



## From the President

Since our last Update, I have had the opportunity to meet several of our members – and, in many cases, the dedicated people who keep their organisations running every day. These conversations and visits have provided valuable insights into both current challenges and the many successes taking place across Europe. They have also offered inspiration for FEDECRAIL's continued work and the direction we are shaping together.

I also had the chance to participate in activities organised by the Heritage Railway Association in the United Kingdom. It was a rewarding experience and a reminder of how important international exchange is for our sector. Sharing knowledge across countries helps us see old questions with new eyes and strengthens our collective resilience.

As we look ahead to December, I am very much looking forward to meeting even more of our members. These meetings help us better understand what support is needed, where we are making good progress, and where FEDECRAIL can contribute more actively.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to UNECTO and VDMT for their well-organised conferences and annual meetings, as well as for the opportunity to speak about FEDECRAIL's work directly to their members. I also want to congratulate both organisations on the election of their new board members. I am confident that our cooperation will continue to grow in a positive direction.

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Finally, I am pleased to share that more information is now available on our website about the FEDECRAIL Conference in Wolsztyn, 26–29 March 2026. The programme already includes several promising themes and sessions, and I truly hope many of you will join us. It will be an excellent opportunity to learn from each other, discover new perspectives and strengthen our European network.

I also hope that all of you will soon enjoy some well-deserved days of rest. Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**Mimmi Mickelsen, President FEDECRAIL**



### UPDATE No. 71

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# Travelling Across Europe – Reflections From a Week With Our Members

**3–9 November 2025**

Between 3 and 9 November, I had the opportunity to travel through England, France and Germany to meet members, take part in national conferences, and listen to the people who keep Europe's heritage railways alive every day. It was a full and inspiring week — from the energy of the HRA Autumn Conference, to the regional and political anchoring of UNECTO in France, to the technically focused and forward-looking atmosphere of VDMT in Germany. The journey gave me a deeper understanding of our shared challenges, our strengths, and the direction in which Fedecrail must continue to grow.

## ***Heritage Railway Association – Autumn Conference (United Kingdom)***

The HRA Autumn Conference offered a remarkably open and honest look at the British heritage sector. The programme ranged widely: governance, financial strain, visitor trends, volunteer shortages, digitalisation, safety, ecological require-



ments, technical developments and long-term resilience.

The day began with a powerful and direct session on what it means for heritage organisations to be “running on empty” — and how they can shift towards “running with purpose”. This was followed by a series of case studies that laid out, with real clarity, what it takes to turn around an organisation under pressure. Swanage Railway showed how reforms and a renewed focus on visitors can stabilise a railway in crisis. Crich Tramway Village spoke openly about breaking long-standing patterns to rebuild commercial strength. Llangollen Railway shared their journey of recovery after operational incidents and organisational stress.

A standout moment for me was hearing Sophie Allinson speak about the barriers that many young people and women face when entering the heritage railway world. Her reflections were personal, direct and full of insight — and they resonated deeply with the themes we are working on within FEDECRAIL, especially the Youth Upskill Programme and our broader inclusion efforts.

The afternoon sessions turned attention to regulation, safety and digitalisation. From discussions on platform–train interfaces and health management, to digital reporting systems and cybersecurity, to ecological obligations and the future of coal policy — the programme captured both the complexity and the adaptability of the sector. The day concluded with a networking reception and a funding advice clinic, giving space for one-to-one conversations that were every bit as valuable as the formal sessions.

## ***UNCTO Annual Meeting (France)***

The UNECTO meeting in France provided a different but equally important perspective. Here, the focus was on regional identity, political anchoring and the role heritage rail plays in tourism, culture and local development. The presence of regional representatives set a strong tone from the start, making clear how deeply heritage railways are



embedded in regional strategies.

UNECTO's programme combined technical workshops with strategic discussions on communication, commercial development, maintenance, visitor behaviour and economic impact. The breadth of topics reflected a high degree of professional maturity within the French sector. Several sessions offered valuable insight into how visitor expecta-

tions are evolving, how regions perceive heritage rail as part of their cultural landscape, and how organisations can work more effectively with political stakeholders.

