

Loco Shed

Asia Pacific Heritage and
Tourist Rail Organisation



APHTRO
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Some halt, but some will start.

(Kyoichi Oda, President)

Needless to say, social circumstances impact our rail heritage activities a lot. During the Covid pandemic, steam trains ceased running in some countries. Civil war ruined heritage rail in other countries. Steam engines are kept 'stored' in those countries and it takes time for the situation to change for the better. It is not so easy to solve a problem based on the social situation.

In late September, I visited Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam to meet the people of Indochina Rail Ltd. They are planning to start running a steam train 'The Revolution Express' between Da Nang and Hue, one of the most scenic sections of Vietnam Railways. At a fruitful meeting with Mr. Michael Gebbie, Chairman of Indochina Rail Ltd and staff, I was very impressed with their plan and an idea that interprets railway history in Vietnam. Of course it will be the venue of the APHTRO Conference Visit Programme of 2025.

Our friends of Manila Railroad Club have made the effort to revive a steam train in The Philippines. This March, Philippine National Railway stopped its operation to build a new, electrified, elevated standard gauge railway in Metro Manila. The track was demolished and now a concrete viaduct is being built. It seems the steam train plan is finished, but another idea comes along. The southern terminus of the new line, Calamba, is close to a lake resort area and track still remains beyond the station. They are looking into the possibility of running a steam train there for holidaymakers from Metro Manila.

The state in Syria changed suddenly and unexpectedly in early December. There was a rumour that a steam train ran sometimes during the civil war: we keep watching for

state changes and what the future holds - with a beam of hope.

We lost some by social circumstances, but we expect some newcomers.

Supporting members' projects

We are currently supporting the following projects:

- a. Encouraging building relationships between the new Taipei Railway Museum, York NRM, IATM and others;
- b. Proposing TICCIH Congress in Indonesia and India;
- c. A steam train revival plan by the Manila Railroad Club in The Philippines;
- d. Holding a Rail Heritage Trail Tour in Thailand and Taiwan;
- e. Holding photography tours in the Southern region of Jordan Hejaz Railways;
- f. New management at Rewari Steam Centre in India;
- g. Financial assistance for some delegates coming to our annual conferences.

Report of Conference Visit Programme in India 2024

(Naiyi Hsu, Vice President)

APHTRO Conference 2024 was held from September 27th to 29th in the National Rail Museum Delhi India.

The National Rail Museum

There are various exhibition contents in the museum. You can see the history of the development of railways and trains across the world and of course in India; many models of important locomotives and rolling stock of Indian railways; special events in the history of railways - for example Mahatma Gandhi driving a train when he was travelling in South Africa; the three Indian Mountain Railways of 'World Heritage'; and other heritage railways of the world.

In the open air, displays of a lot of precious locomotives and rolling stocks. The most attractive one is the locomotive with a coach of the Patiala State Monorail Tramway - still runnable - we enjoyed riding and taking photos of them. There are also a mini train and mini mini trains riding and children love these very much.

We met a lot of visitors, most of whom are elementary school students. The museum has functions and roles both in education and entertainment, and of course in preserving history and the heritage of railways.



The Conference

Madam Aashima Mehorotra, executive director at railway board, Ministry of Railways, welcomed our attendees on the first day.

The first speaker was Mr. V. J. Singh to tell us about railway heritages. What is heritage and why it is important? The various type of railway heritages in India. The situation of heritage preservation in India and the roles of the railway authorities and enthusiasts and what did they do for these heritages.

The second was Ms. Moulshri Joshi, a member of TICCIH and ICOMOS, talking about the Industrial Heritages in India. Industrial heritages are quite different from the historical or architectural heritages and are difficult to preserve not only on the objects themselves but also on the concepts of them. However people in India made considerable effort to preserve some of these heritages.

The third was Mr. Vinoon N. Marthur, the President of Railway Enthusiasts India, talking about the railway architecture in India. He analysed their types and features with examples so we could differentiate them from each other.

Then Mr. Rajesh Agrawal, Vice President of APHTRO introduced the Nilgiri Mountain Railway to us. The lower half section of this railway uses Abt-type rack rail to climb mountains and special X-class engines with pinion to engage the rack rail. These X type engines are unique in the world. The Golden Rock Workshop maintain, repair, and also build the locomotives very well. Our APHTRO awarded them at the meeting.

