

Annual report 2020.

1. A personal introduction by the President of FEDECRAIL.

The year 2020 will not only go down in history as a year bounded by 2019 and 2021. That 2020 would be a year full of changes for FEDECRAIL, prompted by wishes expressed by our members in 2019, was predictable. That COVID-19 would dominate life so radically well into, or even beyond 2021, could not have been foreseen at the time we held our Annual General Meeting in no not Bilbao, but in Rotterdam and in modified form.

In the meantime, vaccination is now in full swing throughout Europe and in many places globally, as the ultimate way out of the CORONA pandemic. But mutations of COVID viruses have also developed on the different continents and at the time of writing it is the Indian variant that is spreading so fast that many countries have imposed an entry ban from India. Our colleagues at Wattrain - the world's heritage rail organisation - have organised several Zoom Web meetings from November 2020 on, with participation from all continents. It gives us a sense of global solidarity and it allows us to learn about solutions (and threats) that have been developed or are occurring elsewhere. It is knowledge we can potentially help our own organisations with as well.

Although I will come back to this under point 2, in my report on 2020-2021, I would like to indicate, that with the introduction of the first lockdown, FEDECRAIL had to adapt to the new reality. As a result, all physical contacts were stopped, so that the whole programme around the Annual General Meeting on April 23rd 2020 in Bilbao was formally postponed. In the end, the Belgian legislator gave way by Royal Decree to the possibility of organising the meeting 10 weeks after the latest legal date for such a meeting (30 June 2020). Thus, on September 5th 2020, we met in Rotterdam with a limited agenda, including those items that, according to Belgian law, needed to be assessed and accepted by the General Assembly in any case. After those items, the meeting was adjourned and the board remained unchanged until the reopening of this members' meeting on 19 June 2021, the same date but preceding the General Assembly of 2021, at which time four candidates were nominated by the members for election as members of the board of FEDECRAIL.

Travel restrictions across Europe made it necessary to hold the meetings of the FEDECRAIL Board in digital form via WEBEX from 30 May 2020 on. The positive aspect of this is that no travel and accommodation costs are incurred and also that hardly any travel time needs to be used. This made it possible to hold meetings much more frequently, so that processes that are being worked on can also be carried out more quickly.



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Reducing these costs already made it possible at the 2020 AGM part 1 in Rotterdam to offer members 50% reduction of the membership fees compared to 2019. The proposal was accepted by the AGM. For 2021, the Board will put a continuation of this proposal on the agenda.

Communicating only in a digital way also has major disadvantages, which became more visible during the year. One of the founding members of FEDECRAIL, the British Heritage Railway Association, decided to leave FEDECRAIL at the time of BREXIT, as part of its own reorganisation that realistically envisages a British society that will no longer be influenced by the European Parliament or the European Commission. Although the departure went entirely according to the constitutional rules, I am convinced that within - now missing - more physical means this process could have gone differently. Incidentally, on a personal level, good personal contacts continue to exist and several British colleague organisations have applied to become individual members of FEDECRAIL. As such, they will be presented to the General Assembly as candidate members.

The following discussions within FEDECRAIL, whether or not to keep UK Team members active are also uncomfortable for the same reason, with uncertain outcomes for the time being.

On the whole, however, good progress is being made when it comes to cooperation with other European umbrella organisations of the working industrial and mobile heritage. Steps in this direction will be discussed with the FEDECRAIL members via various web consultations, as well as the continuation of the steps to make our organisation more "member orientated", to become a platform of activities where we can all be active together in order to achieve our goals as well as possible on a European level. In the upcoming general meetings, parts of it will be submitted for approval to the members, so that it can also become one of the bases of the Strategic Plan for the period beginning in 2023.

I realise better than anyone else that this CORONA period is very difficult for everyone involved. Some have lost family and/or relatives, or colleagues in a heritage rail organisation. Longer lockdown periods take away the pleasure of working for our heritage rail organisations, which as an institution face very difficult tasks to deal with future damage incurred in many forms and to repair it where possible.