I also had the opportunity to present FEDECRAIL's current work and priorities. The dialogue with members afterwards was thoughtful and constructive, touching on regulatory challenges, youth engagement, safety expectations and the importance of strengthening cross-border cooperation. The final day included a cultural and historical visit, offering more opportunities for good conversations in a relaxed setting. The overall atmosphere was welcoming, organised and forward-looking.



### ***VDMT Conference (Germany)***

The final stage of the week was the VDMT conference in Germany, which carried a clear technical and regulatory focus. Many participants expressed concern about the increasing complexity of technical systems, uncertainty over future signalling





Conference VDMT

solutions, and the challenges of maintaining older technologies in a rapidly changing framework. The mood was thoughtful and realistic — and in many ways a mirror of the concerns raised across Europe.

One of the most inspiring contributions came from the historical S-Bahn project in Berlin. Their multi-year work to equip historic units with a light version of modern signalling, enabling them to operate within the S-Bahn network, demonstrated what is possible when volunteer commitment meets professional engineering knowledge. It was a prime example of technical innovation supporting heritage rather than excluding it.

One of the presentations offered a clear overview

of the technical and structural challenges currently affecting heritage railway operations in Germany. It highlighted how shortages of replacement components, ageing technologies, and uncertainty around future signalling systems are placing growing pressure on organisations. At the same time, new expectations around digitalisation, documentation and safety processes are significantly increasing the administrative workload.

The central message was that national technical decisions — particularly those related to signalling and safety — have direct and long-term implications for operators working with historical rolling stock. To navigate the future, the presentation emphasised the need for stronger coordination,



shared guidance and more exchange of practical experience on how older technologies can be maintained within an increasingly modernised environment.

A major highlight of the conference was Josef Doppelbauer's keynote. His broad, analytical overview of the European railway landscape — touching on safety, interoperability, regulatory evolution and the environmental pressures on the wider rail sector — underscored how closely linked heritage railways are to developments in the mainline world. His reflections reinforced how important Fedecrail's role is within the European dialogue, and how essential it is that heritage railways remain visible in regulatory discussions.

### ***Looking Ahead –***

### ***Strengthening Fedecrail for the Future***

The impressions from this week make one thing very clear: Fedecrail has an increasingly important role to play in supporting Europe's heritage railways. Across all three countries, members voiced similar needs, concerns and expectations. It is evident that our federation must continue to grow into an organisation that is both responsive and proactive.

We need to deepen our understanding of the realities our members face and ensure that the support we provide matches their challenges. The technical and regulatory landscape is becoming more demanding every year, and many organisations cannot navigate this transition alone. Fedecrail must be able to guide, coordinate and represent the sector with clarity and competence.

At the same time, the week highlighted the importance of continuing our work with young volunteers, apprentices and new groups who want to enter the sector. Building a welcoming, inclusive and sustainable community requires long-term commitment and visible opportunities for involvement.

It also became clear that we must strengthen our-

selves internally. Expectations on Fedecrail are growing, and in order to meet them, we need to expand our team, build capacity and develop expertise in areas such as technical affairs, youth engagement, policy, communication and cross-border coordination.

What this week ultimately showed is that our community is full of dedication, knowledge and willingness to collaborate — but that we must face the future together. Fedecrail has a vital role as a connector, facilitator and voice for Europe's railway heritage. Strengthening that role will be essential as we prepare for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

***Mimmi Mickelsen***

## **Don't Miss Our 2026 Conference!**

*We are incredibly excited to welcome you to FEDECRAIL's Annual Conference 2026 in Wolsztyn, Poland, taking place 26–29 March. With a full programme of inspiring sessions, hands-on workshops, technical visits and unforgettable heritage experiences, this is an event you truly won't want to miss.*

*From the Poznań tramway tour and a special charter steam journey to Wolsztyn, to discussions on ERTMS, coal strategy, tourism, funding and the future of European heritage rail, the conference offers an exceptional opportunity to learn, connect and shape the direction of our sector together.*

*Registration on our website [www.fedecrail.org](http://www.fedecrail.org) – make sure to secure your place as soon as it goes live.*

*We're looking forward to welcoming you to Poland for what promises to be a memorable and inspiring conference filled with knowledge, networking and shared heritage passion.*





Photo: Magnus Svensson

## Malmköping Tramway Museum — MUMA

### *Sweden's Working Life Museum of the Year 2026*

***A living heritage where history, community and passion keep the tracks warm***

Malmköping Tramway Museum – MUMA – has been awarded the title “Working Life Museum of the Year 2026”, one of Sweden’s most distinguished recognitions within industrial and cultural heritage. The museum is a proud member of FEDECRAIL through the Swedish federation Museibanornas Riksorganisation (MRO), which gathers heritage railways across the country.

