



**Association  
Internationale  
d'Histoire des  
Chemins de Fer**

**International  
Railway History  
Association**

**Asociación  
Internacional de  
Historia  
Ferroviaria**

## HIGHLIGHTS

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June 2021

## QUICK SHIFTING

Switch quickly, One shouldn't waste a good crisis? It may seem like a contradiction, but it is not. The pandemic has taught us to react quickly. Online conferences can no longer be counted on one hand. Even our General Assembly took place in cyberspace. We are learning very fast.

So do the railway companies. Commuting takes on a totally different dimension now that we will probably be working from home for a long time.

That will put a lot of pressure on the railway companies' earnings in the years to come. It took a few months before the railway companies were aware that effects on public transport might persist for more years than the pandemic in itself. Working from home is here to stay.

The Belgian railways are adapting to this situation: in order to avoid large crowds, tests are being carried out with reservations on trajectories with high transport demand, e.g. to the coast, and in order to

limit the loss of income from the smaller number of commuters, new formulas are being devised, or rather, old formulas are being dusted off again: the 'flexabonnement' is a good example.

"The past is a foreign country. They do things differently there". Our successors will certainly investigate such novelties. We are still too close to the facts. In this newsletter, we focus mainly on the General Assembly. Transparency is one of the values of our century, so we pay attention to this event.

There is also some museum news, because the far-reaching vaccination, coupled with the necessary sanity measures and caution, seems to be keeping the infection wave at bay. The effects of the pandemic will be felt for some time yet.

While preparing the newsletter, I received from our president the message that Mrs. Zsuzsa Frysnyák, Hungarian historian with a great

reputation in the field of railway and transport history, passed away. The participants at our conference in Budapest know what a tremendous effort she made for this conference. Csaba Horvath wrote an In Memoriam.

In the meantime, there are plenty of birthdays. The chance of Belgium and France meeting up during the European football festival is of course nihil, but it would be a happy coincidence, because this year we are celebrating 175 years of the Brussels-Paris railway connection and 25 years of Thalys. In June, the Orient Express passed through Belgium twice, a feast for trainspotters. For the adepts of crime stories, it must be a disappointment. No murder on the Orient Express this time

Paul VAN HEESVELDE  
Chief-Editor



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER -

Dear members and dear partners,

I am very pleased to present you a synthesis of the activity report of the President approved by the IRHA General Assembly on 16 June 2021.

As most organisations, the International Railway History Association IRHA had to cope with a unique situation during the past one and half year as a consequence of the worldwide covid crisis.

After the year 2019 dedicated to the regular activities of our association - focused on the preparation of three books and the initial organisation of the 9th International Railway History Conference on "Europe and the Railways", the extension of the covid pandemic from the first months of 2020 had a direct influence on our activities and perspectives.

Political measures and restrictions adopted in most countries led to drastic limitations of all international activities including travel, seminars, conferences and all events that implied face-to-face meetings with an exception for teleworking and remote meetings.

Nevertheless, our activity could be successfully continued in 2020 and during the first part of this year with two objectives:

- maintaining the links and exchanges between IRHA members and with our partners, in particular thanks to the regular dissemination of the IRHA newsletter,
- preparing in parallel the publication of three books under the umbrella of IRHA

### *Publications*

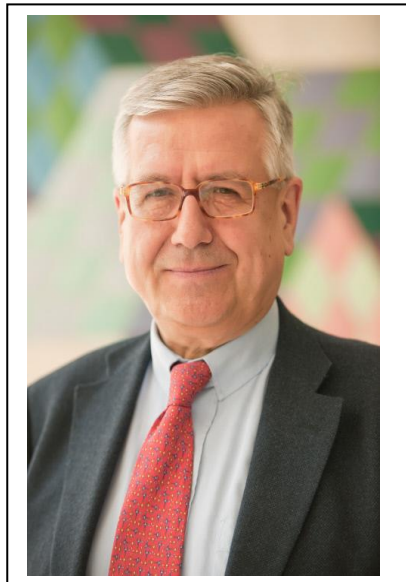
Real progress been achieved in the preparation of the three conference books:

- "Railways and the Cities" (Mechelen / Malines conference)
- "Euro-Asian rail links: from the 'Bagdad-Bahn' to the new 'Rail Silk Roads' (Istanbul 2016)
- "Railways in the First World War" (Budapest 2018).

A huge assessment and reviewing work has been achieved during the period under the coordination by IRHA Honorary President Henry Jacolin and with the strong commitment of the editors and chairpersons of the respective scientific committees, Andrea Giuntini, Ralf Roth and Paul Van Heesvelde. We also want to pay tribute to the "regional leaders" who were strongly committed to the assessment and reviewing of the papers proposed for the books.