Incredible creativity and admirable persistence is what struck me most. It proves once again that being active in our heritage rail world has a very worthy motivation as a basis. Something that is also experienced again and again by our visitors. An element that will ultimately be decisive in the continuity of our activities and the preservation of the special collections and experiences that we want to offer our visitors.

I would like to thank the thousands of volunteers and professionals who make our work possible for their tremendous commitment and tireless enthusiasm.

The presidents report will be mostly concentrated on the period of this General Meeting 2020 held on September 5th in Rotterdam and the moment of writing of this report May 1st 2021 in the light of the planned AGM on June 19th 2021.

The idea's about 2021 and beyond can be found in the Business Plan 2021-2022 and the annual plan 2021, both on the agenda of the AGM 2021.

Jaap Nieweg, President of FEDECRAIL
Hoorn May 1st 2021.

2. Presidents report of the year 2020

A. Renewing the Constitution.

Right from the start of 2020 there was a hive of activity because of an extra General meeting conform article 7 of the constitution, with the members of January 11th 2020 in Leuven (B), because of the proposed modernisation in the constitution of our organization. Three main reasons for this changes are:

- the new Belgium law for our type of organization (IVZW) per 1.1.2020;
- More influence of the members in proposing and electing members for the board;
- Maximizing 4 terms of 3 years of unbroken board membership and after ending term, for re-electing and proposal as candidate by a FEDECRAIL member-organization is necessary.

The changes took effect following publication in the Belgium State Courant on March 13th 2020.

B. Developing new policy.

During this meeting with the members in Leuven I started the discussion with the members about the wanted more member oriented attitude of FEDECRAIL. I pointed out that during 2020/21 we would start continuing the next steps in this process, most politely described as changing FEDECRAIL from a meeting table into an activity platform. In this idea there will be interaction and co-operation in this platform setting. The Corona outbreak delayed the next steps in the form of draft policy papers. But in the end of 2020 and the beginning of 2021 the first three drafts were for a first reading on the agenda of board meetings and will be discussed in May 2021 in web-meetings with the (umbrella) members prior to the AGM on June 19th.

C. Contact with the members.

On January 21st 2020 I had a meeting in Berlin with the president of our German Member VDMT, Mr. Hans-Jürgen Credé to discuss how in the future the co-operation between VDMT and FEDECRAIL, on European level can be intensified and how the co-operation with UNECTO, who I had spoken during their AGM in November 2019 and the HRA who made clear that it was not automatically self-evident that they would accept an unchanged membership after Brexit (I met the British about this subject in Birmingham in the last week of September 2019). So I thought that it was of great importance to talk about this subject in an early stage of the process and it made clear that in the communication between FEDECRAIL and the largest members and between the largest members quite a lot of shortcomings could be seen.

In this light the VDMT did propose a candidate for the FEDECRAIL board as substitute for our vice president and treasurer Mr. Heimo Echensperger, who because of the new constitutional maximum 4 terms of 3 years would not be re-eligible any more.

Because of the longer period before electing of new board members in the AGM (from September 2020 to June 2021) changes in VDMT made it necessary to withdraw their candidate. I was very happy that they asked their Austrian colleagues ÖMT to come forward with a candidate from one of their board members and they did.

D. Contact with ERA and EC.

On January 31st 2020 I joined a HOG delegation to meet with ERA and EC officers to talk about the 4th railway package and the implementation of this rules for harmonisation of the laws and rules of the open access European Rail infrastructure network. Key points ECS, ETRMS, ECM and the way that results like exemptions for heritage rail on the open network are not as "must" communicated to the member states, but as an "it is possible". ECM is a very actual example. Exemptions for the non-commercial use of historic rolling stock, without a formal ECM maintenance, but as maintained as the vehicle(s) as has always been maintained, is not implemented in many of the national railway laws and rules.

This has the ongoing attention of the HOG people in FEDECRAIL. During the year the regular meeting with the ERA General Manager, Mr. Josef Doppelbauer, was postponed and that was a pity, because it was the chance to talk about these type of subjects.

