

# Wattrain

The World Association of  
Tourist Trams & Trains

## NEWSLETTER

No. 3 April 2015



### Dates Confirmed

The second International Congress of the World Association of Tourist Trams and Trains in Japan  
October 23rd 2015 to October 30th 2015

This follows the highly acclaimed first International Congress held in the UK at Leeds and York.

## Japan, a land of surprises.

### Report by David Morgan, President of Wattrain

WATTRAIN is holding its triennial assembly and seminar in October this year in Japan. So far, the organisers of international seminars on a global scale have been held in Switzerland (2003), Argentina (2006), Australia (2009) and the UK (2012). So you could say that it is now the turn of Asia to host our next seminar. It is true that this is one reason that we have chosen Japan to hold our next one, but this is not the only reason. The country has some very interesting railway heritage, much developed by European influence being a later development than many, as well as some beautiful scenery. There is in fact considerable public interest in steam locomotives.

When I visited Japan for the first time in 2008, I was taken to the new railway Museum at Omiya, where we will be holding our business meetings. In the first year when I went, it



attracted nearly two million visitors. Conversely, Japan led the world in building the Shinkansen high speed network for



*Mooka Station, a station shaped as a steam locomotive.*

its bullet trains, the first line opening in 1964. I can tell you that there is little to match the thrill of standing on a platform of a station dissected by such a line when a bullet train tears through it at over 200 mph (320 kph).

Japan does not have the tradition of volunteering that we enjoy in the UK and many western countries, so many of the steam lines are run by local government, such as the Mooka Railway which we will be travelling on during our congress. Encouragingly, the railway which was saved from closure to maintain a passenger service for the local community, makes a strong feature of its railway past with a small museum and a demonstration of a large locomotive operating under compressed air to explain steam technology to large crowds of children and their parents.

Since my first visit, I have made two more trips, last year and March this year to discuss the preparation for our conference in October, backed up by a visit in February made by Chris LeMarshall, our Australian Vice-President. The brunt of the organisation will be borne by the Nippon Travel Agency which is the third largest in Japan, specialising

in organising conferences and conference tours and is partly owned by the West Japanese Railway Company. Wendy Chang, (who speaks perfect English) is a member of the Events & Convention Produce Team in their International Travel Division and will be our main contact.

It was clear from my meeting in March that the Agency had obviously done a lot of homework and had clearly been well briefed by our host Mr Taksuhiko Suga. They presented me with a detailed timetable and a list of other very useful information.



## Conclusion

The meeting results can be summarised as follows:

- Their schedule proposes the opening of pre-registration in mid-April. Please see [www.wattrain.net](http://www.wattrain.net). Any problems or further information please email [david.madden@wattrain.net](mailto:david.madden@wattrain.net)
- Full registration will not start until 1st July 2015 but pre-registration will facilitate negotiations with the hotels; it will also give more certainty to room reservations.
- I suggested that we should differentiate between double bedded and twin bedded rooms and ask registrants whether they wish to share. In Tokyo, the cheaper hotel has a large number of single bedrooms. The more expensive hotel is quite plush and grand. Both are about seven minutes walk from Urawa Station.
- The confirmatory registration will have a deadline for payment in September; their preferred method of payment is by credit card although the organisers will also examine payment by bank transfer which may be easier for those using their own umbrella organisation or even travel agents handling their flights.
- An important point is that the organisers do not recommend the use of the Japan rail passes as the organisers can get better value through group travel; although the pass may be of value for those extending their visit to Japan or after the conference.

The Japanese appreciate the value of their railways, their past and their potential for the future. It is a fascinating country well worth a visit for a wide variety of reasons.

At the conference, we will be discussing the viability of the heritage and tourist sector and how best to ensure



its sustainability in the future. We hope as many will come as possible to put forward your own views and to listen to the ideas of others.

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## Tourist Railroads & Railway Museums (ATRRM)

### ATRRM Travels to Texas by Don Evans, West Coast Railway Association.

We travelled to Tyler, Texas to attend the Association of Tourist Railway and Railway Museums annual conference in the first week of November where we met our Chief Mechanical Officer Robert MacBeth.

The middle portion of the McKinney Avenue Transit Authority uses original Dallas streetcar tracks.

The new downtown loop will open in 2015, bringing the streetcars into the center of downtown permitting the use of single ended cars. The big news is that construction of the loop extension into downtown Dallas is finally under way after many years of planning. This will bring streetcars into the heart of downtown instead of ending at its edge. The loop passes within half a block of a light rail station, so now MATA will connect with LRT on both ends of the line. Having loops and turning facilities all along the line will permit the use of

single ended cars for the first time, taking pressure off the small number of double enders.