### *Newsletter*

The IRHA newsletter was relaunched in 2019 thanks to the efforts and personal involvement of Paul Van Heesvelde as the new Chief Editor. The publication targeted at IRHA members as well as our




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**Paul Véron**  
IRHA President

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

partners from railway foundations and railway history associations, museums, railway companies, is now published on a quarterly basis. It offers an effective tool to further developing exchanges and cooperation within the international family of railway history and heritage. All IRHA members have been cordially invited to send contributions and make greater use of this opportunity to promote their national events and exchange all kind of valuable information. Paul Van Heesvelde is thanked for his comprehensive report of the newsletter development sent prior to the assembly.

### *9th International Railway History Conference*

The organisation of the 9th IRHA Railway History Conference initially planned at the end of 2021 or first quarter of 2022 was deeply affected by the covid situation.

Initial contacts in 2019 with Train World in Brussels-Schaerbeek opened very attractive perspectives for the organisation of our next conference in partnership with Train World. A space was also envisaged to hold our conference in an area of the museum. The development of the covid crisis during 2020 generated a strong uncertainty around the organisation of this conference. As the result of a consultation of members of the IRHA Bureau and Board of Management in March 2020, a majority proposed to postpone the 9th Railway History Conference to a period where face-to-face conferences are allowed by public authorities. A clear majority argued that a remote (visio)-only conference would not meet all objectives of IRHA in particular in terms of international contacts and networking. Definitively the optimum for the 9th conference would be a mix of face-to-face participation and possibility to join by visio for a number of participants from different parts of the world. The year 2022 - second half - or 2023 is proposed for a new planning of the Railway History conference in Belgium. The General Assembly will have to debate and take a position on this issue.

### *10th IRHA Railway History Conference in Canada*

Following the kind invitation received from our Canadian colleague and friend Pierre Barrieau, it was decided at the last General Assembly in Paris to hold our 10th IRHA Railway History Conference in 2023 or 2024, possibly in Montreal or another venue in connection with railways and railway heritage. This conference with global dimension would address the considerations and decisions that led to the creation and development of high-speed rail systems around the world. The date and first concepts for this 10th Railway History conference will have to be discussed with Pierre Barrieau and all participating members at the General Assembly.

### *Membership*

We were very pleased to welcome a new member, the First Hungarian Steam Train Foundation EMGA in our association in April 2021. In addition, all IRHA members are invited to motivate the railway associations and organisations from their respective geographical areas to join IRHA or develop a fruitful cooperation with our association

Finally I want to express warmest thanks to all IRHA members - members of the Bureau, Board of Management, General Assembly - for their confidence, their continuous involvement and effective support to all activities developed by our association for the benefit of railway history.

Paul VÉRON  
AIHC – IRHA - AIHF President

## RAILWAY & MOBILITY READINGS



Pereira, Hugo Silveira. "Railway Imperialism Revisited: The Failed Line from Macao to Guangzhou." in *Technology and Culture*, vol. 62 no. 1, 2021, p. 82-104. Project MUSE, doi:10.1353/tech.2021.0003.

Studies in railway imperialism usually focus on examples of nations from the European core who imposed railway projects upon their colonies or peripheral countries, seeking political or economic advantages. Both colonies and peripheral countries are often described as passive agents that were either bullied or swindled into accepting those projects. This paper revisits the concept with an example of a colonial country on the European periphery. Portugal attempted to impose a railway from its colony of Macao to the Chinese city Guangzhou in order to obtain political and economic leverage in the South of China. The diplomatic endeavors of the Portuguese representatives in China, conducted with a belittling and even racist demeanor towards the Chinese, were met with different forms of resistance from their Chinese counterparts that eventually led to the termination of negotiations and the project. This new look at railway imperialism shows both that it was not a practice exclusive to imperial powerhouses and that it could be countered by the countries on which it was imposed.

Wang, Hsien-Chun. "Contested Tracks to Modernity: Negotiating Narratives at Taiwan's Railway Department Park." In *Technology and Culture*, vol. 62 no. 2, 2021, p. 573-583. Project MUSE, doi:10.1353/tech.2021.0064.

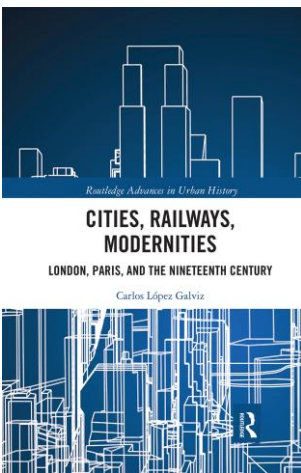
abstract:

This essay looks at the exhibitions of Taipei's Railway Department Park, a museum exhibiting Taiwan's "railway culture." It explores how the history of the island's railway system and the Railway Department as the symbol of modernity have been intricately linked to contested interpretations of Taiwan's history, which is shaped by wars, Japanese imperialism, and Chinese nationalism from the nineteenth century to the present day. It also reviews how the contents of the exhibitions may appeal to the general public, invoking shared memories of railway travel and creating a sense of community in a time when bickering over history has strained relationships among the Taiwanese people.