Mr. Heimo Echensperger, previous Vice President of FEDECRAIL was the fourth speaker, talking about Heritage Railways in Europe. Volunteer heritage railway appeared in 1951 in the Talylyn Railway, UK so they had more than 70 years' experience to well develop systems, principles, charters, and skilled persons to maintain heritage railways, or run old trains on lines. Recently, they have developed 3D machines to make spare parts for trains for better reliability of the old engines and rolling stock.

The fifth speaker was Ms Hasty Tarekat who told us the history of Indonesia railways and their heritage items, many of which are familiar to us since our visit last year, e.g. Sawahlunto Coal Mine, Ambarawa Station, and the train from Bogor to Sukabumi, etc.

The sixth speaker Mr. Albert Wu from AFRCHO talked about the present state of Alishan Forest Railway in Taiwan after the reconstruction of two new tunnels and some new stations after severe damage by heavy rain in 2009. The whole line was reopened in July 2024 and welcomes everyone visiting.

The last speaker Ting-Chao Chang from the Preparatory Office of the National Railway Museum, Taiwan, talked about the ongoing change of the museum from a railway workshop, once planned to be changed to a so-called "cultural park", preserved by a force of many people and members of the Legislative Yuan (Congress). We, APHTRO, also played a role in helping the preservation of the whole area as a heritage site.



Visiting

On September 29th, we visited Rewari Loco Shed and the Heritage Transport Museum.

Rewari Loco Shed preserves many steam locomotives including 1000mm, 762mm, and 1676mm gauged ones. The most famous and important one is E.I.R 22, the 'Fairy Queen', made in 1858, the oldest movable locomotive in the world. Another important coach is the Edward VIII which His Majesty rode in around India when he was a prince.



The Heritage Transport Museum is a private museum supported by government and a special society. The major collections are automobiles with some trains. But also, there are cow carts and artifacts for riding on animals such as camels or elephants before the invention of machines.



Pre-tour to Darjeeling

There was a tour before the conference to Darjeeling Himalayan Railway on September 24 to 26. DHR is the second world heritage railway in the world. It is built to go up to a more than 2000m high mountain to carry tea products down from Darjeeling and the daily necessities up. To avoid tunnelling in the whole line there are three loops and six Z-reverses, and these have become its significant features. Tindharia Workshop is responsible for repairing and maintaining the locomotives and coaches using traditional machines. There are many landslides near Tindharia interrupting trains' running. Only Kurseong and above has daily trains running.



Nowadays, trains run from Darjeeling to Ghum and back. They make stops at the Batasia Loop taking a 15 minutes break to see the Kunchenjunga Mountain, the 3rd highest mountain in the world.

We visited Sukna Station, Kurseong Station, Darjeeling Station, and were warmly welcomed by station masters and staff. We also visited Tindharia Workshop and the Elysia Place, the Headquarters of DHR where Director Priyanshu welcomed us and made a brief introduction himself. We exchanged gifts and interaction delightedly. Of course we rode a round trip steam train from Darjeeling to Ghum and back to see how they operate the train, but unfortunately due to bad weather, we could not see Kunchenjunga.



Conclusion

Thanks to our President Kyoichi Oda for organizing this conference and to India for providing good venues and programs. We learned a lot from those speeches about how the world faces railway heritage, and enjoyed the conference very much. We hope more members come to our conference next year.

Conference Webinar 2024

This year's Webinar was held on 7 & 8 December on the following schedule. Most of presentations were from the business session in New Delhi.

Saturday 7 December

Slot1 UTC 09:00-09:30 Mr. J L Singh (India) "Rail Heritage: The Way Forward"

Slot2 UTC 09:45-10:15 Mr. Heimo Echensperger (Germany) "Heritage Railways in Europe"

Slot3 UTC 11:00-11:30 Mr. Vinoo Mathur (India) "Architectural Heritage of Indian Railways"

Sunday 8 December

Slot5 UTC 09:00-09:30 Ms. Hasti Tarekat (Indonesia) "Railways Heritage in Indonesia"

Slot6 UTC 09:45-10:15 Naiyi Hsu (APHTRO Vice President, Taiwan) "A brief report of Visit Programme 2024"

Slot7 UTC 11:00-11:30 Kyoichi Oda (APHTRO President, Japan) "Plan of Visit"

Programme 2025"

Slot8 UTC 11:45-12:15 Ms. Moulshri Joshi (India) "Industrial Heritage in India"

Conference Visit Programme 2025

Conference Visit Programme 2025 is planned in Vietnam and Thailand in late October or early December. The current plan is as follows:

Thu. 16 Oct. Arrive Da Nang, night train from Ho Chi Minh City or Hanoi, or flight

Arrive Ho Chi Minh City or Hanoi then take a night train to Da Nang, or direct flight to Da Nang via Singapore, Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur etc. Photographers have 'reconnaissance' by hired car or van. (Unofficial)

Overnight in Da Nang.

