basque Country.

Furthermore a visit to the Basque capital of Vitoria/Gasteiz including a tram ride is planned followed by the Basque Railway Workshops at Lebario. The group will also be taken by metre gauge train across to San Sebastian/Donostia before crossing into France to Hendaye for an excursion on the rack railway at La Rhune. The rack railway with open carriages climbs up the mountain in a charming landscape breathtaking summit views making the excursion a not-to-be missed experience for all participants. A visit to San Sebastian (alternative to La Rhune) may be possible for those, who want to visit the European Capital of Culture in 2016, but only if there is sufficient interest.

The partners program always offers alternatives with exploring places, visiting museums (including the Guggenheim Museum) and shopping.

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