E. The search for alternative fuel.

In February the members of the Environmental working group were invited to attend a trial trip with alternative fuel (instead of coal) of compressed wood disposables at the Museumstoomtram

Hoorn – Medemblik. A project financed by the Province of North Holland and the municipalities of Hoorn and Medemblik in a project of less CO₂. It was the result of step one. The locomotive ran from A to B and back, but there has to be a further improvement needed to make it practically usable. As far as we are informed, the project was hindered by COVID as so much was hindered by that phenomenon.

F. Developing Internal Rules.

There has been made a start with developing an internal rulebook. After first reading the board decided that about further development should be decided by the board in new constellation after the election in June 2021.

G. Results of CORONA/COVID-19 (for FEDECRAIL)

- a. The postponement of the Bilbao conference/programme 2020. It was clear that Bilbao in Spain was not the suitable COVID-19 location for the AGM in April 2020. As already stated the more suitable location and date was September 5th in Rotterdam. In April 2021 there still no chance to organize a full conference/AGM programme in Spain. We decided to use Brussels (Airport) as location. Easy to travel to for those who want and can attend (depending possible travel restrictions on June 19th).
- b. FEDECRAIL started to become a frequent user of web-meetings, for the board (WEBEX), working groups (ZOOM) and web-meetings with members (mostly ZOOM or WEBEX). It will be part of intensifying the relations with the members (vice versa)
- c. Especially the transformation of our meeting structure from 4 physical board-meetings per year with an enormous cost (travel and hotel) , to 8 to 10 meetings a year + working group meetings etc. for hardly any costs and no loss in time of traveling.
- d. This at least it brings the possibility of lowering the basic costs and so the basic membership-fee.

H. BREXIT and HRA.

As already stated above, Brexit was the moment for HRA to reorganize into an umbrella of heritage rail organisation in a non-EU country. We have some more non-EU members, but their relation with the EU is different from the point of few that they are not an island (Norway, Switzerland) . I have felt the practical approach in the way, that HRA wanted to stay connected, but not for the money they had paid in the pre-BREXIT episode. It was a reason to leave and for FEDECRAIL it is a reason to think about different types of membership as a whole. Much of our action are derogated to EU/EC/ERA/EP and HRA felt unhappy to pay this money for actions they are no longer aiming for.

Generally spoken the environmental issue can be the new binding factor. In the farewell discussion we left the door there open on both sides. This situation is still unchanged.

I. Plan Paris and the European Green Deal.

In October 2020 I held a speech during the Hybrid AGM/conference of the European Route of Industrial Heritage (ERIH) about the heritage rail as part of the working industrial and mobile heritage, the use of fossil fuel as part of the conceptual authenticity and the upcoming question what coal mine shall we keep open. Can we aim together that this should be a part of the European Green Deal.

In December the Dutch Ministry of Culture invited me to give a lecture about the same subject under the title of European co-operation. Speakers were the president of the FIVA (world association of historic cars), the chairman of the European Federation of Historic Aviation and myself for heritage rail. Besides that the chairman of the Dutch Mobile Collection gave a lecture, and the Dutch board member of Europa Nostra, the general manager of the Dutch Bond Heemschut monument organisation.

During the presentation of the "7 most endangered", the Member of the European Commission for Culture and Education gave a wonderful speech in which we could feel at home as well in heritage as the green Deal.

A few days later I was invited give a speech about the above subject for the Europa Nostra Industrial Heritage Committee, of which our board member Peter Ovenstone is one of the secretaries and our President emeritus David Morgan is a member. We had an interesting discussion about including fossil fuel and historic mining as part of the working industrial and mobile heritage. This should get a fair place in the sustainable Europe of the European (Cultural) Green Deal.

J. Conclusion.

2020 and the first part of 2021 were a very moving period. Creativity, threats, chances and personal emotions controlled the world as a whole or in detail. The world was burning but where possible you could still see the sun shining. No one can fore see what the future will bring us, but this period has at least learned us, that we are well willing to fight for the European and global heritage railway sector as part of the working industrial and mobile heritage

Jaap Nieweg,
President of FEDECRAIL,



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May 1st 2021.

