

Wattrain

The World Association of
Tourist Trams & Trains

NEWSLETTER

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**A MERRY CHRISTMAS
& A HAPPY NEW YEAR**

Editorial

The subject of Climate Change is the headline news today with an announcement that 195 countries have agreed a statement on how climate change is to be dealt with worldwide, largely by reducing the use of fossil fuels, and how the richest countries can assist smaller ones to cope with the requirements of implementing the legally binding agreement. For heritage and tourist trains the main issue may result in a serious decline in coal supplies. It has been suggested that of coal currently being produced worldwide, 83.2% should remain in the ground, implying that 16.8% of worldwide production of coal may continue. The future of coal therefore remains an important issue for Wattrain in the 2020s.

Adapted from "Landmark Deal, the key points", 'The Observer', 13.12.15. (London). The Paris agreement will come into force in 2020. All countries will together aim to limit any temperature increase to "well below" 2C above pre-industrial levels and will "each pursue efforts to limit this to 1.5C." These combined pledges are not enough to keep warming below 2C, so the text includes a five-yearly review mechanism. From 2020 richer countries will help resource "developing" nations adaptations to climate change. The deal includes a mechanism for addressing losses which vulnerable countries face, exempting the US from any such claims. All countries will voluntary cut emissions, with the long term aim of reducing these to zero by the second half of the century.

The Japan Congress October 2015

In helping to organise the conference we have to admit that the directors and I expressed concern about the fact that only basic information emerged from Japan. However the outcome was that superb arrangements were made by our hosts for the conference and the add-on visits as the following comments show:

"I had the privilege of speaking at the Wattrain conference in Japan. It was great to meet such a dedicated and passionate group of heritage professionals. It was exciting to hear that so many involved in the preservation of our collective heritage understood that the past can be made meaningful for future generations. While many think that our human species is the problem at this moment in history, perhaps we can deliver the solution - and museums can show how such solutions were found in the past - we created a machine (trains) that can deliver thousands from one city to another every hour - amazing! And Japan perfect place to have a train conference, thank you."

Stephen Ryan, Sydney NSW Australia .

"Sharing and discussing mutual concerns and opportunities at the WATTRAIN Congress in Japan was enlivened by the chance to experience world class railway museums, state-of-the-art high speed rail transport and top notch programs of heritage railway preservation."

Courtney B. Wilson, Executive Director, B&O Railroad Museums, US.

"Japan manages to couple the best of railways past to the very best of railways future - from the world's fastest narrow gauge steam locomotive to the latest generation Bullet Train, and beyond to the 600 kph Maglev. It was a Congress and visit programme to rival any: all went exactly to plan, with thoughtfulness and attention to detail second to none. Nothing was too much trouble, and we returned very much in our hosts' debt. It was a wonderful experience."

Neil (and Charlotte) Butters, Member of Railway Heritage Designation Advisory Board, Science Museum

Wattrain

"The Congress was a great chance to share & learn about common problems that Tourist Trains are facing today and, I hope that in the future, help us to focus on tomorrow problems. Besides it is always a good opportunity to gather the local operators who most of the time ignore the activity of fellow colleagues on the other side of the world".

Sergio Rodriguez Zubieta , Tranex Turismo, Argentina

"I have the feeling that WATTRAIN conference allowed us to get to know each other and offered the attendees the invaluable possibility of meeting people with whom we can make future alliances for the sake of the railway preservation".

Gabriel Asenjo, CEO GyG Metal Mecanica, Argentina.

We arrived from Australia and were provided with a truly wonderful experience, planned and delivered by our Japanese hosts. Like the Japanese Rail timetable the planning was carefully organised from accommodation through to the conference events ,and our exciting steam rail and Shinkhasen trips, every aspect of this conference was focussed on showcasing how Japan nurtures its tourist and heritage rail system. We were transported from last century to today and then the future , the theme of sustainability was not only discussed but on show as to how Japanese rail enthusiasts work to preserve the history of rail"