Carlos López Galviz, *Cities, Railways, Modernities London, Paris, and the Nineteenth Century*, Routledge, 2020, 320 p. ISBN 9780367662929

*Cities, Railways, Modernities* chronicles the transformation that London and Paris experienced during the nineteenth century through the lens of the London Underground and the Paris Métro.

By highlighting the multiple ways in which the future of the two cities was imagined and the role that railways played in that process, it challenges and refines two of the most dominant myths of urban modernity: A planned Paris and an unplanned London. The book recovers a significant body of work around the ideas, the plans, the context and the building of metropolitan railways in the two cities to provide new insights into the relationship of transport technologies and urban change during the nineteenth century.

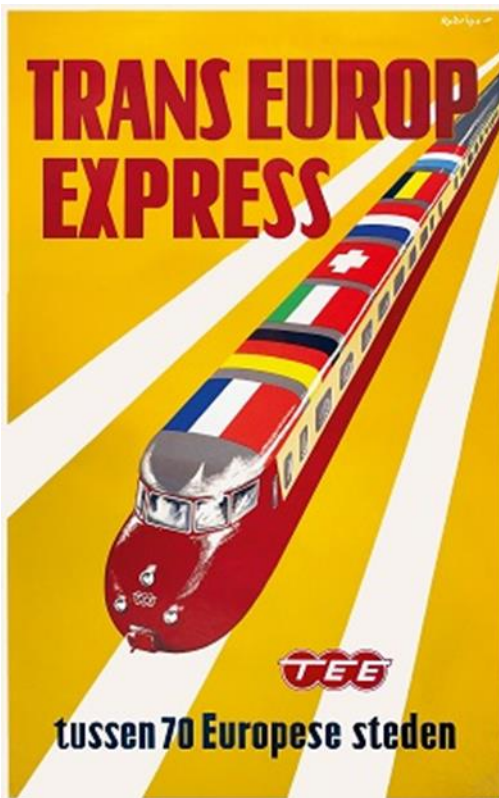


## Exhibition news

Expo Spoorwegmuseum Utrecht

The new exhibition 'Track of Imagination', 150 years of Dutch railway posters, tells the history of railway travel in beautiful and colorful posters. The 120 posters, some of which have never been exhibited before, are an exceptional display of the development of design styles over the years.

The earliest illustrated railway posters were made at the end of the 19th century for boat trains by architect H.P. Berlage and others. Attractive posters to draw foreign tourists to 'Holland' by train were often produced in neighboring countries. They painted a picture of windmills, bulb fields, and girls in traditional costume. In 1913, Willy Sluiter designed the first 'modern' Dutch railway posters. He did not depict trains or destinations, but rather passengers, railwaymen, and 'locals' in the cartoonish style that was characteristic of this 'gentleman-artist'. When the papers from the Conference are published in print form, it is hoped to provide a price discount for those who took part in the Conference.



During the exhibition 'Spoor van Verbeelding', children can make their own poster in the 'workshop of Imagination' in the museum. This special place has been created with all the tools, instructions, and inspiration needed to make the most beautiful poster for the wall at home. Children and their parents can also expect more fun activities around the theme of posters. The exhibition has been compiled by collector and publicist: Arjan den Boer. His richly illustrated book '150 years of Dutch railway posters' will be presented by Thoth publishers at the same time as the start of the exhibition.

Arjan den Boer (1972) studied General Literature (specializing in art history and cultural education) at Utrecht University. He is a publicist in the field of history, monuments, architecture, railways, and posters. In addition to publications, he gives lectures and tours, including at the Spoorwegmuseum. For more than ten years, Den Boer has been a collector of original railway posters, of which he has built up a collection of hundreds.

The exhibition includes posters from the extensive collection of the Spoorwegmuseum, from the collection of the guest curator, and from several museums and archives in the Netherlands and abroad. Some posters have never been exhibited before or, as

sensitive as the original lithographs are to light, have been coming out of the shelves of the depot for a long time. The exhibition will also feature rare examples of the French Art Deco master A.M. Cassandre.

See <https://www.spoorwegmuseum.nl/en/ontdek/nu-in-het-museum/track-of-imagination/>

Source: Utrecht Spoorwegmuseum

**Reopening of the Nuremberg DB Museum on 1 June 2021** - new video installation "Locomotive" and surprise packages for children - museum visit by appointment and with a fixed time slot.

Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2021, the DB Museum Nuremberg will once again open its doors to guests. Just in time for International Children's Day, the museum will start operations with free surprise packages for children and a newly designed exhibition space with a video installation by the artist duo Christoph Girardet and Matthias Müller.



Museum Director Dr. Oliver Götze: "We are really delighted to finally be able to welcome the public back to the Nuremberg House. Of course, we would like to surprise our guests with something new and celebrate the reopening together with them: from 1 June, we will therefore show the video installation "Locomotive", which will not only delight art lovers. We will also celebrate International Children's Day with little surprises for our youngest railway fans. It's worth a visit."

New room concept with "Locomotive" video installation

During the closure period due to the pandemic, a new room concept was created in the DB Museum in which the 20-minute video installation "Locomotive" by the two artists Christoph Girardet and Matthias Müller is shown. In three film sequences running side by side at the same time, museum visitors are taken on a gripping journey through dark tunnels and over dizzyingly high bridges. For this, Girardet and Müller, who have been working on their joint cinematic work since 1999, have collected railway scenes from hundreds of feature films, sifted through them and reassembled them. "Locomotive" shows how closely the medium of film and the world of railways are linked and will delight cineastes, railway fans and art lovers alike.

Museum visit with fixed time booking

Due to legal requirements, a visit to the museum is initially only possible by appointment. Two time slots are offered per day: in the morning from 9:00 to 12:30 and in the afternoon from 13:30 to 17:00 (on weekends: 10:00 to 13:30 and 14:30 to 18:00). During the one-hour break, contact surfaces are cleaned and extensive ventilation is provided. Detailed information on how to reserve a timed ticket can be found on the DB Museum website ([www.dbmuseum.de](http://www.dbmuseum.de)). The reservation modalities listed there also apply to the Museum of Communication Nuremberg. Together with the DB Museum, the museum restaurant TINTO will also open its outdoor catering facilities (for more information, see: [www.tinto-tapas.de](http://www.tinto-tapas.de)). Unfortunately, the DB Museum's external locations in Koblenz and Halle (Saale) must remain closed for the time being. Archive and library open by appointment

See: <https://www.deutschebahnstiftung.de/pressemeldung/db-museum-zeigt-eine-videoinstallation-des-kuenstler-duos-girardet-und-mueller.html>

## TRANS-SIBERIAN: THE WORLD'S LONGEST RAILWAY – NRM YORK

### DATE CHANGE

Despite our best efforts, the exhibition Trans-Siberian: The World's Longest Railway, which was to open in York and London from June this year, has been postponed until 2022.

This was a difficult decision, but we believe it's the right one, because of the continued and unprecedented global travel disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ultimately, we want this exhibition to be of the very highest quality, with objects and stories drawn from around the world to bring to life the extraordinary experience and achievement of the Trans-Siberian Railway. By delaying until next year, we give ourselves the best possible opportunity to deliver a fantastic experience for our visitors.

We are currently working with our lenders and principal partners, JSC Russian Railways, and we look forward to the exhibition going ahead in 2022.

## RAILWAY & MOBILITY READINGS

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Death on the narrow gauge — Peter Johnson 262

The tunnels of the Liverpool & Manchester Railway, 1830–1845 — Anthony Dawson 271

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What were the investment dilemmas of the LNER in the inter-war years and did they successfully overcome them? — Bill Wilson 310

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### **175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the railway link Paris – Brussels – 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Thalys**

Train World, the national Railway Museum of the Belgian Railways, puts a new anniversary in the spotlight, a milestone in international travel: in June this year, railservices were operated between Paris and Brussels.

June 2021 marks, on the one hand, the 175th anniversary of the rail link between Brussels and Paris, which marked the beginning of international rail transport on the European continent, and on the other, the 25th anniversary of Thalys.

In 1839, when the peace treaty with the Netherlands was signed, more than half of the Belgian railway network, then 555 km long, had already been built. The following years were used to complete this basic network and to connect the Belgian railway lines with those of Prussia and France.

#### Early trials

In 1842, a first local connection of 11 km between Belgium and France was opened, between Mouscron and Tourcoing (direction Lille). This was soon followed by the Mons - Quiévrain link (towards Valenciennes). One year later Belgium and Prussia inaugurated the railway Brussels - Mechelen - Leuven - Liège - Cologne. The representative of the French king Louis Philippe in Brussels was concerned about this and informed his government that there was a danger that Belgium would fall under the economic and political influence of Prussia if nothing was done on the French side.

With only two small local cross-border lines via Lille and Valenciennes, France was thus lagging behind. The decision to build a national railway network in France was only taken in 1842, eight years after Belgium. Although the principle was acquired, the money for this project was lacking, because at the same time France had to spend considerable amounts of money on the colonisation of Algeria.