3. Appendix.

During the evaluation of the Wernigerode Jubilee programme in May 2019 I decided not to continue after termination of my first term as member of the board of FEDECRAIL. There were mainly personal reasons for this decision. So I intended to step down in Bilbao 2020. It went a bit different. In Rotterdam, 1st part AGM 2020 the members accepted that the next election of board members should be in a more normal AGM. So I stayed on. During that meeting Heimo Echensperger suggested that I at least should start a second term in the light of continuity with four board members leaving in 2021 (me including).

In this last year I started with the board restructuring the relationship between FEDECRAIL and her members. This, combined with the remark made by Heimo and the feeling that the process for our working industrial and mobile heritage is moving in the right direction, I decided to change my decision to leave. The Dutch umbrella (HRN) did candidate me for a second (surely last) term as board member. If the members accept my candidature I would be delighted to lead the board of FEDECRAIL in the coming at least one or two years.

Jaap Nieweg.

Report from Tram Group 2020

The pandemic has had a major impact on organizations in 2020. It has also affected the opportunities for Tramway Group's work. At the beginning of the year, a visit was made to the UK and UK Tram where all heritage tram organizations gathered. It was the last physical meeting that has been possible.

The Tramway group initial purpose is to be near the members and work to get new members for FEDECRAIL. We are aware that this has some challenges but the importance of communicating and be member oriented need to be priority number one for TG.

During the year, the activity has consisted of keeping in touch with the sister organizations in Europe to reconcile the situation and the impact of the pandemic.

- We have attended the Nordic meeting for tramways. It was a short online meeting that was held.
- Tramway group was represented in an online activity from Scottish Trams Society. They arrange online event every second week with participants from several places in Europe. The plan is that different presenters who tell about the historical aspect of tramway in different cities, both places that have or had tramway.
- Tramway group started working with online meetings, the first meeting was about conversion and marketing. It was a very well attended meeting and it was appreciated. The subject was also not only

tram related but relevant to a much wider audience.

- Tramway group monitors the standardization mission that exists within the EU based on M / 486 "Mandate for programming and standardization addressed to the European standardization bodies in the field of urban rail". It is important that the work does not eliminate the possibilities for continued heritage trams to run on modern infrastructure. It must also not be developed to affect its own infrastructure or have higher requirements than what is necessary for heritage tram.
- Gothenburg city has developed a new point steering (route setting) with rfid. It is a new system for the trams that make it cheaper and easier to build new infrastructure. The heritage trams have been a big part of the project and made and it's also made sure that the heritage trams runs without problems. Tramway Group has taken part in the information and the project, it has given an interesting insight into how the heritage tram sector can support the modern development in tramway.

We have not been able to visit members we wanted or could represent the Tramway Group in the way we wanted. But we still see that we have been able to keep in touch with members and work to keep up to date with developments during the financial year for our members. The biggest challenge for everyone has been the pandemic and to try to keep up the interest and commitment of their volunteers and in some cases employees. We now hope that we will take a turn and that the veteran trams can once again roll out and let passengers ride with them.

Heritage tram operation thorough Europe and Covid.

Around Europe, the activities within heritage tram have looked very different.

FEDECRAIL has been in contact with most of their member countries in Europe regarding how their activities have been affected during the pandemic on heritage tram operations. The low level of tourism has an impact on visitors to the business of heritage trams, especially in the cities, while museums located outside the cities have attracted local visitors and those who are tourists in their home countries. There are variations in how the heritage tram organizations have been able to conduct business because the pandemic.

It differs between countries how general advice and restrictions have looked like and whether the countries have closed their borders, lock down and other measures.

Those who run veteran traffic in the cities and share infrastructure with the regular public transport have had a difficult year. Many organizations have not been able to drive or had a very a limited opportunity to drive and minimized number of passengers due to little tourism. High average age among active members has had an impact on volunteer work, both in terms of being a driver or working in the workshops. There are also examples of museums that have had the opportunity to concentrate more on work in the workshops with success.

