

Romanian Narrow Gauge Exploratory Tour August 2019

Blog 10 - Sibiu - Agnita Railway, back to Cluj and end of tour

Today we rode a motorised trolley on the Sibiu - Agnita Railway from Hosman towards Cornatel. This preservation group hope to restore steam passenger trains to this section initially as there is a weak bridge west of Cornatel and river erosion of the line east of Hosman. They have limited secure accommodation for their rolling stock but have been given several carriages and wagons from the Swiss Waldenburger Bahn which they hope to use on trains. Previously, they have hired in a steam loco and coaches from Criscior but currently they have a number of bureaucratic hurdles to overcome before they have permission to run a passenger service. They are at a similar stage to the operation at Teaca and are sharing expertise with a hope that both will be approved at the same time.



The one carriage on site is from the Waldenburgerbahn in Switzerland. Alex, a railway volunteer, was one of our hosts for the visit. One of the subscribers to this blog, Hans-Peter, says:

The Waldenburgerbahn is being changed from 750 to 1000 mm. There is lots of information material available in German language.



Departing Hosman



Left to right: Rod, Norman, CJ and Ron on the trolley trailer prior to a minor derailment. We had just the one but riding back on the trailer, I was able to appreciate how common derailments on this light vehicle probably are. The trolley itself felt much more stable.



The track passes fields of crops and grass with sheep grazing.



We didn't get all the way to Cornatel, this area of uncleared summer growth defeated us and that meant turning the trolley on a car jack and moving the trailer off the track to get it onto the rear of the train for the return.



Getting ready to turn the trolley and move the trailer off the track.

The two volunteers gave us a good ride and looked after us well. I wish them well in their attempts to return a section of this long rural narrow gauge line to use for tourist trains.

You can read more about the Railway here:
<http://www.sibiuagnitarailway.com/index.php>

The Railway has a British support group:

<http://www.sibiuagnitarailway.com/friends/saruk.php>

The Railway has had its downs - see

<http://www.sibiuagnitarailway.com/friends/files/SARUK/HeritageRailway154.pdf>

and while other railways such as Viseu de Sus, Criscior, Abrud, Moldovita, Covasna/Comandau and Sovata received permission to operate tourist trains, Teaca and Sibiu-Agnita both missed the boat at a time when obtaining permission was much easier than it is today.

A more positive slant is provided here:

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/news/world/prietenii-mocanitei-restoring-the-sibiu-agnita-railway/article/386651>

This shows the parallels with the pioneering days of Welsh narrow gauge preservation when groups of mainly young people took over the running of the Talylyn Railway and re-opened the Ffestiniog Railway.

We drove back to Cluj to end the tour. I am now retracing my route by train to Bucharest and KLM back to Humberside. Unless there is anything of interest to report, this is the last blog of the trip.

John

Postscript

With reference to Blog 9 - Rasinari - Sibiu 'Cheese Tram', Hans-Peter writes:

Thank you for your great Romania-Blogs. When I looked at the pictures of the 2 trams, one with "AOMC" written on its side and the other one described as "active tram", I recognized some Swiss tram features. A search showed that the AOMC tram arrived in Rasinari end August 2018 and is the ex Be 4/4 101 of the Swiss Aigle-Ollon-Monthey-Champéry (AOMC) railway.

The "active tram", a Stern&Haffner Triebwagen ET 26111 was apparently built in 1951, was in service at the Swiss Birsigalbahn as Be 4/4 Nr. 8. It was sold to Austria and later arrived in Romania.

Maybe you know much more about these 2 trams, but I thought that I would nevertheless send you this information.

With best wishes.

Hans-Peter

Romania Narrow Gauge Exploratory Tour 2019 Summary

In August 2019, we were able to confirm:

*Two railways operating daily with steam (Viseu and Moldovita)

*Two railways operating at the weekends with steam (Criscior and Abrud)

*One line which uses steam (when serviceable) at weekends and possibly daily (Sovata)

Two lines which can be visited by appointment where tourist trains may operate in the future (Teaca, Cornatel - Hosman)

*One line which uses steam on the scenic top section on the first weekend of the month (Comandau) and diesels on the lower Covasna section on other weekends

*A further diesel narrow gauge operation on part of the scenic gorge section from Turda to Campeni (see Facebook screen capture below)

Open air railway museums at Dej and Sibiu (both including some narrow gauge locos) and the railway museum at Bucharest Nord station

Tourist tram rides at Rasinari and *Arad - Podgoria

Regular trams operate in Cluj and Bucharest - other cities?

*Three industrial narrow gauge lines still operating in an area west of Brasov and south of Sibiu

The lines with a * above are likely to provide a core program for Romania Narrow Gauge 2. Carpathian Travel Center proved to be very competent and I would hope to use them again.

I will try to contact everyone who I think may be interested in **Romania Narrow Gauge 2** in summer 2020 when I have details to share (likely to be in September 2019). If you don't hear from me about this, assume you are not on my 'possibles' list and drop me an email.

Thanks for following this blog which is available online now at <http://rabylee.uk/romania19.html>



Rudolf Hanzelik shared a post.

20 hrs

The former Romanian Railways #CFR 760mm gauge line number 309, a 9 km sector was reopened on January 2019, between Sălciua-Lunca Arieşului in Arieş valley, Alba County, Transylvania, Romania. They are working on to reopen for tourism another 14 km from Sălciua to Baia de Arieş. These sectors are part of the former Abrud, Alba county to Turda, Cluj county narrow-gauge railway that was closed in 1997.



During our tour Chris discovered this post on Facebook which explained the mystery narrow gauge operation we observed while driving from Campeni towards Turda. Christian our host at Teaca who lives in Cluj was also aware of this line.

John