There was a debate in the French parliament about whether the railway line to Lille should be built with public or private funds. For three years the construction of the line started with public money. But that gradually ran out. In the end it was the banker James de Rothschild who would finance the construction and operate the northern line to Lille and Belgium. On 20 September 1845, he set up the Compagnie du chemin de fer du Nord to operate this railway. Work finally began in earnest and the line between Paris and Lille was completed and ready for inauguration in June 1846.



13 to 15 June 1846: three festive days

For the first time, two capitals were connected by a railway!

France wanted to organise the inauguration on a grand scale, unlike Belgium, which was afraid of criticism of its Frenchness and did not want to spend too much money on this inauguration. In the end, Belgium did agree. The inauguration trip was organised over two days and with three trains decorated with French and Belgian flags, with a total of around sixty carriages. First a journey between Paris and Lille and then, the next day, a journey between Lille, Mouscron, Courtrai, Ghent, Mechelen and Brussels-North. On both sides of the border, there was a three-days celebration.

#### The Brussels-Paris link in the 19th century

Paris and Brussels were now connected by rail. And although the first journey took two days, the journey time soon became shorter. From July 1846, the connection to Paris was made in one day, even with more than 15 stops. The line snaked from town to town and there were stops, customs checks and changes of locomotive at the border. In the course of time, more trains per day and per direction were put into service, as well as new sections of track and new equipment, which increased the average speed. At the end of the nineteenth century, the journey took 4 hours and 46 minutes.

#### And in the twentieth century?

In 1923, the first trains without stops took only 3 hours and 45 minutes to travel from Brussels to Paris. In 1927, the Pullman luxury train Etoile du Nord of the Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits covered the Brussels-





Paris route in 3 hours and 30 minutes. In 1929 the Oiseau Bleu took the same time, and in 1936 the journey was reduced to 3 hours.

TEE...

TEEs appeared in the summer of 1957 with the commissioning of three fast connections using first class diesel locomotives, named Ile de France, Etoile du Nord and Oiseau Bleu.

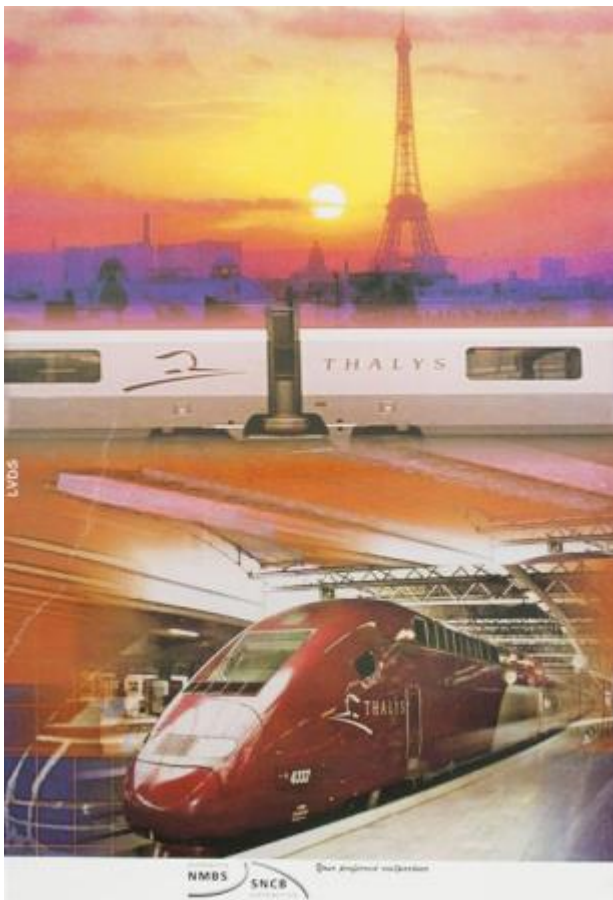
On 9 September 1963 the whole connection was electrified. Because of the electrification of the line the diesel trainsets could be replaced by trains which were towed by multi-tension locomotives. In the summer of 1964 a new direct TEE was built between Paris and Brussels, called Brabant.

All TEE trains disappeared in the 1990s with the arrival of high-speed trains.

## HST

In the 1980s, encouraged by the success of the French TGV Sud-Est, SNCB decided to participate in the European high-speed project and positioned itself at the centre of the planned high-speed network linking France, Germany and the Netherlands.

In total, this project represents 314 km of high-speed lines, including almost 200 km of new 300 km/h lines. The construction of the high-speed line between Brussels and the French border was completed after only 4 years! A record time.



