



Wattrain

The World Alliance of
Tourist Trams & Trains

In Association with UIC-The Worldwide Railway Organization.



Editorial:

Welcome to this July 2018 edition of the WATTRAIN Newsletter.

And as each day passes, excitement is mounting as we approach the WATTRAIN Conference in Frisco, Texas (31st October-4th November 2018.) The details are contained at the end of this newsletter, along with registration details.

The first item, though, strikes a much more serious note. Events at the Puffing Billy Railway, and criticisms of the Board at Australian Government level has given WATTRAIN pause for thought. So Chris Le Marshall's opening article will address the issues raised relating to governance and child protection issues. This issue is so important that it dominates this newsletter..and so it should, you will agree.

WATTRAIN's link with TopRail is vital to the further growth of rail tourism worldwide. Work to improve the connectivity between the WATTRAIN and the Toprail sites is ongoing.

And there is a reference to a full report (to appear in the WATTRAIN website) of the FEDECRAIL 2018 event in Scotland.

Other news items include something of a coup for heritage operator West Coast Railways in the aftermath of UK timetabling chaos.

The West Somerset Railway announces a year Pass..a news item from Taiwan, India... and a letter from Uruguay shows the world wide nature of WATTRAIN!

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Why do Tourist and Railway Heritage Organisations Sometimes Implode ?

Recent events at the Puffing Billy Railway in Australia indicate how poor governance and mismanagement can severely impact on the well-being of individuals and an organisation. As an introduction, I quote from the Victorian Minister for Tourism and Major Event's press release:

"Over decades, Puffing Billy Railway protected paedophiles and chose to ignore allegations of sexual assault against children".

Additionally, in terms of governance:

"The composition of the Emerald Tourist Railway board enabled the Puffing Billy Preservation Society to achieve a significant level of control without scrutiny. The current Emerald Tourist Railway Act does not ensure the independence of board members".

This short article reflects only the views and opinion of the author.

What are the indicators that show an organisation is "standing into danger" and may be putting people at risk?

Culture of Non-Engagement

The Board, senior management, and others associated with tourist and heritage railways must engage volunteers and others. There must be a culture of respect that assists in effective communication, understanding and widespread ownership of decisions and general acceptance of desired outcomes. The documented procedures in rail safety management of change are a good guide and reflect best practice. Consultation, engagement, discussion, analysis and agreement are essential.

Delicate Issues are Not Handled Well

Often there are occurrences that require timely and positive actions by the Board and management to ensure that all in the organisation have a clear appreciation of the organisation's values. For example, where a member or volunteer's behaviour is unacceptable, the Board and management must respond quickly in an informed manner that clearly signals to all what is acceptable and demonstrates the culture and values of the organisation. Nothing demoralises volunteers and staff more than Board and management acceptance of inappropriate or unfair behaviour.

Good People are Leaving

An indicator that something is amiss is when intelligent, energetic people who are eager to contribute to an organisation leave. They generally leave as they have not been given an opportunity to contribute or they find the culture unacceptable when situations detailed above evolve.

Paid Jobs go to Those of the "Inner Circle"

As organisations grow, paid employment opportunities often arise. Those in the organisation generally expect positions to be awarded on merit not as a result of "nepotism". "Jobs for the boys / girls" lead to significant discontent amongst members and volunteers.

Staff Appointments are Easier than Managing Volunteers

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As organisations grow and have a requirement to complete more demanding tasks, many senior managers find it easier to employ staff rather than managing volunteer input. If not managed well, there can be a feeling of disenfranchisement by volunteers.

Key Appointments go to a Select Few

Volunteers and members expect key positions to be awarded on merit. In many dysfunctional organisations, key appointments such as Examiners and Drivers Positions are awarded to those in the “inner circle” who often lack the ability or experience to undertake the role.

The Board does not Question

Board solidarity is essential, however, Board “group think” is dangerous. “Rubber stamp” Boards that do not question management often make bad strategic decisions that expose the organisation. The Board must understand what is happening in the organisation through effective engagement and must balance their oversight of the Chief Executive Officer with the appropriate levels of delegation. If the Board or the Chief Executive Officer overstep the mark, there must be effective mechanisms to correct the situation.