For example, in Stockholm they veteran trams has been able to traffic but has a restriction from the

regional authorities that they are not allowed to take on passengers. This hasn't been applied in Gothenburg or Norrköping, but the lack of tourists has made their business going down. In Gothenburg an ordinary summer there is about 40 000 passengers this year around 2 500 passengers. In Norway and Finland, operations have also been low.

In Rotterdam they have managed to have some tours but because the lack of tourists they passenger count is low; the same information comes from Brussels. In Brussels they had good work done in the workshop though, but their museum has been closed on and off.

In Germany, almost no activity was conducted during the pandemic. It is also clear in the workshops that the businesses have suffered from the pandemic and that many have a high average age that is seen as a risk group.

The tramway museums that have had the opportunity to stay open and own their infrastructure tell of something completely different. They have had quite many visitors because many have chosen to visit museums in the near area. Skjöldnäs, Denmark, says that despite the minimized season, they have had more visitors than usual, the same information comes from Malmköping, Sweden. Even in the Netherlands, museums outside the cities have had quite good operations. All museums also report that they have worked with social distancing, tried to have more trams running, online tickets and other things that prevent the spread of infection but still create the conditions for the museum to be able to stay open.

In UK museums have had reduced opportunities to stay open. Unfortunately, larger events have also had to be canceled. However, organizations in the UK work in a different way with charity than other countries. They have also, for example, from Seaton tramway had tramway marathons that were broadcast live on social media.

It is difficult to get a complete overall picture of the issue as tramway operations are conducted in different ways around Europe.

Report from
Mimmi Mickelsen, TG Chairman Fedecrail

HOG report 2020

The 2020 Conference, Work Group meetings and AGM which were planned to be held in Bilbao (Spain) on 24 and 25 April 2020 were cancelled.

We will have to wait formal announcements from governments relaxing travel restrictions and removing the need for social distancing, before new dates can be set for the 2020 AGM, Conference and group meetings. As this may not be for some time so it is likely that the Conference and Workgroup meetings will be postponed till 2021 and then coincide with the 2021 AGM. We will let you know in a future report what the arrangements will be.

Belgium Legal requirements are likely to mandate that the AGM for this year will have to take place



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before the end of 2020. We will send the notice of the AGM to members at least 3 months before the event. This notice will give the venue, date, commencement time and agenda.

Heritage Operations Group

Recent events

Meeting with Ian Conlon from DG MOVE

DG Move is a department within the EU commission with the transport remit. As Fedecrail is a representative body we can ask the EU and the European Union Agency for Rail for a meeting at any time. We asked to meet the commission at the request of one of the Swedish members. This member had seen their members being denied access to Swedish main lines due to the introduction of ERTMS on those routes. As the Swedish track authority has refused to pay for the fitment of the on-board equipment to allow heritage trains to continue to run. The meeting with Ian took place at the end of January 2020 in Brussels. There is EU funding for the fitment of trains. As the EU and member states have realised that if the trains are fitted with ERTMS, then it is more likely infrastructure managers will install ERTMS when resignalling a line. However the funding will not be sufficient to fit all the trains Europe wide and so any applications for funding will have to be accompanied with a very good business case. If you are interested in accessing this funding please contact the HOG team and we will do our best to help.

Letter to ERA requesting postponement of ECM Regulations

As members may know, following a serious freight train accident in Viareggio in Italy in 2009, the Italians challenged the EU on the standards for wagon maintenance. The wagons involved in the accident were owned by one organisation, leased to another and registered with two non - Italian railways. In addition, the wagons were reported to be a poor state of repair. The EU responded with the ECM Regulations that harmonise the standards for wagon maintenance across the EU member states and require certification of workshops. This is an onerous burden for our members, who vehicles often require bespoke maintenance. So, we did object to the proposals being applied to all vehicles. However, the ERA decided that we should be included in the scope and the new regulation should come into force from 16th June 2020. So this is now a challenging timescale the Group of Representative Bodies (GRB), including Fedecrail, has written to the EU requesting that the implementation be deferred until next year. At the time of writing, 28th April, we are awaiting a reply.

