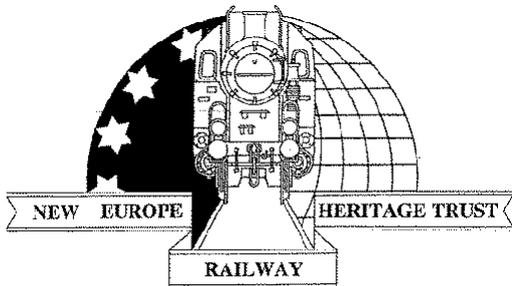


# Eastern Star



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## Steam Returns to the Sibiu-Agnita Railway



A remarkable event occurred on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2015. In the little village of Cornățel a 1911 Hungarian-built narrow-gauge 0-8-0 steam tank locomotive pulling a single coach bustled along a newly repaired two-mile length of 2ft 6 in gauge track. An unremarkable occasion in the UK but in faraway Transylvania it was

almost unique! In spite of the rain, colourful crowds milled round this unfamiliar spectacle. Could this really be happening? Could their little local railway that had closed some fifteen years ago really be re-opening?

This was the culmination of ten years of effort. From a gleam in the eye of Stephen Wiggs and Frank Cooper of NERHT combined with the enthusiasm of Jessica Douglas-Home, chairman of the Mihai Eminescu Trust, and lone Sibiu rail enthusiast, Mihai Blotor, an unlikely railway restoration project got off the ground. *(continued overleaf)*

Romania is a lovely country, filled with breath-taking countryside, stunning castles, fortified churches and resilient, friendly people. Its ancient history and glorious architecture is well preserved in cities such as Sibiu but volunteer-led attempts to preserve its more recent history, particularly narrow gauge lines, face a battle against official indifference, incompetence and corruption.

So against this background the sight of a lone steam locomotive with its haunting whistle echoing through the spectacularly lovely Hârtibaciu valley represented a significant achievement by the unlikely combination of local volunteers, a band of UK supporters, David Morgan and Livius Kooy from Fedecrail and Paul Brummell the British Ambassador to Romania. As Mihai Blotor said, 'This project is a fine example of international cooperation and grass roots friendship between people in different countries with different cultures but with shared ideals'.

In the months leading up to the Steam Weekend the local volunteers, supplemented by a SARUK working party in June with some international help from Germany, had worked long and arduously with the minimum of tools, to repair the track and to make the girder bridge over the Roşia river safe again for train travel. A SARUK delegation arrived several days in advance of the event and was able to help with finishing touches such as getting the rails back over the repaired locomotive pit, resleepering on the approaches to the bridge and securing the water supply from the original well.

Over 1000 people attended the event in unseasonably wet conditions, but the rain wasn't going to deter the locals who were delighted to see the Mocăniţa return to their valley. Happy enthusiastic faces, excited children and smugly satisfied, steam-addicted adults, were reward enough.

Every journey starts with but a single step said Confucius and this was perhaps that first step for the SAR, but now the hard work begins. To that end a Bucharest law firm has been retained to sort out the legal tangle and to determine the exact status and ownership of the land on which the railway runs. This is with a view to transferring responsibility for the administration of this National Historic Monument to a Consortium of Local Authorities specially established for that purpose. The firm has made considerable progress but they are a professional firm and this is a commercial commitment. This critical exercise, which is fundamental to the restoration of this remarkable railway line, needs financing. We are therefore soliciting help with this aspect of the project. All donations towards the legal fees that will help this project to becoming a NEHRT-inspired success story will be gratefully received. Please make out you cheques to SARUK and send to Frank Cooper, 47 Holmes Road Stickney Boston PE22 8AZ. Thank you.

David Allan

(The picture of the train at Cornatel is by Radu Tompa)

**Postscript.** Mihai writes that the Hosman station area has now been completely cleared by men from Cornatel, that is from the level crossing up to the far end of the grain silo, where the siding ends. Interestingly, the siding is in far better condition than the main line, sleeper-wise. There was an approach by a lady from the British Embassy at the request of the Ambassador's wife, who liked so much SAR mugs at the Steam Event that she decided to order a lot to sell to the embassy's guests, promoting Romania at the same time. They were to be accompanied by a short description of the SAR project. A new order was placed for mugs and they have now been delivered for despatch to the Embassy.

