

Protocol of the 27th International Feldbahn Meeting 2017 in Znin / Poland, from 9th to 15th October 2017

Monday, 9. October 2017

Already early in the morning we met in the Museum of Coastal Défense on the Hel Peninsula north of Gdansk with the organizers and participants from Germany, France, Great Britain, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Austria, Romania and Switzerland.

The Museum of Coastal defence gun battery "Schleswig-Holstein" is located in the former bunker systems of the German Wehrmacht. The guns once had the task to protect the Gdansk Bay. Impressive are the three huge concrete bunkers Anton, Bruno and Caesar with their gun emplacements, in which the 406 mm guns could be aligned in a circle. Lunch was served in style from a field kitchen at Bunker Bruno. As the stretch of fieldbahn line with 600 mm gauge ran directly through the partially filled-in bunker, the museum track is split into two parts. A short stretch connected to the Bruno Bunker and a longer route, which is separated by the Caesar bunker. The longer of the museums track is still used by the military ammunition trains of the Polish Navy. In and around the ammunition bunkers for the 406 mm ammunition is a small railway museum, where the history of the three Hel railway networks with 600, 750 and 1435 mm to are documented. In addition to exhibited narrow gauge railway vehicles, there are also a few standard gauge vehicles. From here, we started our travel with two feldbahn trains. The Gmeinder 4257/1945, type HF50B pulled a photo goods train with four flat wagons, accompanied by Polish Navy soldiers dressed in German uniforms. A Polish narrow-gauge diesel locomotive built in 1955, Lokomotywa Wąskotorowa Spalinowa type WLS 40/50, pulled and pushed the accompanying passenger train. All the passenger carriages are built from parts of First World War brigade wagons.

In the afternoon, both trains travelled to the gates of the military harbour, and then traversed the greater part of the military ammunition railway. In total, there are still approximately 16 km of the once over 37 km long ammunition railway in the forest of Hel. The track has large radius points and is in excellent condition. The military has procured new diesel locomotives and flat cars.

A dinner with about 60 participants took place in the restaurant "Cutter" in the centre of Hel municipality in an almost homely and cosy atmosphere.

Tuesday, 10. October 2017

Today's destination was the peat factory Josefowo at Wilczęta (a German Village) near Elbląg (Elbing), in the former East Prussia. The special trip on the 600mm gauge peat railway, took place in two groups, in passenger trolleys and a diesel locomotive from the manufacturer PEMAL. The 3 km long journey lead first to the peat excavation area, which was circled in a large oval. Two derailments on the peat railway were part of the program, and we supported the rerailing routinely with combined forces. The discharging process of the peat trucks at the unloading point could be photographed or filmed at leisure. As a result of delays, a visit to the actual peat factory was not possible. The mid-day meal was in a rented hall in a horse stud farm in Młynary (formerly, Mühlheim). Late in the evening, we reached Znin.

Wednesday, 11. October 2017.

Our destination today was the “Kleinbahn” railway of Białośliwie (Weißenhöhe, formerly Wirsitzer Local Railway). The expansive and largely original train station and engine sheds could be explored at our own pace. The steam locomotive bn2t Borsig 11458/1925, from the Parkeisenbahn Posen, what was brought extra for this special trip to Białośliwie, was steamed up. Thus, the first part of the route journey included photo stops with the diesel locomotive type LD1-1 WLS 40 and a set of 1890s goods wagons converted to passenger wagons. After the return journey, the steam locomotive was placed between diesel locomotive and passenger cars and the ride started again. For the photo run pass, the diesel locomotive was uncoupled and the steam engine pulled the train without the diesel locomotive and with some difficulty passed the photographers and film-makers. The extensive lunch was enjoyed outside at the Gleisdreieck Czajcze. Here, we were able to enjoy the feeling and atmosphere of the “Kleinbahn”. There was a unique sight, as the small steam locomotive ran through the extensive turning triangle and crossed several roads. After lunch, the “Kleinbahn” train travelled further on up to the present (provisional) terminus at Wysoka. The train ride back to Białośliwie was carried out quickly with just one photo stop.

Thursday, 12. October 2017.

The registration and issue of documents for the 27. International Feldbahn Meeting were completed in the workshop office of the railway. The first official event on the program was the opening of the Kleinbahn museum with the private collection of Leszek Musial in Znin Train Station. Leszek is the long-term driver of the Px 38-805 Chrzanow 727/1938 and was also at our jubilee Celebrations 2015 in Frankfurt Feldbahn Museum at the regulator of Px 38-805.

in the immediate vicinity of the railway station, in the sugar factory, a marquee was erected for use as a dining and meeting place. The sugar factory is closed down and is currently being transformed into a hotel. The high factory chimney collapsed during the last storm in June of 2017 and is now unfortunately only half as high.

After lunch, all guest vehicles traveled in brilliant sunshine through the beautiful 11.7 km route to the present terminus at Gasawa.