Possible three month delay to implementation of the 4th railway package

In a similar fashion we have joined with the GRB to request a deferment of the implementation of



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the 4th railway package from June 2020. This is probably of reduced interest to members as it concerns mostly European wide safety certification of new vehicles. In this case the commission has responded that this regulation may be deferred in implementation for 3 months.

Communication to our members offering help and assistance during and after Coronavirus.

As HOG we have emailed our contacts asking if Fedecrail can assist members in post virus recovery. So far we have not received any replies but please do send us your ideas, requests for help and questions and we will do what we can to help. This might be as simple as a letter to the appropriate government department in support of a funding application. Or just running through a check list for things you need to check on restarting operations. Or as complex as helping with a large grant application, we really need you to tell us the help you need.

Potential lobby of TRAN Committee in EU Parliament

We have contacted Ian Conlon as mentioned earlier to see if the EU have any funds for financial help in recovery from the effects of the virus. He replied that the commission do not have any funds, for post virus recovery. He suggested we should lobby the Transport Committee in the EU Parliament. So, we are going to contact the committee. We can make a much more powerful argument if we have facts and figures to quote and specific projects to promote. To help if we could give us an estimate of how many jobs your members support both directly and indirectly. Then how many of those jobs might disappear if your railway or tramway doesn't reopen. Then how much funding you are asking for, what will the money be spent on, with what aim for the local economy.

New representative body ERTMS Accredited Laboratories.

One consistent problem with ERTMS is the specification for the system is open to interpretation. So, there is no guarantee that different manufacturers equipment will work with each other. As a result, the systems have to be tested to ensure the lineside equipment works correctly with the onboard train equipment. Known as system integration. There is a new representative body that of the ERTMS Accredited Laboratories. They will be contracted to carry out the system integration between track and train.

This may be useful for us, as members or members of members might be able to offer their trains and track as testbeds for the various types of equipment. This would allow testing to take place in a less pressured environment than a main line railway on the national network.

We plan to discuss these possibilities with them when we meet the new body at the next GRB



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meeting we are able to attend.

If your members are interested in being a test railway, please let us know.

TSI revisions

ERA has a programme to revise the Technical Standards for Interoperability (TSI) over the next few years. We had planned to attend as many meetings discussing the revisions as we have people and funding for. The virus has delayed the work schedule on these revisions. We go to the meetings so we can see the revised TSIs don't impact adversely on members operations. There should be no impact on members.

Steve Wood, Bruno Fleury, Ian Leigh and Jonas Svartlok

FEDECRAIL YOUTH WORKING GROUP 2020 REPORT

The Covid 19 pandemic started to spread in Europe in February 2020 and all activities of our members were suspended. There were different regulations from state to state regulating the opening of museum sites and strict restrictions on means of transport, including our members' railways.

This also affected travel between states, preventing people from travelling for business or pleasure. The consequence of all this is that many activities related to our sector have been blocked for a long time and in many cases volunteers (of all ages) have stayed at home because of the lockdowns established by the various European countries.

Even our young people have had to give up their days working for the railways (or museums).

Due to the increasing number of infections throughout Europe and the impossibility of guaranteeing health safety conditions, we were forced to cancel the annual Fedecrail Youth Exchange Experience that had been organised for 2020 in the UK at the Seaton Tramway Museum and the West Somerset Railway (July 30th - August 9th).

Obviously, travel restrictions would have caused a massive reduction in attendance and we also didn't want to expose young people to unnecessary health risks.

Prolonged restrictions and lockdowns (which were only reduced in various ways in spring 2021) certainly caused problems and suffering among the younger age groups of our volunteers, risking in many cases the abandonment of activities and a reduction in the number of those participating in the life of their railways.