### Some thoughts on a recent tour of the Baltic States

Some members will know I have visited the Baltic States many times since 2003, and have a particular affection for Lithuania. In July this year I went on a tour with the *Rail Europe Railway Enthusiasts Society*, a train spotters club which travels all over Europe by minibus collecting train numbers. Not a hobby of mine, but it provides an opportunity to visit many places denied to normal tourists. It can be hectic travelling from one station or depot to another, and doesn't allow for in-depth investigation of the venues, nor in-depth discussions with railway staff, so I offer some impressions only of the tour. Earlier editions of *Eastern Star* have covered the Baltic States railways, and as NERHT's 'expert' on the subject, I will continue to keep members informed of developments.

Andris Biedrins of the Banitis narrow gauge railway based in Gulbene in Latvia gave a talk about the railway at the NERHT AGM, so it was interesting to see the steam locomotive Гр N<sup>o</sup> 319 Ferdinands (Gr 319) which was returned to steam in June 2014. *Baltic Railways Magazine No 16* and the railway's website contain accounts of the reconstruction. At the time of our visit, Гр N<sup>o</sup> 319 was on shed, but other trains were running, including one headed by steam.

Another new development was the narrow gauge station at Panevėžys in Lithuania. An article about developments on the ASG Siaurukas railway written by the Director, Gintaras Kerbedis, appeared in *Eastern Star No 56*. The new station is very impressive, and the wasteland that surrounded it when I visited in 2013 has been landscaped, with the collection of rail maintenance vehicles now under cover, but clearly visible to visitors. Opened in September 2014, the new station is built in a style allegedly reminiscent of stations at the turn of the 20th century, though I don't think a station of this design was ever at Panevėžys. In fact it is very different to the main line station which is a plain modernist concrete building. I like it (and am hoping to build a model to display my Russian- and narrow-gauge model trains and road vehicles). During my twelve years of visiting the railway, the main station has undergone two changes of cladding, and is now an attractive mix of white, silver and claret. With only three trains a day on the main line, I never cease to wonder how it ever justified the size of the station. *Bradshaw's Continental Guide* shows only three trains in 1913.

Our visit to Estonia included a visit to, and a train ride on, the Lavassaare Museum Railway. It was of particular interest to me, having written about the museum for magazines, but never been there. It covers a large area on which are many locomotives and other items of rolling stock. It has a 2 km singletrack 750 mm gauge line which takes passengers to the town and back. My photo shows two of its locomotives, a TU2 and a TU3. We had a ride behind K<sup>u</sup>4-332 before returning to Riga. I was surprised to discover the Railway hasn't a guide book for visitors. Many of the exhibits have A4 notices giving information, but like most people I like to have an informative keepsake



to remind me of my visit. On returning home, I e-mailed Mehis Helme the article I wrote about the railway for *Lennuk* (the magazine of the British Estonian Association) saying he could use it as an information sheet for visitors, and offering my services to produce

a proper guide book. I was told the museum doesn't have the financial resources to



produce one, so I am investigating ways of raising the cash for what I consider to be an essential part of any heritage railway.

The annual Steam Festival on the Jokioinen Museum Railway in July is well worth a visit. This is a narrow gauge railway which connects via a short walk to Humppila Station on the main line. It is a large affair, a cross between a railway gala with many engines in steam and hauling trains, and an historic vehicle rally. I didn't see any traction engines, though one is shown on the railway's web site, but there were some stationary engines operating wood-cutting

machinery. And a tank ! My picture shows its No 5, *Orion*, which was originally rescued and restored by the Welshpool & Llanfair Rly., on exhibition in Finland.

Tony Olsson

**Banitis.** The annual Latvian narrow gauge festival held in September 2015 was a great success, with several foreign guests enjoying rides from Gulbene and Aluksne and back in the five well-filled coaches hauled by *Ferdinand*, the preserved steam loco. We hope that several of our readers will be at the next festival which is due to be held on the weekend of 3 and 4 September 2016.

NICHOLAJS STEPANOV'S 1950-2015. We are sorry to hear of the death in October of Nicholajs Stepanovs, sometime leader of Gulbene Council, who served as a director of the consortium which has operated the Latvian narrow gauge railway since 2002. The support of the local authorities has been crucial to the success of this venture, and in all this Mr Stepanovs was a key player. Our sympathy goes to his family and colleagues.

