

Protocol of 26th. International Feldbahn Meeting 2016 in Lithuania from the 06. to 10. October 2016.

Thursday, 06. October 2016

Already early in the morning, partakers of the introductory program of the organizer were at the Klaipėda railway station. Participants from Germany, France, UK, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Russia, Romania and Switzerland gathered in the former narrow-gauge railway station. Here, the official welcome took place by the mayor of the city of Klaipėda, Mr Vytautas Grubliauskas and the sign "Lokschuppen-Bar" was presented to the promoter.

Afterwards a bus brought us to the peat factory Šilutė. This belongs to the German company of Klasmann-Deilmann which is well known to us through their turf railways in the Emsland region of Germany. In the outdoor area we could inspect a large number of 750mm gauge narrow gauge railway vehicles and other interesting material. Especially for us, a Russian TU2 narrow gauge diesel locomotive with two passenger coaches was ready to tour the peat railway. On the edge of the moor a photo stop was made and then preceded with the return journey. Unfortunately time was so short that we did not have the opportunity to photograph the discharge of a peat railway train at the factory. Also for the workshop visit there was only time for a short glance through the open doors. The reason for our haste being our lunch was waiting for us in the "Porto" in Plungė.

After lunch, a visit to the "cold war" military museum in plokštinėwald near Plungė was on the program. The site was a former Russian nuclear missile base with four rocket launcher silos. There was an exhibition which documented comprehensively the technology and the equipment, but also the devastating effects of nuclear weapons. It is interesting that the technology of the American nuclear weapons and other interesting exhibits of the western world were also exhibited. In addition to the workshops, control bunkers and underground living quarters, an empty rocket launch silo of considerable dimensions could be inspected.

The next destination was the small railway museum in Šiauliai. Here was the terminus of the 750mm narrow gauge line from Panevėžys which closed in 1980. In addition to some of the broad gauge exhibits there was also a 750mm-steam locomotive type KP4. This type was the most frequently built narrow-gauge locomotive in the world and has been built in China, Finland, Russia, Poland and the Czech Republic. The Dn2 in Šiauliai Lok PT-4-153 was built by the company Tampere Finland in 1948 works No. no. 660. Our mutual dinner was taken in the rustic restaurant "Čičinskas" in Panevėžys.

Friday, 07. October 2016

The morning was occupied with registration for the 26. International Feldbahn Meeting. In the engine shed, the meeting room and "Lokschuppen-Bar" preparation was made for the 26. International meeting. For decoration was there also a brigade passenger coach and a few typical "Feldbahn" exhibits. In the workshops there were several vehicles being repaired. Of particular interest is the reconditioning of their own steam locomotive KP4-708, from the Lokfabrik Chrazanow built in Poland. The steam locomotive, DN2 Babelsberg 15416/1951, which was lent for the 26. IFT, originated from Estonia and was restored in Latvia. In 1939 the Lithuanian Panevėžys narrow-gauge railway had a maximum line length of 416 km and was thus one of the longest continuous narrow gauge networks in Europe. Today, in the narrow-gauge railway "Aukštaitija Narrow Gauge Railway" 24 people are employed. The route still in use is 72 Km long.

The opening speech was held by the mayor of the city of Panevėžys Mr Rytis Mykolas Račkauskas, who is also the director of the "Aukštaitija Narrow Gauge Railway". Also on the second day there were bus trips on the programme. First visited in Raubonys was the historic wool mill Vilnų. In the past, water power drove the machines, nowadays the very dedicated

owner drives the 100 year old wool yarn machines, with the help of an electric motor and transmissions. The lady of the house offered coffee and tea as well as handicrafts.

The next visit in the Museum of Technology Sodeliškiai Dalius Linkeviäoeius in Schloss Biržai had a surprise for us, in the form of a loco mobile from the company of Case/USA, which parading under steam for the photographers and filmmakers. Also of great interest for us was the opportunity to visit the operating wind mill and the extensive exhibition of classic cars, coaches, etc. We had self-brewed beer and hearty snacks served as a starter in the open air. Afterwards we had the main meal with soup and dessert in a very fine building.

The city of Biržai is the terminus of the "Aukštaitija Narrow Gauge Railway". The narrow gauge line from Panevėžys to biržai is 78 km long and is at the moment closed. It remains to be seen if the re-opening can be realized. In the railway station from Biržai the hand trolley brought from Panevėžys were available for shuttle trips. Then on the program there was a visit to the Biržai castle with guide. The fortifications and exhibits in the arsenal of weapons are witnesses to over 400 years of war.

Dinner took place once again in the restaurant "Čičinskas" in Panevėžys. Then there was an opportunity for discussions in the engine shed and Georg Hocevar showed a contribution on the current state of the Romanian Forest Railways. The colleagues from Latvia showed a very interesting contribution on the progress of the 750mm gauge peat railway museum in Balozi, which we visited in 2014 when the International Feldbahn Meeting was held in Latvia.