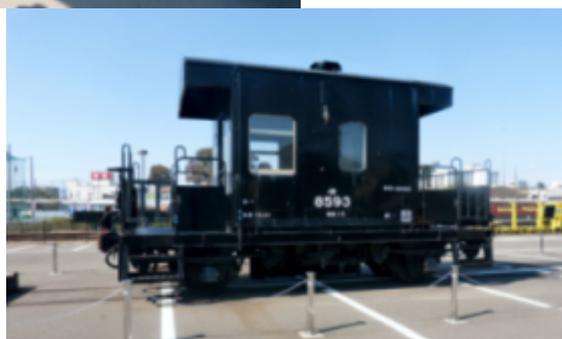
Clive Moore Melbourne, Australia

Some of the add-on trips of the Japan Visit MOOKA

A preserved and operational locomotive which was designed and built to run on compressed air. Unfortunately the unique design was not successful as it could not meet the power requirements for freight traffic and was very expensive to run. Today it is operational and gives rides to the public travelling in the preserved 'guard's van' shown left. To make it more interesting the locomotive chimney is fitted with a smoke generator as compressed air is invisible!

I understand similar locomotives were built in Germany but also proved to be very expensive to run and unable to meet traffic requirements.

The station buildings and locomotive shed were design and built in a very unusual form of a steam locomotive!



Wattrain

The Old, new and preservation of steam

One of the attractions of Japan are the superb 'Shinkansen' (bullet trains) covering a large part of the country and first introduced in the 1960s. Today the network consist of 2,615 km (1,625 miles). The current maximum speeds 240-320 km/h (150-200 mph).

You are introduced to the trains via many platforms 'fenced with gates'; the trains stop precisely for you to board your numbered coach. All trains we travelled on were on time and it is very rare for trains to be late. Most trains arrive and leave within 1 minute! The other notable point is that our train terminated at Tokyo and once passengers left the train a small army of cleaners thoroughly and rapidly cleaned everything.



One of our most interesting visits was to the works of JR Central where the future 'Maglev' trains are being built and tested. The trains are currently operating on a 27 mile test track where one train set a world record reaching 603 km/h (375 mph)

The first line to be built will be between Tokyo and Nagoya, 286km railway taking just 40 minutes! The line however will not be built until 2027 th construction costs estimated at \$100bn (£67bn). Not so interesting for rail enthusiasts as 80% of the route will be through tunnels!

Japan, of course, led the way with the "Shinkansen" services all over the country. The 'Maglev' system is operational in China with other projects at the planning stage in the United States.

Another interesting visit was to the main works in Omiya city where the suburban trains were serviced. Such is the efficiency in that coaches are fully overhauled in three days.

It was quite a surprise too to see a 4-8-0 locomotive being overhauled in the main shops. A specialist team work on one locomotive a year belonging to one of the preservation societies. The overhauls are provided free of charge as their contribution to Japan's railway heritage.

We were generally impressed with all steam operations in Japan where all systems followed the norm in being on time.



Japan 2015



One of only two of the seventy trams running on the morning of August 6, 1945 to survive the A-bombing has had some loving care and a new paint job and will be making special runs through the city this summer. Wattrain delegates had the special privilege of travelling through the city on the newly preserved tram. Despite such terrible damage, streetcars started operating again on August 9, only three days after the bombing.

"Our mission is operating streetcars so we couldn't rest when they were brought to a halt by the atomic bomb," recalled Yukiharu Nakagawa, 79, who was in charge of maintaining the system's power lines. Despite a severe lack of labor and equipment, the workers were motivated by their determination to resume streetcar services in the city.

The Hiroshima atomic bomb site was particularly moving. The sun rises over the Atomic Bomb Dome, the only building to survive the area of direct strike. At 8:15 a.m. on 6 August 1945, "Little Boy" the first atomic bomb to be used in war, was dropped by the United States Air Force from 'Enola Gay', by a B-29 bomber. The force of the atomic bomb effectively obliterated the city of Hiroshima.

Because the atomic bomb exploded almost directly overhead, the building was able to retain its shape. The building's vertical columns were able to resist the nearly vertical downward force of the blast, and parts of the concrete and brick outer walls remained intact. The center of the blast was displaced 150 m (490 ft) horizontally and 600 m (2,000 ft) vertically from the Dome, having slightly missed the original target, the distinctive "T"-shaped Aioi Bridge.