**Baltic Railways Magazine.** As readers may know, the Lithuanian/English edition of this useful periodical has been discontinued (although there is a move to provide an English version in some form). Anybody who would like to obtain the Lithuanian/Russian version is advised to get in touch with [tonyolsson124@btinternet.com](mailto:tonyolsson124@btinternet.com) or Richard Tapper.

Issue No 19 is now out. Among its contemporary pieces is a notice that the Tallinn – St Petersburg passenger train has now been restored following its withdrawal earlier in the year. It is operated by Russian Railways and is a night service. There is also coverage of Latvian Railways' part in developing the port of Riga, and the new standard-gauge passenger service between Belostok (Poland) and Kaunas (Lithuania), a connection that no longer involves change of gauge, thanks to the new construction under the 'Rail Baltika' project. The new Stadler trains for Belarus also get full treatment. The well-illustrated historical sections include a history of the Ventspils railway network and another of the Liffland feeder railways; these include the Gulbene-Aluksne line, now better-known to us as *Banitis*.

**An enquiry.** During the recent visit to the Covasna-Comandau Railway, NERHT Chairman Stephen Wiggs was asked about the history of its 4-6-0T Kraus-built locomotive number 763-247. The management of the railway believed that the loco was at one time on the ASG Siaurukas 750mm narrow gauge line at Panevėžys in Lithuania. Our member Tony Olsson has been looking into this, and also consulted the Baltic railway historian Toms Altbergs, and the general conclusion is that there is no evidence that this locomotive ever worked in Lithuania. However, nothing is certain, and if any members have evidence that locos of this type ran on the Lithuanian narrow gauge, maybe during WW1, they are invited to contact either Stephen Wiggs, or Tony at [tonyolsson124@btinternet.com](mailto:tonyolsson124@btinternet.com) )

CFF crew beside 763 247 at Holomu, Romania

Photo Adrian Nicholls



## Russia

**Narrow gauge.** Several Russian narrow-gauge lines have English-language websites. Among them is the Apsheronk Railway, in the North Caucasus south-east of Krasnodar. This is a mountain line, unusually for Russia, and operates 37 km of route. Traffic is mainly lumber but general freight and passengers are also carried. It has an interesting history. In the late 1990s railway troops were sent to rehabilitate it and, it is said, left memories of bad workmanship and dark tales of corruption. This striking photograph by Anton Malyshev shows TU6p-0053 negotiating the highlands alongside the River Pshekha.



We hope to publish more about these narrow-gauge lines in coming issues.

**Moscow Metro** has its first toilet, at Prospekt Mira station. Internally it resembles an aircraft toilet, and it can be used by holders of the Troika card (and not, apparently, by holders of ordinary tickets). Perhaps to deter would-be long-term residents, it unlocks automatically after 15 minutes. One of its problems is that if someone opens its door but does not enter and then closes the door, it assumes that someone is inside and displays its bilingual *occupied* light for 15 minutes.

In Russia, when passengers are likely to make journeys longer than 60 minutes, intermediate toilet facilities have to be provided and with the Moscow Metro slowly expanding into the outer suburbs this situation has now been reached. Prospekt Mira is a central interchange station, so the placing there of a single one-person toilet is a neat way of conforming with the rules. It will presumably serve as a test-bed for further installations, although finding space will be a problem. Existing toilets for station workers are usually located inside the tunnel so would probably not be suitable.

## Ukraine

Ivor Harding has sent this picture of Su 2-6-2 251-86 at the head of a recent excursion to Hrebinka from the Shevchenko station in Kiev, a round trip of 244km, organised by the Ukrainian Railway Historical Association (AZIZU).



## Bulgaria

Tzanko Simeonov jubilantly informs us that on December 1 the restored MAN-SIEMENS tram 83/553 of 1935 was finally unveiled. 'We did it!' he writes. (Pictures can be seen at <http://bgtransport.org/?action=news&info=afa7e1156daae67af0ed46a3af0f8dec> )

This success follows the inaugural run of the massive 46-03 tank locomotive, which took place in October.