### The turntable at the Dallas Metro station.

Next we headed to Frisco, TX where the Museum of the American Railroad is getting re-established. Director Bob LaPrelle gave us a preview of the planned construction of their new museum, and we wandered the three lines of equipment which had been moved from their previous site at Fair Park in Dallas. To accomplish the move of the two buildings and more than 40 pieces of rolling stock—which includes Big Boy 4018 and Frisco Northern 4501—was a major accomplishment in itself and was done with the co-operation of four railroads! Now the long road of constructing the new museum to house the collection gets underway. Also in the line was newly repatriated Alco PA-1 Santa Fe #59 (which came to the museum after careers on ATSF, the D & H, then



Mexico and finally back to the US via the Smithsonian Museum). While it may be hard to imagine this shell being rebuilt into its Santa Fe glory, one needs only look to what Doyle McCormack has done with a sister PA in Portland Oregon, which is now resplendent as Nickel Plate #190.

Thursday, November 6—a highlight as we spent the day on the Texas State Railroad. We started at the depot and shop at Palestine, and they pulled the large Texas & Pacific 2-10-4 #610 outside for us all to see and photograph.

Meanwhile, Magma Arizona 2-8-2 #7 got set for the day's run and coupled onto its six-car passenger consist for the 25 mile run to Rusk. It was a great ride, as #7 strode well along the good right of way, the sounds of steam at work were great as she handled the train over the hilly line (grades of up to 2.2 percent) beautifully. There were also a couple of photo run-bys on the way to Rusk, where we enjoyed a great bbq lunch on arrival in the State Park there.

A cab walk through at Palestine then we saw 2-8-0 #300 nearing completion in the shop (photo above) and their RS-3 #7 along with many other locos and rolling stock. Later the ride was repeated back to Palestine, and we enjoyed the sounds and sights from the open air observation car. A great day, then back to Tyler for the opening reception of the conference where we met old friends and enjoyed the evening together. HIT Entertainment sponsored this evening reception.

Friday, November 7 was spent with the ATRRM board in the morning, and then the seminars started in the afternoon. As always, learning from others in the field of railway preservation and operations is one of the main benefits of these annual conferences, and this one was no exception. In the evening, another hosted event—this time by the good folks at Rail Events.

Saturday, November 8 was another day of seminars and learning, along with time to meet with the many vendors who were at the conference as well. After a full day, the evening featured the closing banquet. It was a nice affair with the usual annual meeting items, and a very special guest speaker—Ed Ellis of Iowa Pacific Holdings—who told the story of how he bought his first short line railroad and built it into today's company with eight railroads in operation as well as Pullman Rail Journeys.

Sunday, November 9 we packed up and wandered our way on back roads to Dallas (no significant rail sightings). A final dinner in Grapevine (where we saw the Grapevine Heritage Railroad train arrive back from Fort Worth with a GP 7 and four cars). It had been a good conference, and we look forward to visiting Illinois Railway Museum in 2015.



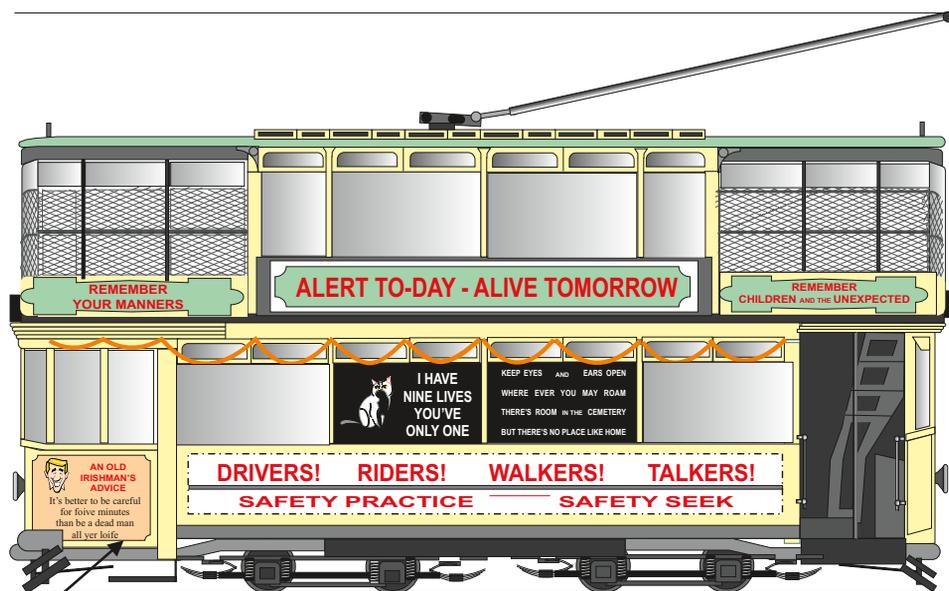
## A special tram in Dublin (Irish Republic)

