



# **The British-Polish Railway and Industrial Heritage Partnership**

**June 2006 Report**

# Support Activities

## Railway and Industrial Heritage in Poland

October 2005 – June 2006

### 1) Railway and Industrial Heritage Seminar, Łódź – October 2005

Our second seminar (the first took place in Warsaw in 2003) was a two-day event, attracted 130 participants and took place under the auspices of the New Europe Railway Heritage Trust and the Łódź branch of the Historic Monument Preservation Society, TONZ. NERHT was represented by John Fuller and Richard Tapper. David Morgan, President of Fedecrail, was guest of honour. Administrative support was provided by Grupa Fabricum. The après seminar programme included a vintage tram ride and barbecue, and special trains on the Rogów (FPKW) and Krośniewice-Ozorków (SKPL) narrow gauge railways.

### 2) Lyd2 Diesels in Distress – November 2005

An SOS appeal was received from a member of a railway society in Ostrowiec Wielkopolski. The society possessed two Lyd2 600 mm diesel locomotives and had been storing them in a former PKP carriage and wagon works. A new owner had acquired the works and had given the society notice to quit. The society had transferred the legal title of the locomotives to SKPL. As, neither the society, nor SKPL had removed the locomotives by the set deadline, the new owner had begun cutting them up. Paweł Szwed, the President of FPKW, the Polish Narrow Gauge Railway Foundation, was approached. Mr Szwed agreed to take the locomotives to his Pionki Forest Railway project subject to the condition that SKPL relinquished their legal title. A number of phone calls and e-mails ensued, with the result that SKPL formally surrendered ownership, and the Pionki Forest Railway acquired their most powerful motive power unit, one complete Lyd2 diesel and a comprehensive set of spares, all that was left of the other.

### 3) SKOKW Mentoring – November 2005

The Krośniewice - Ozorków Railway, to the north of Łódź, is the south-eastern extremity of a narrow-gauge network that once stretched to several hundred kilometres. SKPL runs regular 'piggy-back' freight services on part of the network to the north of Krośniewice. However, due to a diversion of the line to accommodate road improvements, the branch from Krośniewice to Ozorków had not seen any trains during the previous five years. As its contribution to the special events which took place in association with the October 2005 Railway Conference, SKPL ran a special train down the branch as far as Łęczycza. Here further progress was impossible because the level crossing across the main road through the town had been tarmaced over. This line has a small, but vigorous support society, the SKOKW. Our English visitors transferred to a platelayers' trolley and helped SKOKW volunteers dig out another level crossing about one kilometre further down the line. Several meetings subsequently took place with the society's committee. The committee was advised to increase the leverage available to the society by fostering contacts with local authorities and businessmen. This advice was to prove timely given subsequent developments. (See 7.)

#### **4) Pułtusk - Nasielsk Railway Track-lifting – February 2006**

A society, seeking to reopen the Pułtusk - Nasielsk narrow gauge railway, requested assistance. The Mazowsze Conservator of historic monuments was processing an application to list the railway as a historic monument, and PKP had tried to pre-empt his decision by engaging a contractor to start lifting the track. (A similar ruse by the receiver of Uniontex previously put paid to local hopes of reviving the Scheibler industrial railway in Łódź.) The society issued an appeal for as many letters as possible to be sent to PKP protesting about the track-lifting and also to the County Conservator supporting his work.

Discussions with the society's chairman established that the best possible way of supporting the campaign would be to help organise a meeting with the key stakeholders. Accordingly, the Director of the Polonia Centre in Pułtusk Castle was approached for the use of a conference room, the local authorities were contacted and a meeting arranged. The meeting was attended by the chairs of the relevant local authorities, through whose territory the railway runs; the director of the National Technology Museum in Warsaw; the deputy head of the National Historic Monument Archive; the former manager of the line and representatives of SKPL. A presentation was made about the economic advantages of restored railways. As the meeting progressed it became clear why none of the local authorities had put themselves forward as possible custodians of the line. A small number of landowners, hoping to acquire the land where the railway bisects their property, had lobbied effectively against the revival of the line.

At the time of writing, the Pułtusk - Nasielsk Railway has provisional listed status, but it is still possible for interested parties to raise objections. It is understood that a majority of the local authorities have objected to the proposed listing. A watching brief is being maintained on developments and the chairman of the railway society has been assured that more help is available should he require it.

#### **5) Mława Railway, LOT AGM – March 2006**

We have been associated with this narrow gauge railway since October 2003, when we accompanied David Morgan on his visit to the line. A LOT (Local Tourist Organisation) is proposing an EU-funded tourism development programme along the line of the railway. Having sent a speaker to its IAGM in 2004, we attended and gave a Powerpoint presentation at this year's AGM. An up-beat address was made pointing out the advantages that heritage railways have, over other tourist attractions, in promoting local economic regeneration.

A surprise development at the AGM was a proposal from an official of the PKP Estates Dept. This official suggested that the transfer of the railway land would take place more smoothly if each of the twelve local authorities, through which the railway runs, applied to take over their own section of line. The AGM attendees decided to hold a special meeting to consider the proposal. It seemed likely that the PKP proposal would be adopted. We made several approaches to the chairman of Krasne Parish Council (the instigator of the scheme to preserve the railway) and sent a delegate to the meeting to point out that it would be much more difficult to revive a railway which had twelve landlords than if it had only one! Our efforts were successful and Krasne Parish Council is now proceeding with the acquisition of the whole line.