*Tzanko has also sent us the following summary of what Bulgaria offers. Although written for a different purpose, we think it could be of interest to our members,*

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## Bulgaria – the steam heart of the Balkans

**The history** of railways on current Bulgarian territory dates from 1866, when the first railway line between Ruse (on the Danube river) and Varna (on the Black Sea) was commissioned. In 1888 Bulgarian State Railways (BDZ) was founded. It was one of the first institutions founded in the newly-sovereign Bulgarian state. For 127 years of operation BDZ has become one of the symbols of Bulgarian statehood.

Nowadays Bulgarian railways attract passionate tourists from all over the world with their collection of preserved steam locomotives, passenger carriages and, of course, fascinating routes with picturesque scenery.

**Steam locomotives:** Bulgarian railways have a huge collection of preserved traction units. The most exciting units are currently in operation or accessible to the public at different places in the country. Among them is a steam locomotive manufactured in 1868 by Sharp Stewart of Manchester. This locomotive can be seen in the National Railway Museum in Ruse. Five standard-gauge (1435 mm) and one narrow-gauge (760 mm) steam locomotives are restored and ensure the operation of attractive trains (e.g. the Orient Express). Europe's biggest tank locomotive 46.03 (a 2-12-4T built in 1931) is the most recently restored locomotive in the BDZ's fleet.

**Passenger carriages:** The collection of railway carriages is not inferior to the collection of traction units. The oldest preserved passenger carriage built by Societe Construction Belge in 1867 for the Sultan Abdulaziz of the Ottoman Empire can be seen in the National Railway Museum in Ruse, together with several other carriages from 1894, 1902 and 1911. There are two sets of standard-gauge passenger carriages which form separate trains. The Tsar Boris's train (currently known as Corona Express) comprises 3 deluxe carriages, built in 1938-1939. The Todor Zhivkov's train (Vitosha Express) comprises 8 carriages, built in 1975. Another set of carriages is available for the trips on the narrow-gauge line Septemvri-Dobrinishte.

**Routes:** Bulgaria is rich in natural resources – high mountains, long seacoast, mineral springs, fields of roses, Renaissance cities and small mountain villages. All of them can be easily reached by train. Special trains for tourist purposes can be organized for one or a couple of days tours. The most attractive routes are:

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- **Septemvri – Dobrinishte.** Places of interest: narrow-gauge line, running up to the mountains Rila, Pirin and Rodopi, mineral water springs in Velingrad, the highest station in Balkans – Avramovo – 1247 m above sea level, ski resort Bansko;

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- **Sofia – Koprivshtitsa – Karlovo – Hisar – Plovdiv.** Places of interest: capital of Bulgaria – Sofia, Renaissance city of Koprivshtitsa, Rose valley near Karlovo, mineral water springs in Hisar, Ancient city of Plovdiv – one of the oldest cities in Europe;

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- **Sofia – Veliko Tarnovo – Ruse – Varna.** Places of interest: capital of Bulgaria – Sofia, Iskar gorge, the City of Tsars and one of the former capitals of Bulgaria – Veliko Tarnovo, the city called Little Vienna – Ruse, sea capital of Bulgaria – Varna.

## Railway museums in the Czech and Slovak republics

We are grateful to Svatopluk Slechta for the text and pictures which follow and which present a very full description of what is going on in the territory of the former Czechoslovakia. Because of its length, we are dividing this material into instalments.



The history of railway transport in the territory of present-day Czech and Slovak Republics is not very well known abroad. Part of the reason is the language barrier, and also the fact that the Iron Curtain divided Europe in 1948. Photography on railways was forbidden and mutual exchange of information with foreign countries limited. Regardless of this fact, many foreign railway enthusiasts visited local railways, even though they risked arrest, confiscation of photographic materials and expulsion from the country. The main reason for their visits were at the time unknown, but most importantly were nice-looking, Czechoslovak-manufactured steam locomotives with a remarkable design, particularly from the mid-1950s. They published several books about their findings, of which the most interesting was the Austrian publication *ČSD-Dampflokomotiven* by Helmut Griehl and the English publication *The Steam Locomotives of Eastern Europe* by A.E. Durrant. Many interesting publications also came out in Czechoslovakia, but unfortunately these were only in the Czech language. Today, the most interesting and comprehensive of these is the publication *Česká Stavba Parních Lokomotiv* [Czech Steam Locomotive Construction] by Karel Zeithammer and the final 'photographic release' by A.E. Durrant - *ČSD Steam Locomotives Carrying The Red Star*, published in Prague in the year 2015, in memoriam, in Czech and English language. In my opinion, of the books published in Great Britain, only Durrant's book *The Steam Locomotives Of Eastern Europe* aptly describes, in one of its chapters, the historical context and development of steam locomotives in Czechoslovakia. The book is written with such an overview that, even after the 50 years that will have elapsed since its first edition, it's still topical.