The award was formally presented on 6 December at 12:00, during a ceremony held at the museum in Malmköping. The recognition highlights the vitality, quality and ambition that make MUMA one of the most unique heritage tramway museums in Sweden.

“This award is a fantastic confirmation of the joy and dedication our volunteers contribute every week. The tramway museum is not just a museum – it is a living story about how cities grow, and how public transport has shaped people’s lives”,

Mimmi Mickelsen, Chair of Museispårvägen Malmköping, comments.

***A unique heritage experience in the heart of Sweden***

Located in the scenic landscape of Sörmland, roughly 100 kilometres west of Stockholm, Malmköping offers a tramway experience unlike any other in the country. MUMA operates historic trams between Malmköping and Hosjö, allowing visitors to travel through forests, meadows and time itself.

The museum is truly one of a kind in Sweden, offering a complete and immersive experience. It even features what is believed to be the only camping site in the country with its own tram stop – a detail appreciated by families, enthusiasts and curious travellers alike.

Visitors can enjoy homemade pastries in the historic station café, explore gifts in the tramway shop, and let children play at the nearby playground.

Inside the impressive Vagnorama, more than 40 historic tramcars from Sweden’s former twelve tramway cities are displayed, alongside Sweden’s Bus Museum with its exhibitions and charter services.

### ***Youth involvement as a pathway to the future***

One of the key reasons for MUMA's selection was its strong and inclusive youth programme, offering meaningful and engaging activities for young people. The museum's approach has proven essential for skill development, generational renewal and the long-term sustainability of the organisation.

Around one hundred volunteers of all ages contribute to operations every year — driving trams, restoring vehicles, running the café, maintaining infrastructure, guiding visitors, and preserving documents through extensive archival and digitisation work.

Their dedication ensures that both knowledge and culture are passed on to future generations.

#### ***A strong field of nominees***

MUMA was selected from a highly competitive group of finalists, including Hillefors Grynkvärn Museum and Rackstad Museum, both recognised for excellence in the preservation of Swedish working life heritage.

#### ***Jury's motivation***

"Malmköping Tramway Museum, MUMA, lets the echoes of history meet the engagement of the future in a unique union of engineering, community and volunteer strength.

Here, the tram bell rings through the Sörmland greenery, and the smell of sleepers bears witness to a living heritage in motion.



Through its strong commitment, its inclusive youth activities and its dedicated generational work, MUMA keeps the tracks warm – for both people and memories, now and in the future."

#### ***About the award***

The award is presented annually by Arbetets museum together with ArbetSam, the Swedish National Maritime and Transport Museums, and the Swedish Defence History Museums. The prize includes SEK 25,000 and a traditional enamel plaque. When possible, the award ceremony is held at the winning museum, which is also highlighted in an exhibition at Arbetets museum in Norrköping.

Working life museums across Sweden preserve, operate and interpret the country's industrial and social history. Through active use of machinery, vehicles, tools and lived narratives, they create meaningful connections between past and present — and keep knowledge alive by sharing it with new generations.

***Mimmi Mickelsen***



## HOG:

### **Please Provide Feedback on Pre-Christmas Trains**

We would be interested to receive your feedback, to [leigh@FEDECRAIL.org](mailto:leigh@FEDECRAIL.org) in the pleasures (or otherwise) of operating your pre-Christmas seasonal trains that you think other people would be interested in.