## Thalys

The first journey by Thalys was made on 2 June 1996 between Paris-North and Amsterdam via Brussels, with partial use of the high-speed lines and conventional lines. Travel time was then 1 hour and 58 minutes to Brussels and 4 hours and 47 minutes to Amsterdam. From December 1997, the Brussels-Paris route was only travelled via the high-speed line, reducing the journey time to 1 hour and 25 minutes!

The Thalys name and logo were designed by the Belgian-Dutch company Total Design, in cooperation with the participating railway companies.

The name has no particular significance and the initials stand for nothing. It was adopted simply because it sounds good and is easy to remember, whether in French, Dutch or German. The dark red and silver-grey colours are reminiscent of the colours of the old CC40100 and TEE trains.

The various logos of the railway companies have disappeared in favour of a single Thalys logo. Thalys is now a registered Franco-Belgian trade mark.

Source: Trainworld: <https://trainworld.be/en/collections/in-the-spotlight/the-brussels-paris-line-a-175-year-history#>

## The return of the Orient Express

The romance and tedium of docking train wheels, Murder on The Orient Express and Agatha Christie, rubbed brass, teak furniture and plush seats, the end of the 'Great War', foggy stations with the euphoria of arrival or the tragedy of departure ... Wagons-Lits is the name that evokes all these images.

Now that the last chapter of the "dramatic" battle for the leisure group is taking place, there are enough reasons to dive three days into the past of the Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits et du Tourisme. Or how Belgium could be great.



Source: <https://nos.nl/artikel/2386495-domper-voor-belgische-treinspotters-orient-express-neemt-toch-andere-route> Photo : AFP

Mythical Orient Express travelled through Belgium our country in the third week of June. The Orient Express, the most luxurious train in the world, also known from Agatha Christie's "Murder on the Orient Express" and the successful film adaptations, travelled through Belgium. Trainspotters were present to see the blue carriages passing between Brussels and Essen. "They are still the same carriages, although of course they have been adapted to today's technical conditions," says train expert Walter Smolders. A two-day trip from Brussels to Venice costs 2,650 euros. Unfortunately, everything is sold out.

Trainspotters and photographers are bracing themselves. The Orient Express, known from Agatha Christie's books and later film versions, races through our country on its way to Amsterdam and back. The destination may not be Istanbul any more, but the train itself has not changed a bit, stresses train expert and vice-president of the

steam train connection in Mariembourg Walter Smolders in "Start your day" on Radio 2: "It is still the beautiful, deep blue carriages decorated with the metal of the Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits. Of course, the train has been adapted to today's technical requirements."

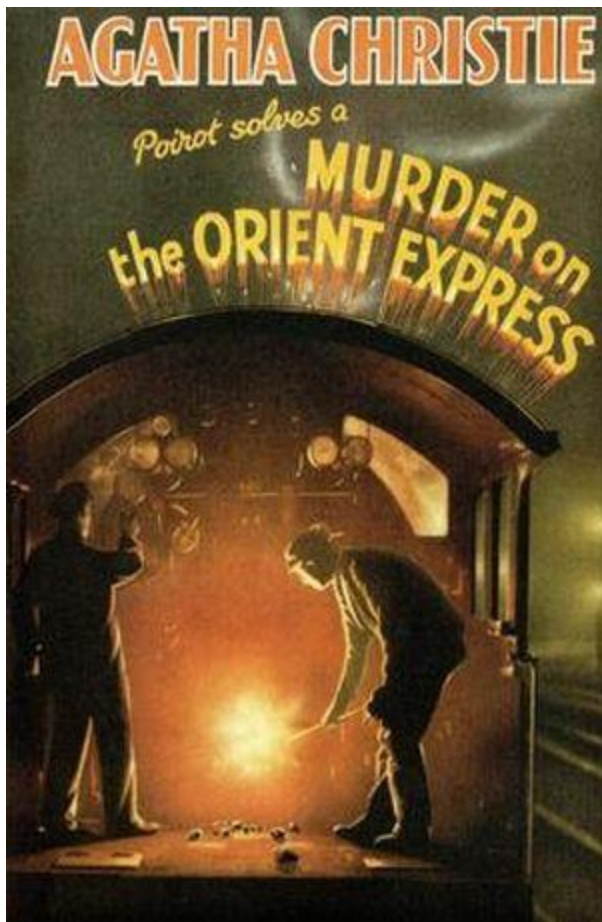
The famous carriages passed through Brussels, Schaerbeek, Vilvoorde, Mechelen, Antwerp and Essen towards the Netherlands on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> of June. The train was delayed more than five hours though, presumably due to bad weather in Switzerland. Fans of the Orient Express had another chance to admire it on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> of June. It then returned from Amsterdam, stand still longer in Essen, from 11.47 a.m. to 12.32 p.m., arrived in Antwerp around 1 p.m. and just before 3 p.m. in Brussels-Midi.