Fri. 17 Oct. Visit the steam engine shed

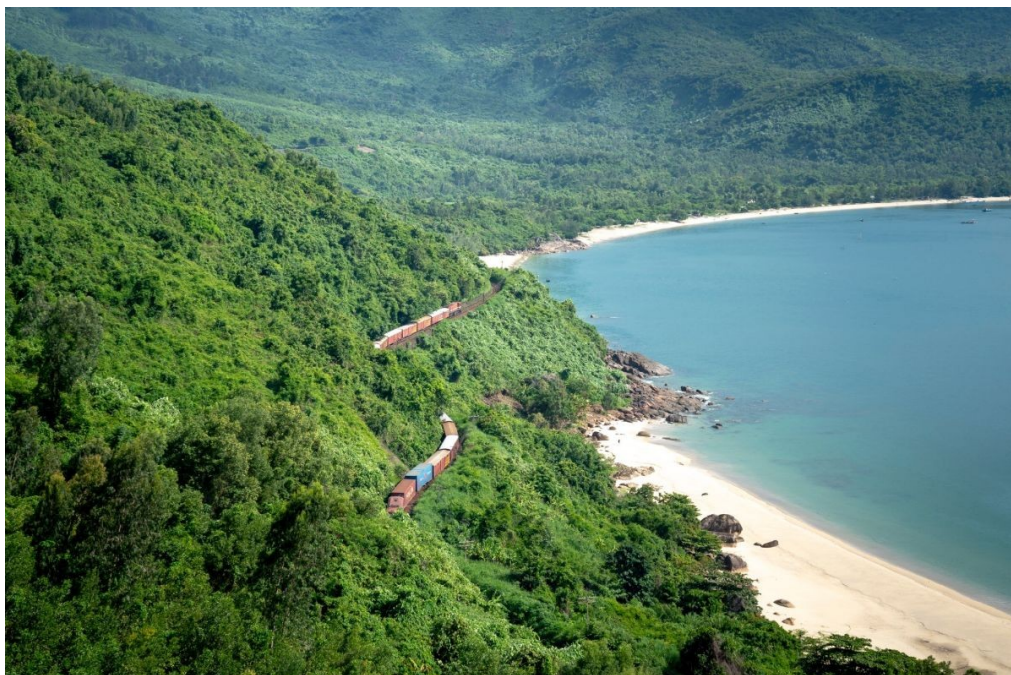
Delegates visit the steam engine shed and small event with local people.



Overnight in Da Nang.

Sat. 18 Oct. Steam train ride Da Nang - Hue, return

Taking a return trip on steam train 'The Revolution Express' between Da Nang and Hue.



The provisional schedule for 'The Revolution Express' is:
0900 depart Kim Lien Station Danang going north via the Hai Van pass.
1015 arrive Lang Co station. Guests can disembark or board here.
1130 depart Lang Co for Hue Station
1300 arrive Hue Station
1400 depart Hue Station
1530 arrive Lang Co Station
1630 depart Lang Co Station
1745 arrive Kim Lien Station in Danang



Overnight in Da Nang.

San. 19 Oct. Photo of the steam train

A chartered car or van is arranged for taking photographs of 'The Revolution Express'. The date can be switched to 18 Oct. due to weather, booking on both days is required.(Unofficial)

Those who don't join the photo tour can ride the steam train again or explore Da Nang city and relax.

Overnight in Da Nang.

Mon. 20 Oct. Flight from Da Nang to Bangkok

Morning flight from Da nang to Bangkok Don Mueang or Suvarnabhumi, then move to each hotels near Hua Lamphong station.

Overnight in Bangkok.

Tue. 21 Oct. Ride and visit Maeklong market line(unofficial)

Visit Maeklong market line near Bangkok.

Photographers have 'reconnaissance' by hired car or van. (Unofficial)



Overnight in Bangkok.

Wed. 22 Oct. Visit railway museum, exhibition and steam engine shed in Bangkok

Visit Thon Buri steam engine shed, rail museum at Hua Lamphong station and exhibition at Makkasan workshop.