### **Standardisation of Electrification Systems**

A recent consultation and report from ERA was on the standardisation of electrification systems. We responded that we thought that changing electrification systems offered poor value for money. We also pointed out that whilst changing old technology such as DC resistance control to other old technology such as an AC tap changing transformer and a mercury arc rectifier might appeal to some as it retains a heritage aspect. But practically this would probably mean a transformer with modern power electronics simply because of what is available. We would then be concerned if the outward appearance of the vehicles changed and the costs involved. The response we received suggested it was the sort of consultation they have to do as changing electrification to one system would be EU wide harmonisation, but it was unlikely to happen.

### **HOG Meeting Not Until the End of January**

We decided to cancel the final HOG meeting/webinar of the year on 20<sup>th</sup> November and instead we will be holding a planning session later in January 2026 for the HOG group. I will be contacting you soon for suitable dates. We want to focus on ETCS/ERTMS in January as this is a subject our members are interested in. The session in January will be about the actual aims of the work undertaken on ERTMS by FEDECRAIL and to plan what to cover during our ERTMS session within the conference in Poland. Also on the agenda for the January

meeting we want to sketch out what subjects we should cover during the year. We would particularly welcome contributions / speakers from the non-English speaking world.

*Ian Leigh*

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## WIMH:

### **Do You Have a “Friendly MEP”?**

#### ***An appeal from the WIMH Working Industrial & Mobile Heritage Platform Group***

Over the last year or so, the WIMH Working Group has successfully established contacts with several members of the European Parliament who now actively support the interests and concerns of rail and tram heritage and those of our industrial and other transport colleagues. Main contacts have been in the EP Culture & Education Committee (including committee Policy Co-ordinators for the two largest EP political parties). We also have contacts with members of the Industry, Research & Energy Committee and also the Environment, Climate & Safety Committee. It is intended to develop similar contacts with members of other relevant EP Committees.

During the year ahead, a key WIMH objective will be to expand the number of “well briefed friends” in the Parliament. To achieve this, an appeal is being made for grass roots help from transport and industrial heritage organisations throughout the European Union.

Have you had any contacts with MEPs who have visited your heritage railway, tramway or museum? Or who have given your organisation - whether an umbrella body or an individual location - help in any other way?

Hopefully, he or she will have gained a strong positive impression from their visit or other contact (as

a parallel example, here in Scotland we have at least one member of the Scottish Parliament who is an active volunteer on a heritage railway). It makes sense to build on such contacts that are likely already to have a good awareness of the value and significance of transport and industrial heritage.

WIMH would welcome details from as many sources of possible. As a first step, please provide the WIMH Group Secretary (email: [ovenstone@fedecrail.org](mailto:ovenstone@fedecrail.org)) with the name of the MEP and some background info about the previous contact / involvement. In getting in touch with a follow through message, we would of course likely wish to refer back to the previous contact with our sector. Many thanks in advance for your help!

***Peter Ovenstone, Secretary, WIMH Working Industrial & Mobile Heritage Group***

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UIC:

## **Global Rail Sustainability Report 2024**

In conjunction with the UN declaration of 2026 - 2035 as the Decade of Sustainable Transport to recognise transport's vital role in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) the UIC has published their Global Rail Sustainability Report.

The UIC report can be downloaded from the link below and provides a wealth of facts and figures which can support project applications, publicity, influential documents and focussed briefings for all FEDECRAIL members over the coming important Transport Decade. It is recommended for wide distribution to Board, Officers and anyone involved in promotion of our Members' businesses. The indisputable facts in the UIC Report can be used as essential ammunition to support applications as well as influencing documents. The

source can be accredited.

Download here: [uic.org/IMG/pdf/2024\\_global\\_rail\\_sustainability\\_report\\_v3.pdf](https://uic.org/IMG/pdf/2024_global_rail_sustainability_report_v3.pdf)

***John Fuller***

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## **News from Greece**

We are working to inform local communities about reopening the Eastern Peloponnese railway (from Corinth to Kalamata) as a tourist and museum train.

As part of this, we held a meeting in Kalamata. Members from the Network of Tourist and Museum Railways of Greece, the Society for the Environment and Cultural Heritage (which is a member of Europa Nostra), local authorities, and citizen representatives participated.

We talked about why reopening the Peloponnese railway would bring benefits to the local societies.