The first entity to document the history of transport in the territory of the present-day Czech and Slovak states was the National Technical Museum, opened in the year

1910 in the Schwarzenberg Palace in Prague. This museum, with the help of various professional groups, gradually created a basic collection of railway rolling stock, and gathered documentation on its manufacture, operation etc.. After the year 1970, other museums and entities dealing with the general issue of rail transport started to emerge. At present, there are approximately 80 state and private museums of various sizes, museum railways and private outdoor railways in the territory of the Czech and Slovak Republics. We can find an overview of these entities in the Czech publication *Malý Atlas Lokomotiv* [Small Atlas of Locomotives] by authors Bittner, Křenek, Šrámek, and Skála. The most important of these are shown on the above map.

Today, there are approximately 800 rail vehicles of various gauges in the territory of the Czech and Slovak Republics that can be described as historic, even though many of them do not have 'national technical monument status'. These vehicles are owned by various entities. The most interesting of these are of course locomotives, followed by diesel and electric passenger transport railcars. According to an unofficial estimate, a total of 337 historic locomotives have been registered. In terms of steam locomotives, for which the data is relatively the most trustworthy, a total of 241 have been saved, of which 167 are in the Czech Republic and 74 in Slovakia. Diesel locomotives have been saved, in total 67 (of which 14 in Slovakia), and electric locomotives total 29 (of which 14 in Slovakia).



*The Railway Museum of Czech Railways in Lužná u Rakovníka (2011)*

In terms of historic passenger and freight wagons, draisines and other special vehicles, the situation in the Czech and Slovak Republics is somewhat unclear. Czech Railways have registered approximately 250 historic passenger and freight wagons, while the Railways of the Slovak Republic have registered 140. For other entities, practically no public comprehensive inventory exists of everything that's available. According to the private records, another 350 standard gauge and narrow gauge

wagons in various technical conditions, are registered with other entities. However, we must take the above-stated figures as merely orientational. In many cases we don't know the owners, or the purpose for which the railway assets are intended. The reason for this unsatisfactory situation is the fact that, to date, no national or supranational association has been formed that would join together all entities with an interest in rail transport history and which would, among others, comprehensively map the current situation. Such an institution was formed at the start of the 1990s but unfortunately, due to considerable differences of opinion, it broke up, and with it its links to similar foreign institutions. Today, practically the only link to the European Federation of Museum & Tourist Railways (FEDECRAIL) exists via the company KHKD (History of Rail Transport Club).

If we look at the most important museum entities in more detail, this is how the situation looks today:

The largest collection of rail vehicles in the Czech Republic is owned by the National Technical Museum in Prague (NTM) <http://www.ntm.cz/en/en-muzeum> formed after the year 2000 as an associated organizational unit. This Railway Museum owns a collection of approximately 130 various rail vehicles. The vast majority of this collection was created in the 1970s, and the external Group for the Study and Documentation of the History of the Railways at the NTM was significantly involved in it. The collection contains representations of the most important locomotive series that moved on the lines of the former Czechoslovak State Railways. A tiny part of this collection is located in the main NTM building in Prague, while a significant part is in the depository of the museum in Chomutov (the former Czech Railways locomotive depot); the rest is in Čelákovice, Lužná u Rakovníka and other locations. Exceptionally interesting for visitors is the rail vehicle depository in Chomutov, which however is only open to the public 6 days a year!