Following my report on the USA “Big Boy” I thought I would this time include another important part of WATTRAIN namely the story of a particularly historic Tram. The drawing of the tram above was made from a very old photograph (Circa 1901), apparently described as a ‘Dublin Tram’, although I understand from knowledgeable colleagues in the Irish Republic that they have no knowledge of such a tram. However it is a photograph and it may be a tram from other cities in Ireland. Is there anyone with more accurate information?

I would be grateful to receive details.

As many city streets were not paved at that time, normal carriages pulled by horses and later powered by electricity were often hindered by wet, muddy, or snowy conditions. This tram was clearly being used to promote safety on the basis that people walking nearby might have thought that the tram could easily avoid them by swerving out of the way which may have been the case with other early vehicles. This was, of course, impossible as trams followed rails in the road, hence the very public safety message shown.

There is one other particular hazard associated with early trams powered from a trolley off an overhead line. Since the tram relies on contact with the rails for the current return path, a problem used to arise if the trams were derailed or if it halted on a section of track that had been particularly heavily sanded by a previous tram when the tram loses electrical



The words in the poster might not be very clear at this size but in splendid Irish/English it reads “An Old Irishman’s Advice - It’s better to be careful for foive minutes than be a dead man all your loife.”

contact with the rails. In this event, the underframe of the tram, by virtue of a circuit path through ancillary loads, is live at the full supply voltage, typically 600 volts! Any passenger stepping off the tram completed the earth return circuit and could receive a nasty electric shock. In such an event the driver was required to jump off the tram (avoiding simultaneous contact with the tram and the ground) and pull down the trolley from the overhead wires before allowing passengers off the tram!

David Madden. Contact: david.madden@wattrain.net

## The issue of sustainability

Sergio Rodriguez Zubieta, of Argentina provided a superb speech at the 2012 conference on the subject of “Alternative Strategies To Face Economic Problems In Time Of Recession”. In the Japan conference Sergio will be addressing the conference on “Sustainability”, which is the main theme of the conference. He describes his speech as follows:

Before going ahead with the topic, I warn you that my background is as a structural engineer and I do not specialize in environmental topics, neither linguistic, therefore I kindly ask you to take my words as a simple opinion, without academic foundation.

The word sustainable refers to something that can be sustained by itself. On the other hand we could talk about something that can be sustainable (or viable) with the time, meaning something that can stand on its own thanks to the economic, social or environmental conditions that allow it,





thquake or man can destroy it. However, viable development also takes into account the social, political and economic conditions of the social group as a whole, which incorporates the human vision, that men can further develop, besides to meet their needs, and that their actions should take care of the environment and the natural ecosystem in which they live.

Hence, something shall be really sustainable (or viable) if it can be sustained in the long run without becoming dependent. The whole group of men work together to preserve it. That is the reason why the concept of the three pillars of sustainability is very important.

### Economic, Sociocultural and Environment.

And all the actors must work together to achieve this, almost impossible, goal. Particularly with trains. Why?

Because we can achieve a self sustained eco-environment, or house (like the biosphere projects) static on a site. But a train is a moving thing, changing landscape and environment all the time.

therefore it can be sustained without affecting the environmental resources. What is the difference then between sustainable and viable? Sustainable development is only concerned with the preservation of natural resources to ensure that future generations can also have the kind of resources to satisfy their needs. But it is not a permanent state, fire, ear-

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## Interested in Japan, its culture and people?



We have been advised that local educational establishments, such as colleges and universities, may be sources of relevant information for those seeking to find out more

about Japanese language and culture. The whole group of men work together to preserve it. That is the reason why the concept of the three pillars of sustainability is very important.

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## Why not join Wattrain as a Member?

Membership is open to national and regional bodies, heritage & tourist railways and individuals.

New and existing members will receive a downloaded 132 page 'Report of the Proceedings' of the First Congress held in the UK in 2012.

As David Morgan says in his introduction:

*"Indeed, this is an important document that every director and general manager of heritage and tourist railways should have on his/her desk."*