Source: <https://www.omroepwest.nl/nieuws/4412192/Beroemde-Orient-Express-maakt-korte-stop-in-Gouda-Mijn-hart-ging-direct-bonzen> - Photo: ANP

Train expert Walter Smolders explains that the Orient Express has a special link with Belgium: "Those luxury lines were the idea of the Belgian engineer Georges Nagelmackers from Liège. He founded the Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits in 1876 for this purpose. It was the first in Europe to offer luxury sleeping cars. The head office of the company was also located in Brussels. The Compagnie no longer exists, although there is still a branch in Amsterdam. They are now putting in special trains."

Price for a Brussels-Venice trip: 2,650 euros per person, for two days of trains, one night's stay and, of course, chic food and drink. Meeting Thursday at 15h20 in Brussels-Midi? Unfortunately, everything is fully booked.



The train of Hercule Poirot

The Orient Express ran without a murder this time. The long-distance train is also well known from Agatha Christie's 1934 novel "Murder on the Orient Express". On its way from Istanbul to London, the luxurious train is stranded in the snow in Vinkovci, Croatia. There, a murder is committed on one of the passengers. Work to do for the Belgian detective Hercule Poirot.

The book was successfully filmed twice: in 1974, directed by Sidney Lumet with Albert Finney in the role of Hercule "I take a professional interest in crime" Poirot, and in 2017 with Kenneth Branagh as director and lead actor.

The world-famous Orient Express also attracted a lot of people on its return journey from the Netherlands. In Essen, many people came to take pictures at the station. In other places in the province, people went to the tracks to see the mythical train pass by. Those who went to the Antwerp central station were in for a treat. The train was eventually guided around Antwerp.

Tuesday, trainspotters needed a lot of patience. The Orient Express that exceptionally travelled through our country to Amsterdam was delayed for hours. Yet even then, dozens of people waited until almost midnight at the Essen station. Today, on the return journey, it stopped there for a while. This attracted a lot of spectators.

Source: VRTNWS – translation by Paul Van Heesvelde

## International Railway History Association Governance 2021 - 2022

### Bureau

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- . Henry JACOLIN, Honorary President
- . Paul VERON, President
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- . Gsaba Sandor HORVATH
- . Dorin STANESCU
- . Paul Van HEESVELDE (Chief Editor Newsletter)
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- . Shehu TijaniYUSUF
- . Ihor ZHALOBA

## IRHA'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2021

### IRHA Newsletter report General Assembly 2021

This autumn, I will have been the editor of the IRHA newsletter for the past three years. But since IRHA's general meeting is already taking place, I will take the opportunity to write a short report about it now, before the third anniversary. Superstitious people in some countries associate the number thirteen with a negative image of misfortune. Has the myth been dispelled by our newsletter? I would dare to think so. We are ten newsletters further. In April 2021 number 22 was delivered.

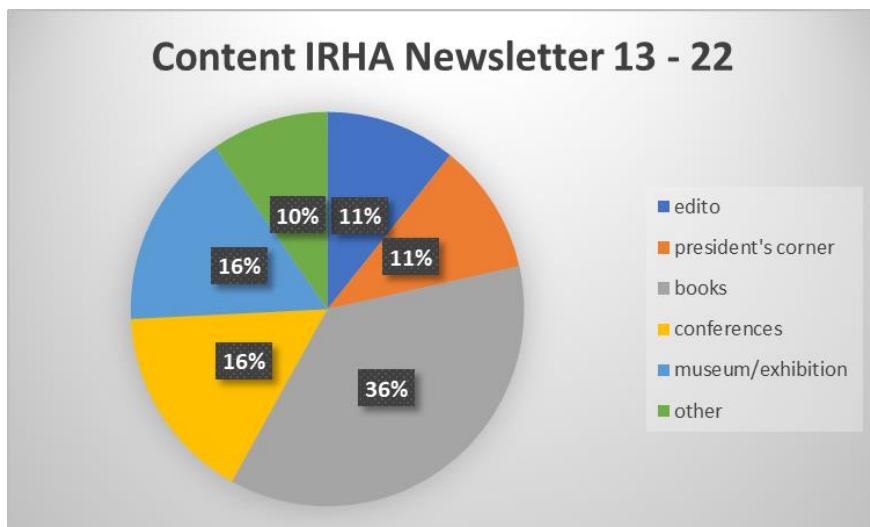
We started modestly. The first issue was a bit of a search and trial and error, but we soon settled on a fixed format: editorial, news from the president, presentation of books, announcements of conferences and colloquia, museum news, in short, everything that could interest our members and that contributes to spreading awareness of our organisation.

