
THE ZURGENA RAILWAY NEWS

April 1st 2021

Nº 6



This is a photograph of a 35 ton iron ore wagon, 12 of which, as part of a train, would have trundled through Zurgena Station on the way to El Hornillo pier for loading onto steamers bound mainly for Scotland. I like to think that the man in the centre is George Boag.

Firstly, a happy Easter to everyone. The photo above was certainly taken in Águilas sidings. You will notice that there is no sign of 'GSSR' markings on it. By this time (I imagine around the 1920s) the line became known as the 'Lorca-Baza-Águilas Line', or 'LBA', although it was being run by The GSSR.

There is no sign of a vacuum cylinder on this wagon, so presumably the only braking available was by hand screw when the wagon was stationary. There were two fatal accidents during the lifetime of The GSSR involving the iron ore wagons, both as a result of the lack of fail-safe braking systems. The GSSR used the vacuum braking system on all of its trains which, although simple mechanically, had many drawbacks. See www.gssr.es/accidents.php.

These wagons worked on the basis of a central chute to allow the iron ore to discharge into bunkers below. If you are interested, I recommend a visit to the El Hornillo Museum in Águilas.

NEWS

We have just received some excellent news from Raphael regarding the Association. I reprint it here for all of those who haven't seen it yet on FaceBook.

“Hello everyone, I bring you important news from our association of friends of the railway. With great satisfaction I inform you that today, Wednesday, March 31, 2021, a plenary session of the Zurgena City Council was held where, among other issues, a very important point on the agenda for us has been unanimously approved by all the political groups, the approval of the agreement with my university research company to protect and restore the industrial heritage of Zurgena and, especially, the railway heritage, with the recovery of the station tracks and the construction of a restoration workshop in the western area of the station, where there is now a closed park.

This project includes the recovery of the turntable and, in a first phase of work, the tracks in the southern area of the station and the wagon weighing scale.

I have to thank the excellent disposition and collaboration with the project of all the components of the Municipal Government Board of Zurgena, starting with its mayor, Mr. Luis García, the Councilor for Culture, Paco López, Fran, Noelia, Nono and all of them Without exception, as well as the attendance to the plenary session of M.^a Ángeles Márquez, our partner of the association, to give support to the project despite her state of health, something delicate at the moment, hoping that she will recover soon to be able to participate and fully enjoy all our projects.

The next step is to continue making calculations with the City Council to be able to set the amount of money that Zurgena City Council is going to invest in this project, which will be the origin of the railway museum in the terminal of the railway station and the railway restoration workshop , where the Association of Friends of the Railroad will be able to exhibit pieces of railway heritage and will be able to work on the historical vehicles that will begin to come to our workshop.

I can confirm that the first rail vehicle that we have requested for our station is the rail bus that I have already commented on other times. A month ago, I sent the first letter requesting the transfer of this vehicle to its current owner, the Rincón de la Victoria City Council, Malaga and there have already been some conversations. The mayor of Zurgena, Mr. Luis García, has promised to send a letter from the Zurgena City Council officially requesting the transfer of this vehicle for our project and I will collaborate in its drafting to try to get it ready next week to send it as soon as possible. I would also like to be able to show you the project of the workshop in the field and to hear your ideas and suggestions about it.

Maybe we could go in groups of six people (covid rules) and take turns of one hour for each visit, if we make a list on this Facebook page we could set a day for it, this is a topic that we have to share and participate, I will take a set of project plans and tracks to better see the result and, why not, a box of cold beers.

In short, I did not want the day to end without sharing this important fact with you, it is a very important first step to be able to think about one day having a track layout to Huerca Overa and being able to put into circulation a train with historical steam material , electric and diesel that allow us to enjoy these vehicles, be able to train the public in the maintenance and restoration of this material and contribute to generating activities that involve new tourist attractions that enrich Zurgena and its region, we will continue in that line.

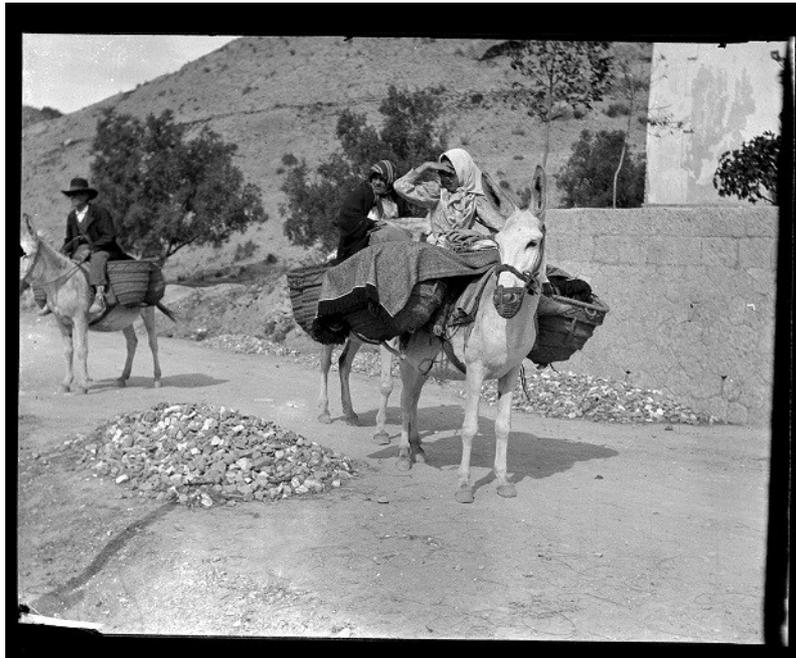
Kind regards to all, Rafael

Well done Rafael!

If you are feeling that The Friends of Zurgena Railway Association is alone in the efforts to get a railway of sorts running again, then you should know about the Baza friends of the Railway and the Guadix for the train association. These two separate associations are more interested in the construction of a new line through the Alamanzora Valley. I will reserve judgement on the likelihood of this happening.

GUSTAVE GILLMAN

Gustave had a huge respect for the 'ordinary' people of Spain, those scraping an existence in the countryside, and he took many photographs of farmers with their asses and carts. In the days of mobile phones, it is hard to imagine how hard it was to produce a photograph, with the clumsy apparatus and home made developer chemicals. Presumably, the photographic paper was imported. How well it fared in the Spanish heat without refrigeration is anyone's guess.



This is one of a set taken at Fines-Olula Station (now sadly derelict). Notice the panniers, bridles and girths on the asses, all hand-made from esparto.

Gustave was an obsessive note taker (see: <https://www.gssr.es/search.php> - enter gillman in the 'Search for:' box) and we have managed to digitize many of these. Here is one he made about the formula for photographic developer.

Where he found these chemicals in Spain at the beginning of the twentieth century is a mystery, but it shows his resoluteness when wanting to perform an activity.

He was an enormous asset to The GSSR. Unfortunately for the railway he was made an offer he couldn't refuse and in 1911 he left The GSSR to work in Petropolis, Brazil where he died in 1922.

One can see many of his photographs and notes on the Archive of Murcia website [here](https://www.archivoweb.carm.es).