It was during the meal time the steam train for the night drive to the railway station Raguvėlė (Rekstinas Forest) was prepared. In the Raguvėlė train station the steam locomotive was run round and in addition, a camp fire on the platform made for an autumn evening atmosphere. During the journey pastries were served, the drinks, we organized ourselves. Back in Panevėžys at the end of the evening we enjoyed once again the nightly manoeuvring of the steam train.

Saturday, 08. October 2016

In the early hours of the morning the steam train was again prepared for us in the Panevėžys narrow-gauge railway station. The passenger coaches were equipped with tables and in the bar, drinks and snacks were offered. In the accompanying closed goods wagons a generator provided the train with electricity. Therefore we were well prepared for the long day on the train. On the way, the train stopped in Raguvėlė where we had spent the previous night, to take water. On the program was a "train ambush". A demonstration battle between Russian soldiers and German soldiers with pickle helmets took place. After the battle the train continued to the station Anykščiai. The city gave its name to the "Aukštaitija Narrow Gauge Railway" and there also is the railway museum. We were greeted with a three gun salute. Christina, who already guided us during the visit two years ago, showed us once again the railway museum and enthusiastically explained the exhibits. Here was an additional steam locomotive of type KP4 from Skoda in Pilsen in 1949 with the factory number 2032.

In the planned photo stop on the bridge over the river Šventoji directly in front of the Anykščiai station, it was then somewhat confusing. Meanwhile the guest locomotive of Georg Hocevar from Romania, the "Bukovina' Dn2t Reghin 764-404R Year 1984 arrived in Anykščiai attached with two passenger coaches. After some shunting there was finally the possibility to take a few photo to the satisfaction of the numerous photographers and filmmakers. Just in front of the train station Rubikiai a provisional stop was made, only a few meters in front of the museum A.Baranauskas. Here a small presentation was made by the city of Anykščiai and the narrow-gauge railway and also lunch was served here. Back at the Anykščiai station both locomotives were placed next to each other and the participants gathered for the group photo. Despite the rain, the mood was good.

Back at Panevėžys railway station and engine shed, comprehensive shunting work was done on the extremely long tracks of the station before the vehicles were again properly marshalled and the steam locomotives fires doused . This evening the dinner was served in the engine shed so that without a great loss of time, the presentations could begin. First, Znin from Poland presented itself as the host of the International Field-Railway Meeting 2017 and gave a short overview of the preliminary program. The sign "Lokschuppen-Bar" was handed over by the current Lithuanian host to the 2017 Polish hosts.

Following this presentation, the candidates for the 28. International Feldbahn Meetings 2018. Georg Hocevar, detailed a possible program for Romania. The focus will be on the Wassertal railway from Viseu de Sus (Oberwischau) in the Karpten and other former forest railways with steam in Romania. To support their application Georg Hocevar brought with him the Romanian forest railway locomotive "Bouvina" that was the second locomotive that we admired on the day out on the narrow-gauge railway "Aukštaitija Narrow Gauge Railway". A second candidate presented itself, the narrow-gauge railway museum Těsovskoy from St. Petersburg in Russia (a former peat railway 750mm gauge) with an interesting lecture. As a third candidate, the field railway museum from Glossen in Germany, offered itself as venue, if no other candidate was found for the venue in 2018. Under the administration of Udo Przygoda from the Frankfurter Feldbahnmuseum there was a clear endorsement in the ballot for the 28. Int. Feldbahn Meeting to be in Romania. The applicant from Russia was asked to try again next year for a candidacy for a Feldbahn eeting.

This was followed by further lectures on the Stoomtrein Katwijk Leiden in the Netherlands and on the 40th Anniversary of the Frankfurter Feldbahnmuseum. At the end of the official event, Pieter van Ham from the Stoomtrein Katwijk thanked the host for the nice 26. International Feldbahn Meeting in Panevėžys/Lithuania.

Sunday, 09. October 2016

The remaining participants had the opportunity to visit once again the narrow-gauge railway station at Panevėžys. There a photo locomotive parade was organized. But also during this time the weather was very bad and the results of the photo parade are rather modest. The time came for goodbyes and the departure of the organizers and the other feldbahn museums and societies. We had experienced some very interesting times and there lay a long journey home before us.

Many thanks to the organizers of the 26. International Feldbahn Meeting in Panevėžys/Lithuania, as well as Mr. Gintaras Šileikis and Mr. Vismantas Užalinskas and Mr. Artūrs Tukišs from Latvia for their support.

A hearty goodbye to the narrow-gauge railway Panevėžys-Anykščiai-Rubikiai in Lithuania and see you again at the reunion at the Kleinbahn Znin in Poland.

Protocol: Udo Przygoda, Frankfurter Feldbahnmuseum e. V.