

Inside Motion

June 2017

News and information for staff, volunteers and supporters of the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways



This newsletter is distributed to those who request it by email and is also accessible from the main website at www.festrail.co.uk along with previous issues. Diary and event information is also available online.

To be added to the email distribution list, please fill in the form at <http://tinyurl.com/pmjl6ue>

All contributions, details of group meetings etc to insidemotion@ffwhr.com

'WELSH HIGHLAND STARS'

15th-17th September 2017

Intensive three-day timetable featuring passenger, vintage, freight and mixed trains

Details to follow on our website and Facebook

RHEILFFORDD ERYRI • WELSH HIGHLAND RAILWAY



festrail.co.uk



01766 516024

The annual **Welsh Highland Railway** Super Power weekends are always worth a visit, but this year's three-day event taking place from September 15-17 promises to be special.

As is normal for this weekend, there will be an intensive service operating over the three days with many additional departures over and above the standard Welsh Highland service trains. We have set a precedent for unique workings in previous years and we have no intention of stopping now!

There will be passenger, vintage, freight and mixed trains running throughout the weekend, and consequently many favourites from the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland fleet of locomotives will be in use for people to enjoy.

The Snowdonia National Park through which the railway runs is well known for its stunning and varied landscapes which of course can be admired from the train during daylight hours, but are you aware that Wales now leads the world in the percentage of its territory enjoying protected status for its night skies? Snowdonia National Park is now an International Dark Sky reserve, only the tenth place in the world to gain this status, and it is our intention to celebrate this achievement at the gala with a number of special opportunities for visitors to enjoy.

We will be in a position to reveal further details in the fullness of time, but in the meantime please mark the dates in your diaries! - Tickets will be available to purchase online in the very near future.

We need your help to prepare for the event, and to put it all away again afterwards... We will need people Wednesday and Thursday 13th & 14th September. Those who are travelling some distance would be welcome to join the North Wales Group for their monthly meeting at the Mountain Rangers Social Club, Rhosgadfan, on Wednesday 13th. Real Ale and Sandwiches available as well as entertainment in the form of Mr John Ellis Williams' superb photography of all the latest developments on the WHR, will be provided.

Help is then required Friday to Sunday 15th to 17th to help with stewarding, manning stands etc all through the day and evening on both Friday and Saturday. Finally assistance will be needed to put it all away again on the Monday.

Anyone who would like to be involved in this popular event please let me know your availability and we'll find you something to do. Contact Tym Crowther – andy@tymcrowther.eclipse.co.uk

Sibiu Agnita Railway (UK)

Volunteer working party - 11-17th September

Steam returns to the railway in September and it is planned that trains will operate throughout the weekend 16 – 17th September to Hosman for the first time since the railway closed in 2001. Although a lot has been done, much work is required to achieve this aim, and we will be taking part in work that includes...

- Point timbers need replacing at Hosman and track lining and levelling
- Ballast must be dropped and tamped into place
- Rotten or missing sleepers need replacing
- Fishplates and joints need to be checked, greased and tightened and bolts replaced
- Track at Hosman station needs to be dug out from debris currently covering the rails
- Level crossing warning signs need restoration, repair or replacement
- Kilometre marker posts need to be repainted
- Weeds and grass needs cutting and strimming
- Information and interpretative display panels require installing

Since its formation in 2011, SARUK has given support to the group of individuals in Romania who have the intention of seeing trains run again on the 760mm narrow gauge railway that ran between Sibiu and Agnita in Transylvania. They have formed a society called the 'Friends of the Mocănița' (Asociația Prietenii Mocăniței) that undertakes practical work to rehabilitate a five mile long section of the line between the villages of Cornatel and Hosman for occasional use with a steam locomotive and passenger carriages. In addition they organise activities to raise awareness of their aims and objectives and take part in sponsored fundraising events such as running various distances to full marathons...Behind the scenes, SARUK and APM members are working to secure a long-term sustainable future for the railway and to protect and preserve a neglected part of Romania's heritage.