We discussed different ways to fund a cost benefit analysis study, including crowdfunding, sponsors, and local authorities, among others. We hope our efforts will succeed.

***Konstantinos A. Pettas***

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## **ÖBB 5046.216 Railcar Currently Undergoing Restoration**

### ***Seeking financial support***

The former ÖBB railcar 5046.216 is currently undergoing refurbishment in Austria. After entering service in July 1955, these railcars were also used in international transport. In 1996, it was taken out of service and passed through several buyers before ending up at Bahn im Film. It was then transferred to the MVJ factory in Szombathely/





*Transfer on 12 September 2024*

Hungary, where the bodies were removed. Between 2022 and October 2024, the two bogies with the axles, the draw gear and the buffing gear were mechanically refurbished, and the trunnions were inspected.

After its first presentation on its own bogies at the MVJ factory, the 5046.216 was transferred from Szombathely to Weiz to the workshop of the Steiermärkische Landesbahnen. Here, extensive sheet metal work began on the car body, which also required the replacement of many skirting plates in the skirt area.

We carried out the engine overhaul in several stages in collaboration with Ferrotrade. This involved removing the parts, cleaning them and, after inspection, resealing the engine. Defective parts were replaced and, where necessary, remade. The piping was derusted, sandblasted and painted accordingly. Both heat exchangers were removed, cleaned of old deposits with a custom-made long brush, then pressure-tested and reinstalled. The turbocharger was repaired in a Hungarian specialist workshop, as the long downtime and ingress of rainwater had left their mark. The exhaust piping was recently removed and is currently being rebuilt. The heat shield around the actual exhaust pipe is virtually non-existent and will be completely rebuilt.

The paintwork repairs have also begun. Here, we are focusing on removing the old paint down to the metal so as not to trigger a chemical reaction between the old material and the new paint. Several windows have already been dismantled, cleaned and reassembled with completely new seals by specialist technicians.

As an enormous amount of money has already been spent on the refurbishment and there is still no end in sight, we would be very grateful for any support for the railcar.

**If you would like to support the refurbishment with a donation, please contact:**

[bahn.im.film@aon.at](mailto:bahn.im.film@aon.at)

***Christian Pühringer, ÖMT Secretary***



*Photos (2): Patrick Kohary*





## **A Really Special First Train**

### ***An important milestone for Italy***

A special train with private historical rolling stock was organised on the Arezzo-Stia line (Tuscany, Italy), which is open to regular traffic and owned by the region, on October 19th, 2025.

Nothing new, one might say, except that the three carriages being pulled are the first historical vehicles belonging to a private individual to be registered in the European Register of Vehicles through the Italian Railway Safety Agency (ANSFISA).

The complex administrative procedure was made possible thanks to a specific decree of Ministry of Infrastructure and NSA, but also to the determination of the non-profit company H-Rail, which became the keeper of private historic rolling stock and steam engines (still to be overhauled) by identifying specific ECMs specialising in maintenance management of heritage vehicles.

The three carriages from the 1920s, which had been used for special trains in the past but then set aside due to the lack of specific regulations, were pulled by a modern Diesel locomotive (CZ Loko EffiShunter 1000), but this did not prevent a

milestone from being set for the preservation and use of railway heritage in Italy. This is a very positive sign for all Italian entities (including voluntary associations) that own vehicles, but also a good example for other European organisations.

***Pierluigi Scoizzato***

## **Train à Vapeur d'Auvergne :**

### **2026 Will Be a Year of Discovery and Heritage**

After a particularly intense 2025 season, with more than 10,000 kilometres travelled across Auvergne and the Massif Central – Auvergne Steam Train is preparing for another equally eventful year, with a slightly more reasonable programme for 2026, but one that is still full of surprises.

Next year, passengers will once again be able to enjoy great railway trips, whether to discover heritage sites, spectacular natural landscapes or festive events. The public will once again be able to enjoy the association's great classics: trips to the heart of the Allier Gorges, immersions in the Monts du Cantal, cultural getaways to iconic sites





such as Chenonceau, not to mention the themed trains that make our services so unique. Steam enthusiasts will once again be delighted by several mixed services combining diesel and steam traction, while other trips will offer genuine rail tourism breaks lasting several days.

