
THE ZURGENA RAILWAY NEWS

March 8th 2021

Nº 5

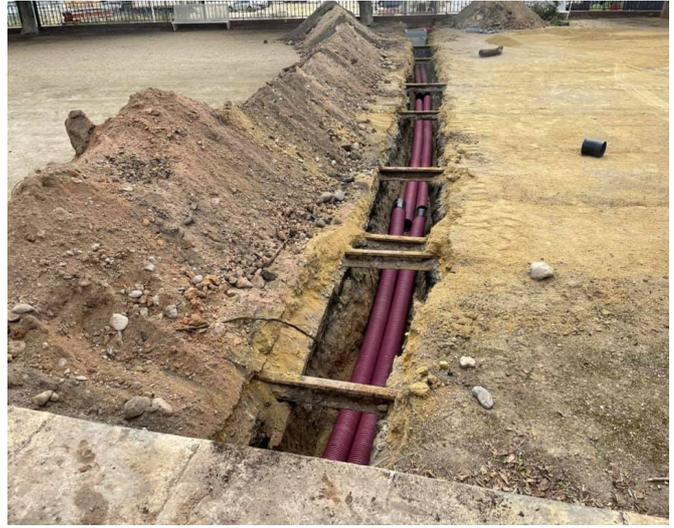


This is number five of these little newsletters and in this edition we have a lovely photograph taken by Lawrence G Marshall in 1962. I think that I can make out that the loco is 'JARAVIA', however, if anyone has any other ideas, please let me know. One can still stand on the spot where the photograph was taken by putting one's back to the fence separating the play park. At the time when the photo was taken, the loco was 57 years old. As a reminder, there is much information in my friend and mentor Don Gaunt's website: www.faydon.com.

NEWS



It has probably come to the attention of those of you that live near to Zurgena that there has been some digging going on. This is the town hall works replacing water/drainage etc. Fortunately, Rafael had the presence of mind to ask the mayor to expose the track at the same time, which will save us some future efforts.



One can see from the right-hand photograph that there are still rails buried under the gravel. Hopefully, they will all be exposed soon.

In addition, Rafael has been in touch with ENFESA, the company responsible for the selling off of Renfe equipment and we are awaiting prices. The listing sent to them can be seen here:

www.gssr.es/trackside.php

We are also working on the purchase of the old Ferrobus that ran on the line after the steam locomotives were pensioned off. Unbelievably, it still exists albeit in an atrocious state.



I have actually been to see it, and it looks worse in the cold light of day than in this photograph. Something that Arthur Daley would sell!

Rafael assures me that it can be renovated, so I have to take his word for it. It is currently languishing in a field near Málaga.

There is a good description of a journey in this piece of rolling stock in D. Trevor Rowe's book 'Railway Holiday in Spain'. I would be happy to scan the relevant pages if anyone so wishes.

GUSTAVE GILLMAN

Gustave was such a prolific photographer (see N° 4 and www.gssr.es/ggillman.php) that he has left us images of almost all of the line from Baza to Lorca and Águilas.

Below is a photograph by Gustave of Águilas Port taken around 1902.



All this has now gone and been replaced with recreational areas, bars, restaurants, etc. On the left, one can see part of a steamer with the goods trains in attendance. The main part of the image is taken up by mounds of iron ore. Once El Hornillo was opened, the trade through the port would have diminished to next to nothing, leaving esparto (www.gssr.es/esparto.php), fruit and vegetable transport. In fact, esparto was a huge trade through Águilas Port around this time, supplying cellulose for the Scottish paper industry, so it seems odd that there is only one esparto goods wagon in the picture.

The track was laid and owned by The GSSR and came from a junction near to Águilas Station. As the port was owned by a different company with contrasting business interests, there were a lot of arguments over the construction of the line and especially El Hornillo.

The castle “San Juan” can be seen on the hill. It is now open to the public and gives wonderful views of the coastline.

Gustave experimented with many photographic techniques that were very advanced for the time - colour, stereoscopic cameras (like there were around in the '60s called View-Master), portable cameras etc. He wrote articles for British photographic journals and experimented with different developer and film chemicals.



If anyone has any questions about The GSSR or Gustave Gillman, or can identify the flag in the above image (Danish perhaps?) please don't hesitate to contact me on maxcastril@gmail.com.

Thank you to all who have sent me emails of thanks They are much appreciated.

Stay safe.

I leave you with a photograph, again from around 1902, from Gustavo of steamers being loaded manually with iron ore using esparto baskets. Truly back-breaking work. This mostly stopped when El Hornillo opened.

Presumably a steamer was in port for weeks whilst being unloaded and then loaded. It is well known that many of the iron ore mines spent much time idle awaiting international prices to rise to ameliorate the transport costs of bringing the heavy ore down to the port on mule trains and then manually loading it onto the ships. This is why Edmund Sykes Hett's vision for The GSSR and El Hornillo was such a stroke of genius.