“Stacked Board”

Complementary skills and diversity at Board level are refreshing and essential for good governance. Management must avoid influencing the appointment of Board members in order to have a “compliant” non-questioning Board. Paid staff should not be allowed to hold Board positions as there are too many conflicts of interest.

Popular Projects Win Over Essential Projects

Boards have a responsibility to act in a manner which ensures the sustainability of their organisations. In an asset intensive industry, it is essential to invest in asset maintenance and replacement. Dysfunctional Boards often invest in popular projects, not essential asset related projects. If in doubt, look at the state of the railway track, it is a good indicator of the Board’s priorities.

“Consultation becomes Telling”

Successful organisations consult, assess, agree and communicate desired outcomes, especially organisations that are volunteer based. When member consultation becomes simply a forum for the Board and management to tell members what has been decided, invariably there is significant discord. Members and volunteers tend to think there is an “inner sanctum” that is making unilateral decisions for all.

Board Unaware of Responsibilities

Ignorance is no excuse. Board members have legislative, regulatory and above all moral responsibilities and obligations. It is especially true with respect to protection of young children, youth, the disadvantaged, “whistle blowers”, and in relation to occupational health and safety and rail safety. All Board members must consciously identify and understand their obligations.

Not Following Professional / Expert Technical and Other Advice

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There is a range of professional and expert advice that Boards can utilise to assist with sound governance. When Boards choose to disregard expert technical and other advice, often for reasons of politics, they do so at their own peril.

About the Author:



Chris Le Marshall is a founding Vice President of WATTRAIN. He and his business partner, Jane Besley, operate a boutique strategic and business planning consultancy that operates across a number of industry sectors. The consultancy, Linqage International, has undertaken over 40 (forty) assignments in the tourist and heritage railway sector. See linqageinternational.com.au.

TopRail: Tourism Potential of Railways meeting held on 12 June 2018 in Paris

TopRail, the UIC working group focused on Tourism Potential of Railways was held in Paris on 12 June. The meeting was attended by railway representatives from the railway operators of Austria, Switzerland, Hungary and Spain as well as representatives from the European and the World Tourist Trains and Trams associations (Fedecrail and Wattrain).

(Further reading on WATTRAIN News page)

UK: Vintage train company steps in to reopen Lake District line(Guardian 19/06/18)

West Coast Railways to run services on Oxenholme to Windermere route hit by Northern timetable fiasco.

West Coast Railways, which runs charter trains along some of the UK's most scenic routes, formally launched its first service on the Lakes line on Monday, two weeks after Northern suspended all journeys and introduced a replacement bus service.

A 40-year-old diesel engine and carriages will carry passengers free of charge along the 10-mile route from Oxenholme to Windermere six times a day, from 9.25am to 7pm. It is understood that the Department for Transport will meet the £5,500 daily cost of running the service.

Tim Farron, the MP for Westmorland and Lonsdale, worked with a local passenger group to arrange for West Coast Railways to run services on the line. "We're nine hours into the service and we've been on time throughout the day," he said.

"It's a victory for the can-do over the can't-do. We've shamed the Department for Transport and Northern rail by making something happen. We are doing them reputational damage every time we run a train and they don't."

UK: West Somerset Railway: Annual Pass

The West Somerset Railways Annual Pass is a brilliant way to visit the West Somerset Railway as many times as you like throughout the season, valid for a period of 12 months from the date of issue.

Family: 2 adults and up to 2 young persons (or dogs) - £129.00 per year.

Individual Adult: £62.00 per year. www.west-somerset-railway.co.uk

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FEDECRAIL CONFERENCE 2018 EDINBURGH SCOTLAND UK



This year we were based for the main conference in Edinburgh UK, Thursday 19th – Monday 23rd April, organised in collaboration with HRA and HRA Scottish Committee, with representatives from 19 countries.

Heritage Operations Group (HOG) met following Fedecrail council meeting on Thursday afternoon, (Jonas Svartlok's separate HOG Group minutes). Business sessions were held in the auditorium of the National Museum of Scotland, an excellent venue with Victorian heritage and a vast collection of artefacts ancient and modern. Visits were arranged to Hopetoun House, the Royal Botanic Gardens and the Royal Mile for guests not participating in meetings.