*A parade of 423.0 series locomotives in Lužná u Rakovníka (Lužná 2006)*

The Czech Railways Museum (<http://www.cdmuzeum.cz/en/default.htm>) in Lužná u Rakovníka, is located in the premises of the Czech Railways locomotive depot. A well-maintained collection of steam and diesel locomotives is located in the depot premises, owned by Czech Railways, NTM and KHKD. With a bit of luck, one can see machines from series 534.3, 354.1, 475.1, 477,0, 556,0, 434.1, 354.1, 423.0, 464.0, 498,0 and others in working order here, as well as T 679.1, T 478.1, T 478.3 diesel locomotives, and the latest diesel locomotive prototype T 499.0, known by the nickname 'Cyclops'. The machine was repaired this year from the Winged Wheel Foundation's funds (Nadace Okřídlené Kolo). The Railway Museum also has its own maintenance premises available, where it can perform repairs of locomotives. It's open to the public every year, from mid-May to mid-October. The museum regularly dispatches nostalgic trains for

the public. An overview of special train rides is found on the internet at <http://www.cd.cz/volny-cas/nostalgicke-vlakly/kalendar-nostalgickyh-jzd/-13383/>. The museum also organizes interesting thematic 'meetings' of locomotives from various production series, with the active participation of foreign entities.

Herkules KHKD <http://www.khkd.cz/> is a private club which was founded in the year 1981, its function being collection and the renovation and operation of rail vehicles. The collection function has gathered historic vehicles which at present consist of eleven steam locomotives, three motor locomotives, three motor railcars and more than 70 passenger and freight railcars. Of the locomotives, the most interesting are series 354.7, 434.1, 555.1, 423.0 and others. KHKD vehicles are used for historic rides, rides for travel agents, and for the needs of film crews and exhibitions. One can come across the club's vehicles in Lužná u Rakovníka, or on the adjacent line between the Krupá – Kolečovice railway stations. During the summer holidays, the club regularly organizes rides for the public here. An overview of the rides is displayed on the club's website.

Výtopna Jaroměř [Jaroměř Locomotive Shed] <http://www.vytopnajaromer.cz/> was established in the year 1987 as a private museum. It has an interesting collection of rail vehicles, and has itself repaired several operational locomotives, of which the most interesting is a locomotive from the 423.0145 series. The locomotive shed regularly organizes nostalgic rides for the public on the dates listed on its website.



*Steam in the summer months on the Jindřichův Hradec narrow gauge line (2007)*

Jindřichohradecké Místní Dráhy [Jindřichův Hradec Local Railways] <http://jhmd.cz/> is a private company which arranges rail transport on two narrow gauge (760 mm) lines leading from Jindřichův Hradec to Obrataň and to Nová Bystřice. Regular transport is ensured by ČKD [Českomoravská Kolben-Daněk] TU 47.0 series diesel locomotives. During the summer season, steam locomotives head selected trains. Here, a visitor can find operational locomotives from Lokomotivfabrik Krauss & Cie. of the year 1898, Henschel & Sohn of 1907, Fabrica de locomotive Reșița manufactured of 1959, and Fabryka lokomotyw im. F. Dzierżyńskiego Chrzanów of 1953. The railway is found in a picturesque and touristically attractive part of South Bohemia, known locally as Czech Canada.

Kolínská Řepařská Drážka [Kolín Sugar Beet Railway] <http://zeleznicka.bloudil.cz/stranka/15-english.html> originally formed part of a 130 km-long system of beet-railways in the Elbe region. This line, with a 600 mm gauge and a length of approximately 10 km, was constructed in the year 1894 and led from the Kolín sugar factory to Býchory. It was abolished in the year 1965. The line was newly restored in the year 2011 and today enables the touristic operation of the BS 80 steam locomotive from the manufacturer ČKD, on a section about 6 km long (from Sendražice to Býchory).

Průmyslové Muzeum Mladějov na Moravě [Industrial Museum Mladějov in Morava] and its adjacent 10 km industrial line with a 600 mm gauge <http://www.mladejov.cz/> actually belongs among local attractions, particularly as far as locomotives are concerned. The museum owns 10 locomotives, of which the most interesting are 2 operational machines from the Kraus Linz locomotive factory, of 1920 and 1929. In the past, this railway transported shale from nearby mines to local furnaces for further processing. The production of fireclay, and the operation of the railway, ceased in 1991. Today, the railway is used exclusively to transport visitors.



*The now-operational U 57 001, originally designed for Bosnian railways (Třemešná 2014)*

Osoblažská Úzkokolejka [Osoblaha Narrow Gauge Railway] <http://www.osoblazsko.com/> is an interesting narrow gauge (760 mm) railway. Operation on the railway is ensured year-round by diesel traction. Of interest are the TU 47.0 diesel locomotives from manufacturer ČKD, which are reaching retirement age. Nevertheless, another gem is the loaned operational U57 001 museum steam locomotive, manufactured by the Škoda Works in Plzeň in the year 1932 for the Bosnian Željeznica Šumsko-Industrijskoj Preduzeća AD railway. The locomotive was loaned to Silesian Provincial Railways by Austrian friends from Club 760. The repair of the locomotive was completed by the Silesian Railways' own workshops in Krnov in the year 2009. Afterwards, it was put into museum operation. The railway operates daily, with the steam trains running only on certain days which are listed on the website.