Wherever we went in Japan e.g. Senzu, Oigawa Railway there was a warm welcome from local organisations who entertained us on the platform as our tour trains arrived. As well as costumed actors and drummers, some of our team were invited to show their own skills (or lesser skills) on drums in particular. Railway preservation in Japan is excellent and a number of preserved steam locomotives hauled trains on main lines, (but not where the Shinkansen trains operated!) One service was the Oigawa Railway to Senzu.

Most had teams of volunteers who were welcoming us and, with English being their second language, presentations and conversations were easily understood. Railway preservation (over 50 organisations) in Japan is thriving.

Other visits in Japan.



A change from visiting railways was a trip along the wild River Hozu-gawa nineteen kilometres long. The very experienced crew were also comedians. Their steering of the boat caused some concern as we headed towards the rocks only for them to skilfully steer us away with smiles on their faces. It was hard work for the crew but as they were all very skilled they were able change duties between rowing, steering and guiding us past rocks as well as keeping us entertained.

A very pleasant journey through glorious scenery.



What was particularly amazing was that a main line railway followed the river over very difficult ground conditions crisscrossing several times from one bank to the other. Whilst railway construction all over the world had their difficulties, we gazed in wonder at the expertise of the railway construction engineers building this line in such treacherous conditions. As far as we could see there were no roads near to the railway and we later learned that all materials for the building of the line were by river boats.



The Railway Museum was opened in 2007 in Saitama City, (Greater Tokyo) by JR East. It recounts the history of a railway, exhibits many historic vehicles, teaches train operation using interesting simulators and explains railway technology as it evolved over the years.

The museum's big collection of historic trains includes steam and diesel locomotives and retired Shinkansen passenger and freight cars. Many of them can be entered and viewed from below. The museum further showcases one of Japan's largest dioramas. In another section, railway concepts, science and systems are explained through models and hands-on activities.

The Japan Conference

A copy of the **REPORT OF THE TOKYO PROCEEDINGS** will be available to all Wattrain members in January/February 2016, covering:

Day One

- ✪ "Keynote Speech by our Patron: Courtney Wilson (US)
- ✪ "Sustainability in Tourist Trains": Sergio Rodriguez Zubieta (AR)
- ✪ "Achieving Sustainability by delivering a Social Dividend": Chris Le Marshall (AU)
- ✪ "Railway Heritage Preservation in Japan - A brief history": Tatsuhiko Suga (JP)
- ✪ "Reviewing and Redefining Sustainability": David Morgan (UK)
- ✪ "Tourist Railways, Trams, Railway Museums in Continental Europe: Stefano Benazzo (IT)
- ✪ "The Permanent Challenge of Reducing Costs in Steam Locomotive Restoration": Gabriel Asenjo (AR)
- ✪ "The Future of Coal": David Madden (UK)
- ✪ "Restoration of Class C11 Steam Locomotive at Oigawa Railway": Hiroyuki Ishikawa (JP)
- ✪ "Starting Over: Taking a Fresh Approach to Building a Museum in the 21st Century": Bob Laprelle (US)

Day Two

- ✪ "Having Your Cake and Eating it?": Stephen Ryan (AU)
- ✪ "Rikubetsu Galaxy Railway" Invigorating a remote town in Northernmost Hokkaido": Takemasa Sugimoto (JP)
- ✪ "Keeping on Track - for a Sustainability Future": Clive Moore (AU)
- ✪ "Katagami Railway Preservation Society": Seiji and Naoko Morika (JP)
- ✪ "The Story of La Trochita Railway - Sustainability of the Patagonian Express: Dario Dukart (AR)
- ✪ "Tourist Trains in South America" Luis Gutierrez (AR)
- ✪ "Energy & Efficiency Grounds with respect to our industry: Shaun McMahon (AR)

The afternoon was taken up by an Open Symposium for the general public organised by the Railway Preservation Society of Japan (RPSJ). Questions on World Heritage Railways were put to a panel comprising Tatsuhiko Suga (RSPG Chair): David Morgan (UK), Clive Moore (AU), Stefano Benazzo (IT), Ian Leigh (UK), Yunichi Yoneyama (JR) and Gabriel Galizia. (AR)

The Report of the Proceedings will normally only be available as a download but we will consider printed copies if there is a demand. Downloads are also available covering the 2012 York (UK) conference.

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www.wattrain.net