Previous working parties have seen SARUK volunteers assisting with the reconstruction of concrete capping beams along the edges of an inspection pit at Cornatel station, changing of sleepers and point timbers, painting of ironwork on metal bridges, weed killing, cutting back of undergrowth, splitting old sleepers into firewood for use as locomotive fuel, operating a petrol powered pump to lift water from a well to fill the locomotive's tanks, surveying the line and its structures, jacking and packing the track to take out dips and level sunken joints, replacement of rails, shovelling ballast, painting.....and many other tasks beside.

The usual pattern for these 'working weeks' is that we find our way to Sibiu and stay in either self-catering accommodation or hotels or guest houses in and around the city itself. There is a wide variety of accommodation available and because the city centre is compact, which makes it convenient to meet up to socialise in any number of cafes, restaurants or bars in the evenings after a hard day in working on the line.....



Getting there...

In past years, volunteers have arrived by train, plane and automobile. Low cost airline Wizz Air flies from Luton for less than the cost of a London to North Wales return train ticket in the UK.

As plans crystallise it may well be the case that a van may become available to transport tools and equipment; in which case volunteer drivers may well be sought too....

It is possible to travel overland from the UK by train; Ffestiniog Travel in North Wales specialise in organising tickets for unorthodox railway journeys and can be contacted at <https://www.ffestiniogtravel.com/rail-ticket-service> or over the phone on 01766 772 030. Alternatively <https://www.seat61.com/> offers advice and links for anyone wishing to book rail tickets independently.

There are direct trains from Gara du Nord in Bucharest to Sibiu either overnight or during the daytime. The daytime trip offers a splendid scenic ride if not a particularly high speed one, the 217km (135 mile journey) departs Bucharest 10.00 and arrives Sibiu 15.55. The train consists of corridor coaches!

The flight departing Luton 19:50 September 10th 2017 has tickets advertised from £25.99 with return flights on Sunday 17th from £88.99 or Monday 18th from £57.49

Depending on numbers, we've either hired cars or a mini-bus to travel between Sibiu and the work site at Cornatel which is a journey of about twenty minutes.

There are usually local volunteers working alongside us too and lifts and ridesharing are often used as well.

Rental cars are available from the airport from approximately £60 per week for a compact.

Regular buses run along the route of the railway during the daytime (from a bus depot adjacent to the main railway station) and, in extremis, taxis are available.

The maxim about being careful not to get separated from your lunch very much applies as the stretch of railway line we'll be working on is remote from any shops... It is customary for us to have lunch either on site or at a suitable local establishment.

Costs: Romania is a good value destination, although prices have risen in recent years. For budgeting purposes, around £30 per person per night is a good 'starter for ten' and should, unless you opt for a luxury hotel, see you with a little bit of change....

At the time of writing (July 2017) the exchange rate is approximately £1 – 5.2 lei.

A 500ml local draft beer costs approximately 5 lei and a 330 ml bottle of imported about 7 lei.

At a mid-market restaurant a three course meal for two works out at about 100 lei.

Intending participants will need a valid passport....and if you are prepared to drive whilst over there, a photo driving licence. An EU EHIC medical card is a sensible provision, as well as appropriate individual insurance cover.

Track work does involve some manual labour and walking around on rough and/or uneven ground. Suitable working clothes that will get dirty should be brought, work gloves and stout footwear that provides ankle support is recommended – steel toecaps would be mandatory for similar work in Britain.

The weather in the summer can be very hot and a high UV protective factor sun lotion / block is required, as well as a broad brimmed hat. There is no likelihood of construction plant or overhead work, so hard hats are



not necessary. Sunshine has also been known to fall as the liquid variety too; so it is sensible to pack water-proof gear as well.... One volunteer managed to travel from the UK to a working party Romania without remembering his luggage; luckily Sibiu is well provided for in terms of modern shopping facilities! It should be noted that Romania is not known for the widespread availability of vegetarian cuisine but with a bit of care and consultation with waiting staff, most places do offer meat free meals.

Fresh fruit and vegetables are freely available at local markets and local honey makes a delicious souvenir and gift to take home.

