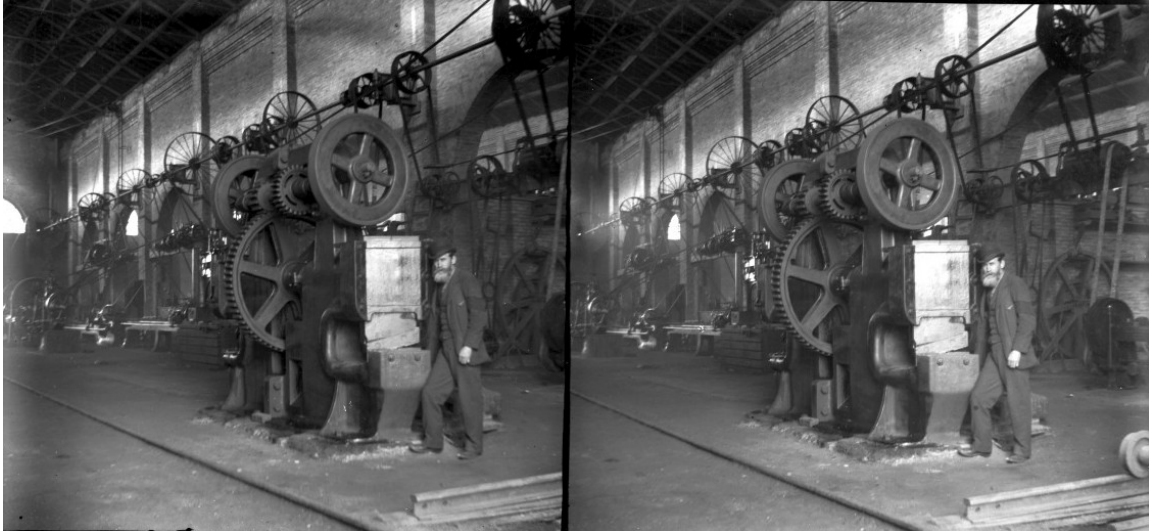

THE ZURGENA RAILWAY NEWS

June 7th 2021

Nº 10



This photo is of interest in two different ways. It is by [Gustave Gillman](#) and was taken in the Águilas workshops, probably around the turn of the 20th century. The chap in his Sunday best with a Bowler hat (I'd love to know who he was) is standing by a metal cutter. Whether he used it for his toenails is lost in the seeds of time. All of the gearing is designed to be able to exert a huge pressure on the cutter that is next to his right thigh. This would have been used to cut sections of iron. Above, one can see the drive shafts that fed power to all of the tools in the workshop. Why are there two of them? Gustave loved to experiment with photographic techniques, and this was one - stereoscopic photographs that when viewed through a special box, would give one three dimensional vision. He left us a wealth of images such as these.

Some comments about the image: When this image was taken, the station and workshops were in a very remote area, there only being some esparto warehouses on the beach. Nowadays, the area is built up with apartments, bars and restaurants. Even the tracks that ran from the station to the port have totally disappeared. All that is left of them is a 'memorial' under glass in front of Águilas Station. The cutter was almost certainly manufactured in Great Britain and transported by steamer to Águilas for assembly. The two wheels at either end of the cutter were flywheels to maintain the angular momentum of the shaft so that the blade wouldn't lose force whilst cutting. A wonderful piece of precision machinery that is now scrap metal.

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Things are moving as fast as is possible in Spain. We have identified where the tracks are, which is gratifying, and Rafael is grinding through the bureaucracy that is endemic here. The mayor of Zurgena has been fantastic and is very keen to see this project through. Looking at it in the cold light of day, it is a wonderful opportunity for the area. We have an almost perfect old station with track that can be renovated. The museum will be only a few kilometres from the Autovía and close to the resorts of Vera and Mojacar. In addition, the track between Zurgena and Arboleas will be very easy to lay. In addition, the station of Arboleas is being renovated as we speak. The track to

Almajalejo will be easy to renew as well, with a few little obstacles. This will be a project in the near future.

Rafael has posted a letter on FaceBook which I reproduce here verbatim:

Good morning everyone, a little information this week, I have been traveling in Lisbon, Portugal, seeing incredible machines and excellent people, lucky to have been able to make this trip.

The conclusion of this trip is clear and it is a problem that happens in Spain too, my friends have a Railway Museum full of wonderful steam locomotives, incredible passenger cars and a lot of material, the complete Portuguese royal family steam train , the train of the President of the Government of 1940, etc. but they have little money and very little technical capacity to be able to keep these units operational, they can only do minor work on passenger cars or diesel locomotives but they do not know how to maintain and repair the locomotives of steam and are stored in the warehouse, they have not rolled on the tracks for a long time.

So I am breaking new ground with our Portuguese friends, both in the Portuguese Railway Museum and in the Electric Tram Museum, they have received me in the best possible way and want me to help them, it is likely that, when we have our workshop Restoration finished let's begin to receive some units from Portugal little by little, I am crazy about a Lisbon tram that I was examining especially, the last of its kind from 1908, a beautiful unit. On the other hand, this Friday I will be in Zurgena, I think the Bobcat will be at our disposal that day and we will begin to discover the tracks that are underground in the park area to start with our project to recover the tracks and the turntable. Together with Max, I confirm all this on Thursday in case you want to come during the morning, we have to advance in the work of the association and perhaps it will be a good moment while we have a cold beer.

Kind regards, Rafael García De La Mata Escudero

At some point, I would like to stay in the Zurgena area to be able to help with the museum (I love getting my hands dirty), so if you know of anyone who has somewhere for me to put my head down, then please let me know. I am quite well housetrained.

We will be on site in Zurgena at 11am Friday if anyone wants to come to say 'hello'.

Stay well. Best regards

Max

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