We also started very modestly with a six-page canvas. We kept that up for about five issues. The main reason for limiting the size is actually very trivial: I did not know how to add additional pages in the template. Everything started to slide and I had more work with the layout than with the content. All in a sudden, I ended up with eight pages. Meanwhile, newsletters of 15 pages are becoming the 'new normal', although it is often difficult to find enough copy. Fortunately, our members also contribute information.

If we were modest, we, the President and I, did have ambitions: as far as possible, a newsletter should appear every season. We have succeeded so far. In the meantime, we no longer speak of the newsletter but of the quarterly newsletter. It seems also to be the new normal.

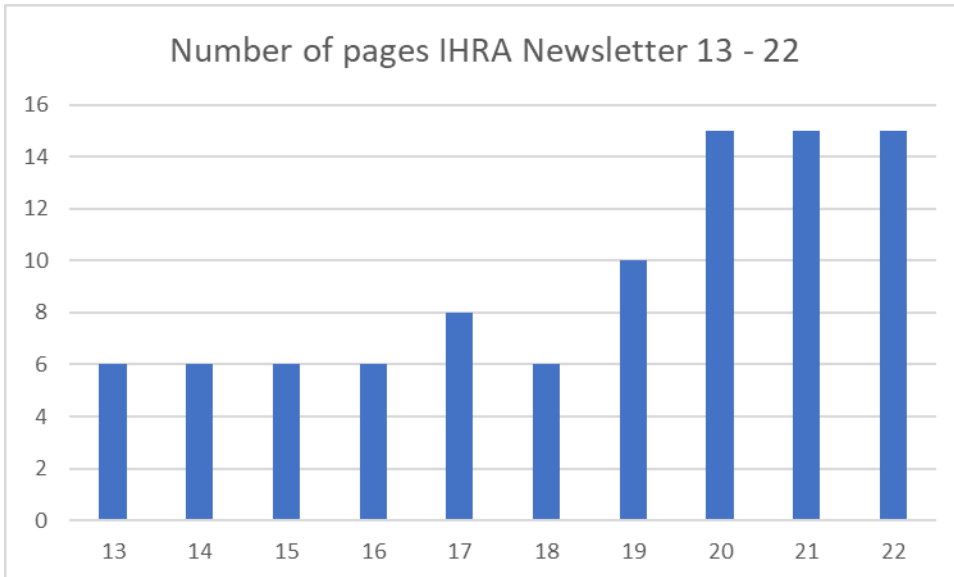
On the content: although I did not make a profound analysis, following details are to be mentioned:

- Ten editorials and ten contributions from our chairman.
- 34 reviews or announcements of books
- Fifteen announcements of conferences, CFP, or reports of conferences
- Fifteen contributions on museum subjects and on heritage.



Quantitatively:

We have until now 93 pages of our newsletter for the period December 2018 to April 2021. The first six issues had six pages, and one eight. From then on, the newsletter grew year by year. The last three issues had 15 pages each.



What about the future?

For the near future, we are thinking about some new sections, with which we will try to increase the connection between the members. Whether this will succeed, of course, depends on many external factors.

What worries me most is the lack of clarity about the quality of the newsletter. There is little response to each issue. If we want to permanently improve the quality, sooner or later we will have to organise a survey among the readers of the newsletter. We will discuss this issue during our General Members Meeting.

The main question remains: who built Thebes and its seven gates? All of you did it, and I did a little bit too, of course. Keep writing us, keep informing us.

Paul Van Heesvelde  
Chief Editor

**DO NOT FORGET TO FILL IN THE SURVEY  
YOU WILL RECEIVE IN FEW DAYS**



RAILWAY HISTORY  
KNOWLEDGE  
FACTORY

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Next issue:  
Autumn 2021  
(as I live and breathe)

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## Dr. Zsuzsanna Frisnyák (1960–2021) - Obituary



On the 19th of June 2021 Zsuzsanna Frisnyák passed away at the age of 61 in Budapest. She was the prominent researcher of Hungarian railway history and worked at the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences - Research Centre of the Humanities. She participated in 2 conferences of the International Railway History Association, the last in Budapest, presenting a very interesting paper on The Logistics of the Hinterland of War – Railway Transport in Hungary (1914–1915). She also helped in organizing the Budapest conference. She has published articles on Railway Heritage Protection Policy in Hungary and The Centrally Planned Economy and Railways in Hungary in *Eastern European Railways in Transition: Nineteenth to Twenty-First Centuries*. Her death is a loss to the railway history of Hungary and her absence leaves a void in research. She will remain in our memory.

Dr. Csaba Sandor Horváth

***Next issue – September 2021***  
***Deadline for copy: September 15th***

**SEE YOU ONE DAY:**

**Trains of thought don't always run on schedule.**