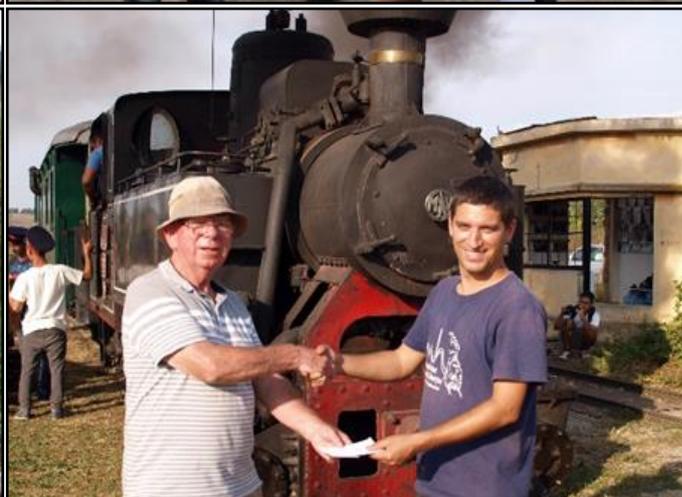
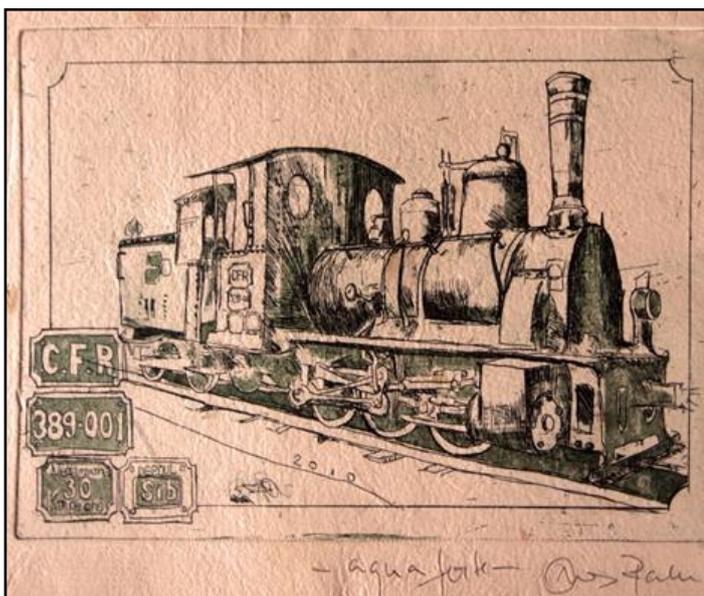
As in previous years it is anticipated that on at least one day during the week we will undertake a day trip to visit another railway elsewhere in Romania. This will either be somewhere with a tourist operation or an industrial concern depending on the interest of group participants and being able to make suitable arrangements.

Sibiu itself offers a wide range of cultural activities and attractions including the justly famous ASTRA Museum of Peasant life that has reconstructed buildings from throughout Romania and is probably one of the best examples of an open air museum in Europe if not the world. Adjacent to this site is the remnants of the metre gauge tramway system that used to serve the city and link it to nearby Rasinari (there is a slim possibility that this might be running during our time in Sibiu but time will be available to have a look at it)

There will also be opportunities to visit the roundhouse and railway museum in Sibiu which contains several narrow gauge railway exhibits, including locomotives that used to operate on the Sibiu Agnita Railway.

Please email stewart_alasdair@hotmail.com if you are interested in joining in with this working party, in whole or in part or for further information regarding the Sibiu Agnita Railway project.

SARUK; Membership subscription costs £15 per year and typically includes three newsletters with content pertaining the railway, both contemporary and historical and other items of interest.



Infrastructure Mutual Improvement Class

Calling all Infrastructure volunteers.

Buildings & Estates, Parks and Gardens, Lineside, Signals & Telecom and Permanent Way.

Over the weekend of 28/29 October an MIC – Mutual Improvement Class Session will be held for all Infrastructure Department volunteers.

MICs have been held by the Loco and Operating Departments for a number of years, they are very informative and well attended.

The MICs will involve training sessions especially changes to the rule book and track safe arrangements, refresher training in small tools, guidance on driving the larger infrastructure road vehicles etc, discussions on safety, question and answer sessions, an outline of the forthcoming Winter Works Programme and a key note speaker.

