

Gmünd Cédès-Stoll Replica Project

Almost 100 years after the last trolleybus ran in Gmünd a fund has been launched to build a replica of one of the Cédès-Stoll trolleybuses. If the scheme comes to fruition it will be the only full-size reminder of the vehicles which used this type of current collection.

The project is being promoted by GaMu - Galerie a Muzeum České Velenice. With the division of Austria-Hungary and the creation of Czechoslovakia at the end of the First World War the new border ran through Gmünd and the north-west part of the town is now České Velenice, with the rest of Gmünd remaining in Austria.

There is evidently some local pride in the trolleybus heritage. One of the trolleybus stops, last used in 1916, remains on display in the market square in Gmünd. For a photo see the April 2010 edition of *Trolleybus*, or visit our "Trolleybus during the First World War" exhibition at Sandtoft, where you can also see models of a Keighley Cédès-Stoll vehicle, and the only Cédès-Stoll double-decker, which was used in the Hove trial and later sold to Keighley.

The line was officially opened on 16 July 1907 in the presence of Archduke Rainer Ferdinand of Austria. It ran for 2.88 km from the town square to the station, replacing the horse bus service which had been provided to save townspeople the long walk to the station. Initially there was only one vehicle, numbered 1. It was 5.5m long, had 14 seats and room for ten standing passengers, together with a mail compartment. Because of the high demand for the service an order for a second car was placed in the autumn of 1907.

No 2 was delivered in January 1908. Although largely identical to the first vehicle it was only 5 m long and had four additional seats instead of a postal compartment and room for two additional standing passengers. Each vehicle weighed 3.5 tons and reached a top speed of 15 km / h.

A characteristic of Cédès-Stoll was the wheel hub motors. Generally these operated on the rear axle, but on the two Gmünd trolleybuses they operated on the front axle.

Although there had been two previous examples of trolleybus operation in Austria-Hungary, both of which used the Cédès-Stoll system (Poprad - Stary Smokovec in what is now Slovakia from August 1904 to August 1906, and Sibiu, now in Romania, from August to October 1904), this was the first trolleybus line in Austria and the first in what is now the Czech Republic.

The service closed on 14 July 1916, with the need for costly repairs and a lack of profitability being cited as the reasons. During 1918 the overhead was removed to help with the war effort. One of the traction poles remained in situ in České Velenice until the 1950s.

One of the Cédès-Stoll cars traverses the main square in Gmünd.



From a local newspaper report it is not clear whether the intention is for this replica vehicle to be operational or just to have it for static display. However, this is a very interesting project and we wish it success. No vehicle survives to demonstrate one of the alternative current collection systems which existed in the early years of trolleybus operation. GaMu's plan is to have the vehicle on display on the weekend of 5 - 7 July 2015, which is a very ambitious timescale. The significance of these dates is not known.

For anyone who would like to contribute to the project the local newspaper quotes the fund account number as CZ97 2010 000 000 022003 1300 (in international format).

Thanks to Jan Spousta for supplying the news about this project.

All photos are courtesy the Gunter Mackinger collection.

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Both vehicles are seen together at the other end of the route in the part of Gmünd which is now České Velenice. The vehicle on the right appears to have a postal compartment at the rear and must therefore be no 1. Note the hub motors mounted on the front axles.



From the dress of the people on board and the large crowd that has been attracted this may be the opening of Gmünd's trolleybus line in 1907. Note that the cable drum is mounted above the dash panel. The vehicles which operated in Keighley and Aberdare had the drum mounted out of sight behind the front panel.



BTS Calendar 2015

We've listened to feedback from members and our calendar will be published earlier than usual. The 2015 calendar has a different theme, with the cover and every month each featuring a colour photo showing two forms of electric traction - one of them always being a trolleybus, of course! Tony Belton has supplied all the photos, so they are guaranteed to be high quality. Dave Hall has pulled everything together and Gary Wilkinson is producing them.

The calendars will be available from BTS Sales and by post. Details of how to order will be published next month.

Meeting in Maidstone

Friends of Maidstone 72 holds meetings on the second Wednesday of May and October each year. The next is on Wednesday 8 October, when Bob Appleton will present a programme of "Trams at Home and Abroad" - with a few views of trolleybuses as well!

Doors open at 19.00 for a 19.30 start and the meeting should finish by 22.00. Admission is free, but a collection is held to offset costs. Tea/coffee is available at the interval.

The venue is St Andrew's Church Hall, Tonbridge Road, (entrance and parking in St. Andrew's Road) Barming Heath, Maidstone ME16 9AN