## **6) Scheibler Complex - Łódź, Railway and Power Station**

In the face of considerable setbacks, organised local support seems to have collapsed for the initiative to preserve Scheibler's Railway and its associated art-nouveau power station. Following track-lifting (which took place during the actual listing process) the Voivodship Conservator decided not to complete the listing of the Railway. However, the line of the Railway has been assigned as a transport corridor in a structure plan for future developments. The town council has undertaken to prepare a framework plan for the development of the whole area and this would appear to be the best opportunity for concerned local residents to resubmit their ideas for preserving the surviving industrial heritage items in the Scheibler complex. The situation is being monitored, but without a viable preservation lobby in Łódź there is very little that we can do.

## **7) Krośniewice-Ozorków Railway, Road Threat – April 2006**

In early spring, the SKOKW made a vigorous start in clearing undergrowth in preparation for the restoration of railway services to Ozorków. So it was a considerable shock when we heard from the chairman of SKOKW in April that road improvement plans envisaged severing the railway at Sierpów, some ten kilometres short of its terminus at Ozorków. He was told that maintaining good relations with respect to local government was a sine qua non of railway preservation and a number of specific actions were recommended.

He established direct contact with one of the contacts that had been recommended to him the previous year. (See item 3.) This gentleman made a direct approach to the Governor of Łódź province with the result that the road plans have been amended so that the restoration of the railway will not be impeded.

**Latest news.** All physical obstacles along the line have been removed. Tourist trains are scheduled to commence operations on 9 July, 2006.

## **8) Karśnice, Open Air Railway Museum – October 2005 - May 2006**

A disused open-air Railway Museum exists about thirty miles to the west of Łódź on the Śląsk - Gdynia freight trunk railway line. The museum, lies alongside the Karśnice locomotive maintenance workshops. We visited it, in the company of NERT and FEDECRAIL representatives, in October 2005. After the visit it was resolved that the current situation regarding the museum should be ascertained and that, if necessary, a request for intervention should be made to David Morgan.

In March 2006, a visit was paid to the founder of the museum, the former general manager of the railway workshops. This gentleman explained something of the history of the line and his acquisition policy for the museum. The Śląsk - Gdynia line was built shortly after Poland recovered its independence following WW I, to connect the coalfields of the Śląsk region with the port of Gdynia. As works general manager, he resolved to collect one example of every locomotive to have worked this line. In some cases he even succeeded in obtaining the first locomotive built of a particular series. With the exception of two classes of locomotive, his collection was complete. However, before he could complete his work and transfer the museum to a suitable body to safeguard its future, he was retired from the position of works manager. The

museum was then allowed to decay to its current state. Though retired, he has succeeded in persuading the mayor of Zdunska Wola that the museum should be taken over by the town council. Although a verbal agreement had been reached between the Council and PKP officials, nothing concrete has transpired; meanwhile four of the locomotives have been sold, although only one so far has left the site.

A visit was paid to the mayor of Zdunska Wola. He requested that senior representatives of the British railway heritage movement intervene directly with the chairman of PKP in order to get the current deadlock resolved. At the mayor's invitation, a short presentation was made about railway preservation at a railway development conference which took place in Zdunska Wola in May 2006. The presentation succeeded in signalling that there is interest overseas in the museum's future and a number of useful contacts were made.

### **9) Mława Railway, Harassment – May 2006**

SKPL has taken over the role of operator at Mława from the Forestry Railway Preservation Society. In April the local SKPL Manager, while preparing the line for the commencement of freight operations, had several visits from the local police and in May was arrested for several hours. It appears that one particular individual, with connections to the local police service, has become very interested in acting as intermediary in the sale of a large block of railway land at Mława to LG Electronics. LGE are looking to expand their factory there. The revival of freight operations on the Mława Railway is a threat to his plans. Matters had reached the stage that the General Manager was on the point of resigning when we were asked to give a helping hand. Discussions took place with senior officials of SKPL, as well as the mayor of Krasne, and a letter was sent to the Polish president of LG Electronics.

### **10) British-Polish Railway and Industrial Heritage Partnership**

The volume of work being undertaken is expanding, and we have reached the point where we need to secure external funding to sustain this level of support activities. Accordingly, we have agreed to formally constitute the group of friends, which has operated hitherto as the informal "Seminar Committee". From now on activities will be undertaken under the banner of the "British - Polish Railway and Industrial Heritage Partnership". It is intended that the group will operate in a manner which will be complementary to the New Europe Railway Heritage Trust, but focussing on Poland. An application will be made to join FEDECRAIL when the partnership becomes formally constituted.

**Andrew Goltz**  
**Eton, 15 June 2006**

*photograph front cover, Marek Ciesielski*  
*Px48 1785, hauls a test train on the Śmigiel Railway, 15 May 2006*

*photograph rear cover, Szymon Błaszczuk*  
*Freight services return to the Mława Railway, 20 April 2006*

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