There will be no shortage of festivities: with local events, gourmet celebrations and regional traditions, the season will offer plenty of opportunities to immerse yourself in the conviviality and authenticity of our regions. It will also feature some exceptional events, such as the big anniversary weekend celebrating our association's 50th anniversary.

In parallel with the preparations for this new season, the Auvergne Steam Train was present at the Origine Auvergne trade fair, held from 21 to 23 November, where our volunteers were able to meet the public and present the actions taken to preserve and bring our railway heritage to life.

This participation was rewarded with a great honour: our association received the 2025 'Expérience Auvergnate' trophy, a distinction that recognises the quality of the trips we offer, the commitment of our teams and the passion we put into sharing the railway history of our region.

This is a valuable encouragement, which leads us towards a year 2026 full of projects, encounters... and steam!

*Clément VANNEQUÉ, Train à Vapeur d'Auvergne*

## Leighton Buzzard Railway Events 2026

It is the time of year to list next year's events. Here is our programme for 2026 at the Leighton Buzzard Railway. More details will be made available as plans are finalised and will be announced separately. The programme includes all the favourites and some new events being run for the first time. Our programme is designed to appeal to all families and also to the Railway Enthusiast. Other events are still in the planning stage and will be announced separately. For the latest updates see our website: [www.buzzrail.uk](http://www.buzzrail.uk)

### Overview March 15 : Mother's Day

**April 5/6** :Easter Sunday and Monday

19: Buzzrail ModelEx – Model Railway Exhibition

**May 3 & 4**: Teddy Bear's Picnic

31: Chase from Paw Patrol visits.

**June 7**: Diesel Gala

21: Father's Day

28: Vintage Vehicles Rally

**July 19**: Dinosaur Roar!

25/26: Beer Festival

**August 30/31**: Pirate Attack.

**September 6**: Bluey' visits

12/13: Autumn Steam Gala

27: Juniors Day

**October 11**: Access all areas

28/29: (Half term) also October 31 and

**November 1** Halloween

Throughout **December**: Santa's Special Trains

## Comment on UPDATE 70:

### **Sweden's ERTMS Support Plan Risks Excluding Heritage Operators**

**Anders Svensson, JHRF (Järnvägs Historiska Riksförbundet / Sweden) comments on this article as follows:**

„In Update 70 there was an article that report of the Swedish Transport Administration's (Trafikverket, TRV) report (TRV 2025/17432) on subsidies for ERTMS vehicle equipment. The article presents the problems that this could lead to for heritage trains on national railway network. The Swedish Railway Historical Association (Järnvägshistoriska Riksförbundet, JHRF) has submitted a number of points of view to the Swedish Transport Administration:

- Emphasizes that heritage traffic is the societies' main source of income
- 10–20 vehicles need to be equipped
- This is so that:
  - The non-profit heritage train sector will survive
  - Showcase greater diversity in a mobile condition
  - Also clear geographical diversity and reserves
  - Concurrency, i.e. the possibility of sev-

eral events on the same day(s)

- Referring the associations to Swedish Railway Museum (JVM) is inappropriate for competitive reasons
- The ECM problem makes it difficult for the associations to have their trains pulled by vehicles owned by JVM
- Railcar trains (with passengers) may not be pulled by a locomotive
- Emphasizes switching without on-board equipment as a possibility in more places than Gällivare
- Emphasizes that displaying stationary collections will not allow the societies to survive
- If the societies disappear, it also threatens future recruitment to JVM
- Proposes that the equipment be owned by TRV and leased to the societies

JHRF shall, in the consultation response to the national transport plan 2026–2037 (of which the subsidies to ERTMS on-board equipment is a part):

- Refer to the number of points to the supporting report as above
- Insist that TRV should look at other countries' cheaper solutions
- Emphasize that the upcoming FRMCS (the new railway telephony system) is also a problem for the associations”

**Anders Svensson, JHRF**

**!!!**

**UPDATE Nr. 72**

**will be published in the end of February 2026**

**Deadline for text and photos is February 8th**

**contact: [schuetter@fedecrail.org](mailto:schuetter@fedecrail.org)**