

Romanian Narrow Gauge Exploratory Tour August 2019

Blog 6 Viseu de Sus

Note: we also visited the standard gauge Dej Railway Museum in the Dej Loco Depot en route to Viseu de Sus.

Diesel Logging Trains

While we were there, one logging train left the depot around 07:30 and returned after the last tourist train around 17:30. On Monday afternoon this was just a short train but on Tuesday 13 pairs of logging bogies well loaded with substantial logs returned. Is this the last narrow gauge logging train in the world? I'd be interested to know where others can still be seen.)



Tourist Trains

Six trains are running at 09:00, 09:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:00 and 11:30. The ride up to Paltin takes around 2 hours with one stop for refreshment and returns after a 90 minute stop for lunch. The first trains back leave before the last train arrives at the top and on our second train we crossed the last two (diesel) uphill trains en route. Train tickets can be bought with additional tokens for tea/coffee, pastry, soft drink and barbecue lunch which is what we had. Everything plus beer, wine and spirits was also available for cash but with longer queues. The first four trains were steam hauled by Reșița (pronounced Re-shi-tza), the fifth diesel hauled and the last shorter train hauled by a Russian diesel railcar.



Full steam line up with the diesel for the tourist train. One other steam loco is in reserve - on Wednesday it was under repeat with one of its Klien Linder axles out for repair. That loco had been working on Tuesday.



First train of the day out towards Novat on Thursday with loco 'Bavaria' in charge.



Third train of the day with unnamed loco in charge.



The Fourth (and last steam) train



Our train on Tuesday waits to return from Paltin.



At Paltin, trains run forward for up to 2 km where a bit of complicated shunting occurs (not observed). With our train, this resulted in our open coach section moved from to rear for the return (but not turned on a triangle), the closed coaches moved to the front and the fuel wagon behind the loco. The train must have been split into 3 to achieve this. Our first mid-way open coach on the way up thus became the last vehicle on the way down. This must happen daily as the circular 'last vehicle' sign was moved from our coach to the rear of the train prior to departure from Viseu de Sus station at the start of the ride.

Road-rail van conversions

There are still plenty of these in use with more spare but the former car conversions and truck conversions now all seem to be consigned to the museum. The ones we observed we all used by the border police (we are close to the Ukrainian border here), the logging company RG Holz, the tourist train operator CFF Viseu de Sus or those working on the new bridges being built for the railway along the line (at Delta Novat and other places). We didn't observe any being used as taxis for tourists or hikers.



Side view showing bogie under the front and single axle to take the rear wheel drive. All include a turntable mounted underneath which is closer to the front at the centre of balance.



It was a most enjoyable visit in good weather over three days. Another time, I would probably go for 2 days of train rides separated by a day of linesiding. We were able to drive to Novat, crossing the river on pedestrian suspension or log bridges at various places and could probably have reached Delta Novat and walked some distance up the track to see tourist trains up and down. This operation alone is worth a trip to Romania in the tourist season or on a charter tour at any time of year.

John