

Hungarian Stamps 2009

NOSTALGIA NARROW-GAUGE RAILWAYS III

Magyar Posta released a four denomination series about *nostalgia narrow-gauge railways* in 2001, continuing this with two denominations in 2004. Another four denominations are being added to the series now in 2009.

Narrow-gauge railways are railways with a smaller track gauge than the standard 1,435 mm. Today there are still twenty-two railways with a track gauge of 760 mm and two railways with a track gauge of 600 mm, operating according to a timetable in the most beautiful parts of the country on lines with a total length of 390 kilometres.

The **Zsuzsi Forest Railway** in Debrecen (HUF 75 stamp, Mk48 series diesel engine) is the country's oldest narrow-gauge railway, currently using the remaining 17 km section running from *Debrecen* to *Hármashegyalja* of the now disused 48 km *Debrecen Timber Yard-Nyírbétek* railway. The first section between the Timber Yard and *Nyírmártonfalva* (22 km) was opened in 1822, and then the track was extended in several stages to *Nyírbétek*. The track section between *Hármashegyalja-Nyírbétek* (31 km) was closed in 1977. The stamp design shows a lake near the end station.

The Hortobágy National Park's **Hortobágy Fish Pond Railway** (HUF 100 stamp, C 50 series diesel engine) evokes the memory of the old fish-farm railways used for transport from the fish ponds on the Hortobágy plain. This could not be replaced by a paved road for environmental reasons. In 2004 the track (4 km) was rebuilt, and stations and stops were added in 2006. Since 1 May 2007 it has served touristic purposes as well. The stamp design shows Hungary's longest stone bridge used for public transport, the nine-arched bridge (167 m).

The **Nagybörzsöny Forest Railway** (HUF 125 stamp, type MD 40 diesel engine) celebrated its centenary in 2008. The line between *Nagybörzsöny-Nagyirtás* (8 km) is the upper section of the former *Szob-Nagybörzsöny* (22 km) narrow-gauge railway. The use of switchbacks at Tolmács Hill and Kisirtás is a technological rarity (the engine pulls then pushes the train). The stamp shows the switchback in Kisirtás. The renovation of the lower section between *Szob-Márianosztra* (7 km) was completed in 2007, and plans for the rebuilding of the middle section between *Márianosztra-Nagyirtás* (7 km) have also been drawn up.

The **Királyrét Forest Railway** (HUF 275 stamp, number 490,2004 *Morgó* steam engine) is the light railway with the heaviest traffic in the Börzsöny Hills, which was built in 1893. Nostalgia trains have also been running on the *Kismaros-Királyrét* (10 km) section since September 2003. These are pulled by the steam engine shown in the stamp, which arrived in Kismaros from Romania on 29 April 2003. The stamp also features the viaduct of the Budapest-Szob railway line at Kismaros spanning above the track of the forest railway.

The first day cover depicts a train from the Hortobágy Fish Pond Railway with buffalo wallowing in the background. The design of the special postmark shows the type MD 40 diesel engine of the Nagybörzsöny Forest Railway from the side with the switchback. (Source: article by Csaba Károly Tusnádi)

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Designed by László Dudás

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500,000 copies of the series issued.

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