Overnight in Bangkok.

Thu. 23 Oct. Ride the steam train from Bangkok and return

Taking a return trip on SRT steam train between Bangkok Hua Lamphong station and Ayutthaya, Chachoengsao or Nakhon Pathom. The train departs around 8am then returns 6 to 7 pm.

Photographers take a chartered car or van onward. (Unofficial)

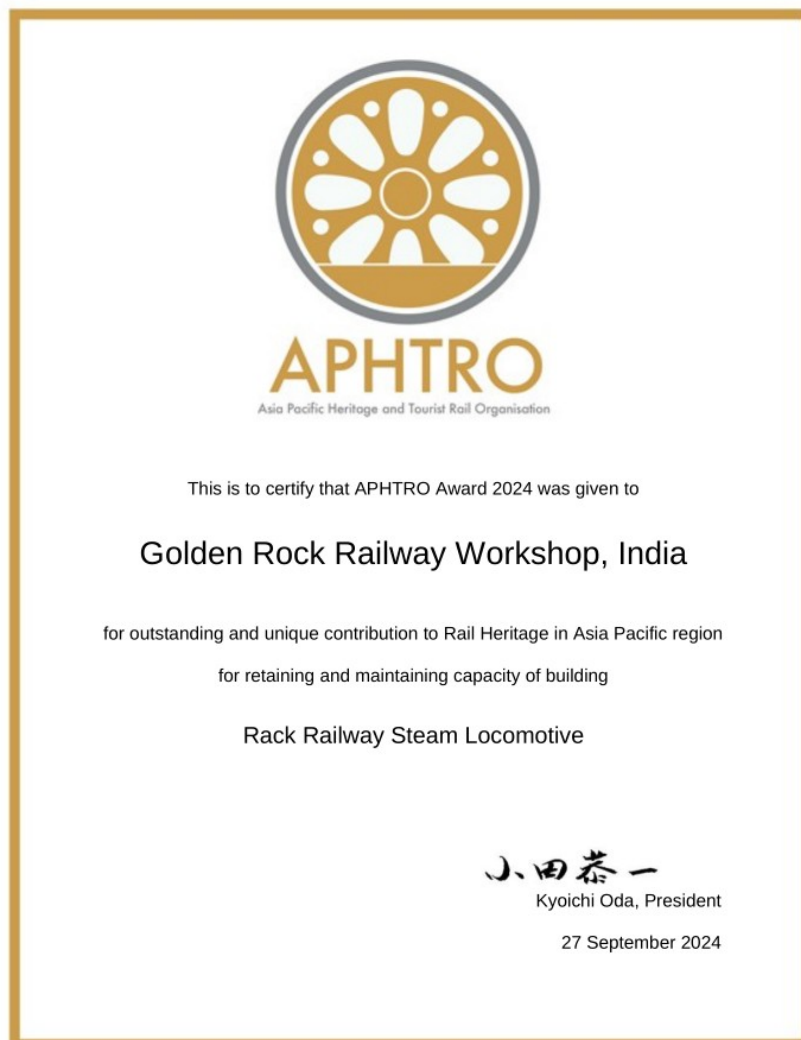


Further conferences beyond 2026

Our Conference will be held as a 'hybrid' - comprising a real visit programme and Webinar. Our Visit Programme is expected in Sri Lanka 2026, Taiwan 2027.

APHTRO Award 2024

This year's winner of APHTRO Award is Golden Rock Railway Workshop in India. They have been holding and maintaining capacity to build a rack railway steam locomotive. Nowadays with no other railway workshops, they still can build those locomotives. Their capacity is unique and outstanding in the world, a precious and brilliant achievement for building a new rack rail steam locomotive X Class 37400 in 2022 as on following YouTube movie: <https://youtu.be/g9P1RMseLh0>



Vacancies

Please recommend if you or someone you know would be happy to help us.

Secretary

We are seeking a new secretary.

Treasurer

We are seeking a new treasurer.

Volunteers

All APHTRO activities are maintained by volunteers and we are currently seeking a

- Newsletter Editor - This newsletter appears at least twice a year

Our Newsletter cannot be sustained without fresh content.

Latest news, photos and articles from your heritage railways will be very much welcomed and will be a useful promotion of your railway.

Our next issue will appear in June 2025.

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(We thank *tw* for checking the draft)