Muzeum Průmyslových Železnic ve Zbýšově [Museum of Industrial Railways in Zbýšov] <http://www.mpz.cz/> . The local railway's history begins in the year 2005, when the original standard gauge railway used to transport coal from local mines was converted to a 600 mm gauge after mining ceased. The railway operates on weekends and summer holidays. An overview of train trips is displayed on the website.

Apart from this overview of the most interesting railway entities in the Czech lands, one must also mention one other company. This is 1. Kolínská Lokomotivní [Kolín Locomotive] <http://www.1loco.eu/> which, among others, was the first company in the Czech Republic in 50 years to produce a working replica of the Orenstein & Koppel narrow gauge steam locomotive (40 HP, 600 mm, 0-6-0T) in 2014. Today, the company regularly repairs museum steam locomotives, and is capable of producing practically any required museum machine to order.



A test run of a replica O&K steam locomotive in Sendražice (Sendražice 2013)

*(The Slovakian part of this survey will be published in our next issue)*

## Review

*CAILE FERATE IN TIMPUL PRIMULUI RAZBOI MONDIAL (RAILWAYS IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR) By Ilie Popescu. 297 pages. Published by Club Feroviar. Romanian text only. Hard covers, 24cm x 28cm. Profusely illustrated.*

The history of railways in the Great War has been described in numerous works, yet it is extremely interesting to have an account of this subject from a Romanian perspective.

The Romanians entered the war on the side of the Allies in August 1916. At that time it seemed that their main enemy the Austro-Hungarian Empire was about to collapse as a result of the Russian offensive under General Brusilov, yet by the end of the year most of Romania had been overrun by the Central Powers. In 1917 the Romanians rallied with support from Russia and France, only to be forced to withdraw after Russia made peace early in 1918. Just before the Armistice of November 1918 Romania re-entered the war and secured massive territorial gains in the peace process, especially at the expense of Hungary, which explains why many of the country's lines originally formed part of the Austro-Hungarian network. The present work does not just cover railways in Romania, and begins by outlining the development of military narrow gauge railways from the 1870s in France, the British Empire and elsewhere. The illustrations in

this passage depict some of the surviving WW1 military locomotives, including those now on tourist railways in Great Britain and elsewhere which will be well known to Western enthusiasts who however may be unaware of the plinthead examples found in South East Europe. The author goes on to deal with railways used and in some cases built by the Romanians and their enemies during the war, with chapters on specific topics including the Ciurea disaster (possibly Europe's worst-ever train crash) when an overloaded train carrying Russian and Romanian troops and refugees ran away and crashed into petrol wagons, leading to maybe a thousand fatalities. A later chapter describes the adventures of Romanian troops who manned two armoured trains on the Trans-Siberian Railway in the Russian civil war supporting the Czech legions fighting alongside anti-Bolshevik forces.

The captions to the illustrations (at least one on every page) will probably be understandable by those who do not speak Romanian. Unfortunately the volume contains no maps which would help non-Romanian readers understand more of this significant but little-known dimension of the Great War.

Stephen Wiggs

**Ukraine steam tour.** Wolfram Wendelin is organising another of his well-reputed tours for the week of 9 to 15 October 2016. The routes will be the Kiev area, and hilly country including the Carpathians and the Voronenko Pass, with plenty of photo opportunities. For these broad-gauge trips two, or three, ten-coupled locomotives will be provided. Additionally there will be a trip on the narrow-gauge Haivoron line behind GR-280. The price (single room) will be €999. Details from [wwlok@utanet.at](mailto:wwlok@utanet.at) or +43(0) 676 5025639

**AGM.** The NERHT annual general meeting will, as usual, be held at the Model Railway Club premises in London. It is at 14.00, 14 May, and proceedings will be followed by a presentation by visitors from the Covasna Comandau Forestry Railway in Romania. Non-members would also be welcome.

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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).

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