
THE ZURGENA RAILWAY NEWS

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Nº 9



This photo of a train leaving Zurgena for Arboleas was supplied by Rafael. This site is where he and I were standing a couple of weeks ago assessing what route the association should start with (see below). The loco is one of the [Moguls](#) but I can't make out which one.

Some comments about the image: The driver (maquinista) and fireman (fogonero) must have known that their photograph was being taken. In fact, one wonders if they didn't stop for the photo as the smoke isn't trailing and there is no blurring of the connecting rods. The contents of the tender are interesting, at the front there being what appears to be coal dust and then later coal? cut into briquettes. There seems to be two telegraph systems, one with four wires (in front of the driver's cab) and another at ground level. I doubt that they are markers of an underground pipe - they seem to be too close together. One can see the image in full size [here](#).

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Well, there has been some progress as you will see later. There has been much cogitation and scratching of heads regarding the first route for the museum. Originally, we were talking about Zurgena to Huércal Overa and then on to Almendricos (where the museum train could meet up with the Águilas - Lorca train, thereby picking up holidaymakers, and even aficionados from Barcelona, Alicante etc. A number of problems were self evident, not least being a big fat [motorway](#) blocking the route. In addition, we saw that the beautiful [bridge](#) over Rambla Guzmaina has some worrying movement (one can see it in the top left of the photograph where there are signs of movement in the stonework and the top two metres of the support leaning to the right). In addition, there is the problem of squeezing a full sized train through the culvert under the A334 Motorway [here](#). In addition, we would be straying into another borough. The bad news is also that there is serious talk of Renfe stopping the Águilas - Lorca service which would negate the value of the section between Huércal-Overa and Almendricos.

To think that The GSSR finished the whole line in seven years!

My suggestion, to get things started, was for us to run the line from Zurgena to [Arboleas station](#) as a starter, which would attract political interest as well as bring in some much needed funds from the general public, thus allowing us to address the technical problems of the Zurgena - Huercal-Overa section. The track is in near perfect condition and the town hall of Arboleas is currently renovating the station.

The 'mancomunidad' are in the process of planning a 'green route' along the old GSSR track and Rafael is in discussions with them (see below) about a combined historic railway and green route combined. He has already designed a track system which allows people to walk and cycle on it. If you have seen the tram system in Granada, you will get an idea of what we are talking about.

Meanwhile, in other news, Águilas museum is closed - poor Antonio became too old to run it. I understand that they are hoping to re-open it sometime. In addition, the Hornillo tunnels museum is closed - I don't know why.

I have saved the best 'til last. I present here verbatim a message from Rafael that was put up on FaceBook yesterday:-

Good morning everyone, a new update on our meetings and projects. A very intense day of work yesterday Friday.

First thing in the morning we had a meeting with the mayor Zurgena, Mr. Luis Díaz, Fran, the councilor delegate of the City Council for our projects and with Mr. Antonio Ramón Salas, president of the Almanzora association of municipalities. Tell you that the meeting was very good, in fact it was a magnificent meeting, where we were able to see people responsible for public institutions realize that our project can represent a new point in the region and be the project that changes, in the right direction, the panorama of employment and training in Zurgena and the Almanzora region. In particular, it is worth highlighting the attitude of Mr. Antonio Ramón Salas who, given the explanations he received of the route of the Vía Verde from Zurgena to the Rambla de los Canales by Mr. Luis Diaz and by me as the technical writer of the project, said that he was in complete agreement with this approach that revolutionized the design of the Greenways in Spain and that he was going to

ask the technical direction in Madrid for the approval of our project immediately and that, if this technical direction made any opposition, he would resign to the economic subsidy for that section and that the works would be paid in full by the Association of Municipalities and by the Zurgena City Council because this project was of vital importance for Zurgena and for the Almanzora region

We talked about the light vehicles for railways that I mentioned in recent days as an optimal way to travel the Greenway comfortably and suitable for all audiences, about the possible projects of bringing historic locomotives and passenger cars to Zurgena station and power walk the route with them, everything was welcomed with great interest and making it clear that they understood that this is the way to return to Zurgena and its region the attractiveness and importance lost since the disappearance of the train in 1985 and that we had their full support, both for the first phase from Zurgena station to Rambla de los Canales, towards Arboleas, and for the second phase between Zurgena station and Huerca-Overa.

And meanwhile, our friend and colleague Max was at the Zurgena train station locating the layout of the train tracks under the layer of earth with which they were covered in the 90's. He had to work alone all morning because I didn't finish the meetings until 5pm, armed with a metal detector, searching for the tracks, and marking the lines with plaster. The results of your work have been very encouraging, much better than I could have thought at first. As you can see in the attached photos, almost 80% of the roads in the park area are below ground. Only the turntable and the road closest to the marble factory to the west of the park were removed during construction work on the playground, which will make reconstruction work in this area much faster. I hope to start the work soon, as soon as I can count on some economic resource from the City Council, we are working to see what money we can get.

Anyway, a lot of work and a lot of results, we continue in the project without rest, I'll be back in Zurgena next Friday to be able to move forward, more news very soon.

Kind regards, Rafael



If any of you are about to say “I could have told you about the track being there” - please don't!! ☹️
All day in the sun with an intermittently working (town hall) metal detector!!

There is information about all of the above on www.gssr.es . If you have any questions, e-mail me at maxcastril@gmail.com, or phone me on 634322087.