So please put those dates in your diary now:

28th & 29th October 2017.

To register your interest in this event please contact infrastructuremic@ffwhr.com.

Alex Spring

Fixed Term Training Opportunity - Infrastructure

An opportunity has arisen within the infrastructure team to take on two trainees on a two year fixed term contract. One trainee will work with the S&T team and the other with the PW team.

Over the course of the two year period the trainees will be given the opportunity to study and work alongside the S&T and PW teams to develop the hands on skills that are required as a maintenance technician.

Candidates must be able to meet the medical requirements to obtain a track safe qualification and must enjoy working in the open environment come rain or shine.

The successful candidates will be able to demonstrate an interest in Railway Signalling or Permanent Way and have an interest in working in the railway environment.

If you feel this opportunity is right for you please contact jvincent@ffwhr.com for more details. Please state if you are interested in either the PW or S&T opportunity.

Anthony Brierley...

Regrettably I have today accepted the resignation of Anth from the position of B&E Manager.

Never one to sit still and eager to progress his career Anth has been fortunate to be offered a position as a clerk of works for NHS Wales. Looking after the capital development works on hospital buildings in an area stretching from Wrexham, to Bangor and down to Towyn. This will be a challenging role but well within Anth's capabilities and will give him an opportunity to develop his skill set in a way that we are not able to offer. In the three years Anth has been with the railway he has made a significant impact on the railway with his attention to detail and the quality of his workmanship (The workshop building standing as a testament to that). Do it once and do it right as he frequently tells me. Anth will be a tough act to follow and the infrastructure office will certainly be a lot quieter when he moves on. We hope he will remain a friend of the railway and who knows maybe appear as a volunteer on the bashes!!!

In the meantime I'm sure you will all join me in thanking him for all he has delivered in the past and wish him well as he embarks on a new adventure.

I will keep everybody posted as we work to recruit a successor.

In Brief...

Your Understanding Requested

To increase customer satisfaction in Spooner's the company has recently invested a great deal of time and money, a new kitchen last year and a complete redecoration this. Thankfully this is paying dividends and turnover has continued to increase. However, as we get busier and busier it becomes increasingly difficult to satisfy all the demands that are made on us. One of the difficulties we face is the supply of 'on demand' free tea to all staff. Staff numbers across the railway have grown over the years and this too has put is an increasingly onerous burden on Spooner's. This is where we would like your understanding.

Currently, we charge a nominal 20p for coffee and hot chocolate in order to cover the cost price of a premium brand. The supply of coffee and hot chocolate simply requires the push of a button, whereas tea has to be made and this takes time, time which we need to concentrate on other aspects of our customer service provision. We therefore ask for your understanding as we introduce a charge of 20p for tea as well.

Spooner's financial contribution to your railway in 2016 was £931,000 turnover and £110,000 profit, a not inconsiderable amount and all of which was reinvested in the railway.

You are reminded that hot and cold drinks free to all 'on duty' staff are available in the guards' room. We will endeavour to make sure that there are always plenty of supplies available to you, including fresh milk.

Thank you for your understanding in this matter.

Martin Batcock, Catering Manager.

John Powell

It is with regret that I must report the death of John Powell on July 4th at Ysbyty Gwynedd. He had not been well for some time. Details of how John's life will be celebrated, low key and not religious, at his direction, will be published in due course.

Adrian Gray

Waggon Tracks Shed Working Parties

Waggon Tracks Shed Working Party dates to the end of the year are:

8th & 9th of July

26th-28th of August (Bank Holiday)

23rd & 24th of September

25th & 26th of November

28th-31st of December

The team are always looking for more volunteer assistance. If you're interested, please contact Will High on williamchigh@gmail.com or 07812 922172.



Coming down the track...

- August 11th & 12th : Palmerston at Shrewsbury Flower Show
- August 20th : Classic Car Show & Family Day
- August 24th : Rock 'n' Roll @ Tan y Bwlch
- September 15th—17th : Super Power -Welsh Highland Stars
- September 17th : Ras y Cob
- September 21st—24th : Prince in steam at the Severn Valley Railway
- Septebmer 23rd : Trailffest

Hugh Napier in steam at Bostogn Lodge