(A full report appears on the website.)

India: "Chaiyya Chaiyya" train to get more attractions

The heritage Nilgiri Mountain Railway (NMR), operating the popular mountain train services to the famous hill resort town Udhagamandalam (Ooty), is set to get new attractions, including a 'Coachteria', to woo tourists. The 'Coachteria', a theme-based restaurant would be opened at the Udhagamandalam station, about 90 km from here, the Southern Railway said.

Taiwan:Takao Railway Museum

"The birth place of southern Taiwan contemporary culture."



Opened in 2010, two years after the last freight service, Takao Railway Museum presents the original setup of the freight office in the 70's, the prime time of railway freight transportation in Taiwan. Exhibitions also include preserved vehicles and a signal box. Takao Railway Museum is located in the area of The Pier-2 Art Center, one of the most famous tourist attractions in Kaohsiung City.

Address: 32 Gushan 1st Rd, Kaohsiung 80444, Taiwan. Website: <https://trm.tw/>

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Ròmulo Guerrini Ballabio(Uruguay) sends this news ..

I welcomed your last newsletter.

As always, WATTRAIN invites us to return by sending news or any news related to the topic that catches us. I've seen reports from distant places of our planet by you. Come to us and they're not so alone. Based on this I would like to tell you that in my small country (Uruguay) also once had a thriving railway (3000Kmts.), Which from the middle of the last century went into a decline which today still continues, leaving very few remains what it was.

Among a group (Circle of Railway Studies of Uruguay) in which we are engaged, with very limited resources, to rescue and preserve some units. We have in custody and running a steam locomotive 0-6-0-Manning Wardle 1890 and 2-6-0 Beyer-Peacock in 1910 with problems in the boiler.

We work restoring other units, almost just for the hell of it. They allow us to be in an area of what were the Central Railway workshops Uruguay in which 3,500 workers came to work.

Friends, I give presented, and I hope the news that more advocates of rail transport scattered around the world, has dropped them well.

Greeting!!

SAVE THE DATE! SAVE THE DATE!

WATTRAIN-World Alliance of Tourist Trams & Trains

will hold its triannual Conference at the Drury Inn Frisco, Texas, from October 31 to November 4, 2018

Theme: "How to address the new challenges of tomorrow using the resources we have today"

We strongly hope to see you there!!!!

Registration: WATTRAIN Frisco, TX registration is now live. Please find below the link to registration: [HERE](#)

Deadline for registration for Conference: September 30, 2018.

Topics: Staffing (recruitment & Training), Environment (incl. safeguarding future use of traditional fuels), litigation, protection of historic collections, and insurance.

Speakers: in addition to Wattrain speakers, renowned experts in their fields, including: Steve Ryan, Sergio Rodriguez Zubieta, William Brotherton, Tripp Salisbury, Gabriel Asenjo, Courtney Wilson, G. Mark Ray (HRA President), Jeff Johnson.

Venue: Wattrain has blocked a number of rooms at special rates at the Drury Inn & Suites Frisco, TX. To reserve: www.druryhotels.com and enter Group Number 2340496. The deadline for hotel registration is October 9, 2018.

Further info, program of the Conference, Partners program: see www.wattrain.net

OPTIONAL POST-CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

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We have deliberately scheduled our conference to slot into the American Heritage Rail Alliance programme and annual congress. Those wishing to attend would fly with me to Durango on Sunday November 4th, where we would stay two nights, travelling on the iconic Durango & Silverton Railroad on Monday 5th November. (FREE to WATTRAIN members and guests, courtesy a kind sponsor) On Tuesday 6th November we would transfer by road to join the HRA conference in Santa Fe. This culminates in a ride on the famous Cumbres & Toltec Railroad followed by a gala dinner on Saturday 10th November; details to follow. Return home from Albuquerque International Airport on 11th November, or later. DAVID MORGAN -PRESIDENT

PS. I have just spoken with David Morgan, who is at London Heathrow awaiting a flight to France. He is to share in the following event, including breaking a bottle of champagne in connection with the following...!

“On Saturday, July 21 and Sunday, July 22, the LE CONIFER tourist train celebrates 25 years of existence. Two days of celebration with the inauguration of our new steam locomotive 150Y.”



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