In Wenecja Train Station is also the famous narrow-gauge museum with 600mm gauge rolling stock. In between times, there exists also on the site a hostel. Here also stayed some participants of the 27. IFT. Unfortunately, the museums rolling stock are still in the open and rust is slowly dissolving the locomotives and wagons.

In the afternoon, the official inauguration of the international Feldbahn Meeting at the sugar factory Znin took place. For the multilingual interpretation of the international Feldbahn meeting all participants had the use of simultaneously headphones. Thus, the previous time-consuming translations in several languages was no longer necessary.

In addition to the opening speech by Mr. Robert Luchowski the mayor, who is known to us for years, there were other official speeches. The investor for the Hotel Znin sugar factory, presented their interesting concept of the future use of the building.

After the official part was over, there followed various presentations of narrow gauge railways in Poland. Frankfurter Feldbahnmuseum was represented by a retrospect on the 27 years of

International Feldbahn Meetings by Udo Przygoda and a lecture about on news from 2016 and 2017 by Felix Grassel. During and after the evening meal, an interesting but loud Polish rock band played. The program recommended socialising which could only be implemented to a limited extent.

Friday, 13. October 2017.

On this day, extensive trips and photo stops on the route from Znin to Gąsawa were on the program. All five steam locomotives with passenger trains, various diesel locomotives - also with a tipper truck train - and various small vehicles were in use. The latter travelled mostly in the city park of Znin.

As a photo accompanying bus, an Old-timer bus, Jelcz 043 (Nickname Ogórek = cucumber) was used, which was also often used by the numerous photographers and filmmakers as a motive with the steam train. At a small kiosk with open air seating directly at the Znin train station, drinks and small snacks were offered. Within the Znin train station also various activities were demonstrated.

The 27. IFT has been heavily advertised in the city of Znin. Posters were hung all over the city and in the pedestrian area of the city hung a big banner across the street. As an additional program item, a secondary school presented a model railway exhibition.

In the evening, all five steam locomotives gathered at the recently refurbished turntable in front of the roundhouse - Steam Pure. A nightly spectacle, that will remain as a good memory for a very long time.

Before the dinner in the tent was served, once again a polish narrow gauge railway made a presentation of their line. During and after dinner there was live music. Afterwards there was still some time for socialising.

Saturday, 14. October 2017

In the morning, the roundabout at the narrow-gauge railway station was named after Leon Lichocinki. He was instrumental in the establishment of the narrow-gauge museum in Wenecja. The narrow-gauge museum is a lasting memorial to him.

Also, on this day were various train rides on the program. In addition, a small "Oktoberfest" took place in Gąsawa station. Here there was a student artist competition (amateur) with models and drawings of the Znin Kleinbahn. The participants of the 27. IFT were invited here at the Gasawa train station to partake in a mulled beer and sausages.

On Saturday evening there was a Night Steam Event with locomotives in Wenecja. With appropriate lighting and dry ice as a steam illusion, an interesting atmosphere was created. However, the steam train to this event from Znin had a considerable delay, since the opposite train on the route was stranded and had to be towed back by a diesel locomotive to Znin. But also, in Wenecja the old-timer bus was available once again and brought a handful of participants back on time to Znin for dinner.

After dinner, plaques and flowers were distributed to the locomotive crews and the organizers. The Deputy Mayor performed this task.

The obligatory group photo of the 27. International Feldbahn Meeting was in the tent, since some of the participants were already preparing for the return trip the next morning. Georg Hocevar presented an extensive and interesting program for the 28. International Feldbahn Meeting in Viseu de Sus in Romania. It is from 8th to 14th. October 2018. The program is already published on the website http://www.cfi.ro/1_7_XXVIII-Treffen.html. The choice of the organizer for the 29. IFT in 2019 unfortunately were not the Russian operators that were announced last year, so Peter Erk from the feldbahn demonstration railway at Ilmenau suggested his venue and was unanimously elected.

Finally, there followed a presentation of the Stoomtrein Katwijk Leiden, Netherlands.

Sunday, 15. October 2017

In the morning, the narrow-gauge locomotives were part of a parade at the Znin Stadtpark. First, came the five steam locomotives, then followed the diesel locomotives and finally the small vehicles as well as our own Hand lever inspection trolley. The interest of the inhabitants of Znin was remarkable and we enjoyed our “walkabout in the crowd”. The brilliant sunshine was an ideal condition for the obligatory group photo in memory of our pleasant days in Poland.

Before lunch, many participants had already left, thereby leaving many gaps in the seating arrangements in the grounds of the sugar factory tent during the meal. After lunch the 27. International Feldbahn Meeting dispersed. Only the Locomotive crews remained, some to help load the next day in Znin.

Many thanks go to the two organizers of the 27. International Feldbahn Meeting, Krystyna Patyk and Peter Erk; and both our tour leaders Marcus Schwebel and Reinhard Schönberger for the planning of the outward and return journey.

A Goodbye to the Kleinbahn Znin in Poland

And a reunion in Viseu de Sus in Romania.

Udo Przygoda, Marcus Schwebel, Frankfurter Feldbahnmuseum e.V.