This is why the Fedecrail Youth Working Group has begun to look into the possibility of connecting young people from various countries on the continent in order to create a network of relationships that will see the start of webinar activities in 2021.



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Pierluigi Scozzato (Chairman) with Mimmi Mickelsen and Josep F. Moragrega Font

EUROPA NOSTRA & FEDECRAIL

Undoubtedly, the most important element of our collaboration with Europa Nostra over the last year has been inclusion of our member, the Achenseebahn, in the Europa Nostra scheme to highlight threatened heritage locations the *7 Most Endangered List*. Once the gravity of the potential threats to the future of the railway became clear in early 2020, Fedecrail initiated the idea of making a nomination for the 2021 list. Fortunately our concerns were quickly picked up and shared by other leading international organisations and the formal nomination was headed up by TICCIH (The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial heritage) and ICOMOS (an agency of UNESCO) with full Fedecrail support. We were encouraged last autumn by inclusion of the railway on the Short List of potential locations and very pleased when the final list was announced on 8th. April. Subsequently, Fedecrail is continuing to take an active role and has already made an input to the Europa Nostra fact finding mission on this issue which has now started work.

The most relevant “arm” of Europa Nostra with an active interest in rail and tramway heritage is the EN Industrial & Engineering Heritage (IEH) Committee. We have had long-standing personal links to this committee. Our President Emeritus, David Morgan is a member and our Vice-President, Peter Ovenstone is a member and serves as IEH Committee Secretary. Active links were greatly strengthened recently by a presentation at the April virtual IEH Committee meeting by Jaap Nieweg on our evolving campaign for mobile and industrial heritage. The Committee agreed this is a very worthwhile project meriting strong support and that active collaboration with Fedecrail on the key issues will continue. A strong interest in the new campaign has also been taken by a Europa Nostra Council Member based in the Netherlands, Karel Loeff, who has been involved in some of the initial discussions with other transport heritage and government organisations in recent months.

Peter Ovenstone /19/05/21

Communications Working Group

1. Fedecrail has identified and agreed in 2020 the need for a Communications Working Group a) to facilitate effective and regular communication with its members and b) to promote the work it does to external stakeholders (including government bodies) and the media.

2. Many of the Fedecrails' initiatives are dependent on first-class communication. That means that Fedecrail will produce and execute a detailed communications plan based on the decisions made by the Council, ultimately approved by the membership at the AGM.
- Communication Strategy – disseminating information & recommendations from Working Groups and board initiatives – Board to agree regular message after each Council Meeting.
 - Develop new mobile-optimised (accessible via smartphone or tablet) website for different stakeholder interests. The current website is in urgent need of an update to be able to fulfil the short-medium term strategy. A members' and media area together with a bookings' payment gateway, easily navigable pages with up-to-date news and social media feeds are essential in persuading existing and new participants to interact with the organisation. Work has already started on a new and mobile-optimised site with a launch date in 2021.
 - Develop Social Media messaging
 - Review changes in communication tools for the future
 - Implement multi-lingual communication & broaden outreach

Jenny Nunn – 11th May 2021

FEDECRAIL ANNUAL REPORT – MAY 2021 – UIC Toprail

Over the year, we have continued to participate in virtual meetings of the UIC Toprail Group to promote opportunities for development of International Rail Tourism. Last year at the start of the pandemic we completed the document "Guidelines on How to Increase Attractiveness for Rail Tourism" which is available at www.toprail.org/about-us. In conjunction with the University of Madrid, a study was carried out to explore the use of new digital technologies for enhancing the passenger experience but further development have to await the return of "normal life". The pandemic has of course impacted on all of us and we have liaised with the UIC Covid19 Task Force who are leading the production of framework guidance for the "post-pandemic railway world". The limited number of possible events relating to The European Year of Rail 2021 are shown at www.uic.org/year-of-rail but of course everything still depends on how pandemic recovery progresses at national level. We participated yesterday in a webinar of the European Tour Operators Association aimed to promote the re-emerging rail tourism opportunities for the coming year.

John Fuller
19/05/21