



Bulgaria



The “Classic Traction Tour” Saturday 18 to Wednesday 22 October 2025

Celebrating the 60th Anniversary of the ex-B.R. Class 86



Saturday 18 October

Sofia Locomotive Depot visit
Retro Tram Tour, Part 1, including depot visit

Overnight : Sofia

As well as locomotives used by BDZ on passenger trains Sofia Locomotive Depot is home to some out of use diesel and steam locomotives, including a pair of Austrian built class 04 diesel-hydraulics.

Sofia operates trams of both standard and narrow (1009 mm) gauge. The larger part of the network is narrow gauge, which is where our tram tour will operate.

The tour price includes - Airport Transfer; Sofia Locomotive Depot visit; dinner in the hotel; and overnight in 3-star hotel.

The Retro Tram Tour is offered as an optional extra at additional cost.

Sunday 19 October

Charter train - Sofia - Septemvri (ex BR Class 86 and Class 87)
Service train No: 16107 - Septemvri 16:28 - Velingrad South 18:13h

Overnight : Velingrad

The narrow gauge railway from Septemvri - Dobrinishte was dieselised with Henschel diesel-hydraulic locomotives built in 1965. We have requested these Henschel veterans are used on the Service Trains in the itinerary.

The tour price includes – Charter train described above; ticket for the above service train; breakfast; box lunch; dinner in the hotel; and overnight in 3-star hotel.

Monday 20 October

bus transfer Velingrad - Septemvri
Visit to locomotive depot, and Wagon Factory in Septemvri
Charter train - Septemvri - Plovdiv - Dimitrovgrad
(ex BR Class 86 and Class 87)
Charter train - Dimitrovgrad – Kaloyanovets (ex BR Class 86)
Visit to Kaloyanovets Depot
Charter train - Kaloyanovets - Stara Zagora (ex BR Class 86)
Overnight : Stara Zagora

The Wagon Factory in Septemvri has its own locomotives on two gauges including the unique narrow gauge 91-40.

Kaloyanovets Depot is home to more than a dozen steam locomotives, which once formed the Bulgarian strategic reserve. Riga built EMUs and various other items of rolling stock have been reported at Kaloyanovets.

The tour price includes – Wagon Factory in Septemvri; bus transfer as noted above; Charter trains described above; Visits to Kaloyanovets and Plovdiv depots; breakfast; box lunch; dinner in the hotel; and overnight in 3-star hotel.

Tuesday 21 October

Charter train - Stara Zagora - Ljubenovo (ex BR Class 86)
Visit to Maritza Iztok Complex (including charter train using Maritza Iztok locomotive) Charter train - Ljubenovo – Plovdiv (ex BR Class 86) calling at Stara Zagora to drop off those continuing to the "Steam Tour" q.v.
Service train No: БВ 1614 - Plovdiv 18:03– Sofia 21:00 Overnight : Sofia

Maritza Iztok operates more than 100 kms of railway and is Bulgaria's largest industrial railway by a substantial margin. There is an interchange with BDZ at Ljubenovo. Most of the Maritza Iztok network is electrified at 1,500vDC and is operated by East German EL2 electric locomotives. The railway also operates diesel locomotives of classes 06, 52 and 55.

The tour price includes – Stara Zagora depot visit; charter trains described above; Visit to Maritza Iztok Complex; ticket for the above service train; breakfast; box lunch; farewell dinner in local tavern; and overnight in 3-star hotel.

Wednesday 22 October

Retro Tram Tour, Part 2
Visit to the Transport University (Todor Kableshkov)
The Transport University is home to Czech built electric locomotive 42 072-9, which enthusiasts will recognise as a sister of CSD's "Laminatkas". Narrow gauge steam locomotive 615-76 is also plinthed at the University.
The tour price includes – breakfast, visit to the Transport University and Airport Transfer.
The Retro Tram Tour is offered as an optional extra at additional cost.

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"Classic Traction" tour £1,394 single room supplement £105. Prices subject to confirmation and exclude air or rail travel between the UK and Bulgaria but we can quote times/prices on request. To register your interest, and for booking procedure email info@entusiasthols.com or write to Enthusiast Holidays (Italiarail Ltd.), 26 Onslow Gardens, South Croydon, Surrey, CR2 9AB, or call 020 8657 8649 (0044 208 657 8649 from overseas).

Prices are based upon an exchange rate of €1.20 = £1

The Locomotives



It is impossible to say in advance which locomotives will be used on the Charter trains, but they will be from the ex-British Rail locomotives now owned by Bulmarket.

Former British Rail Class 86

In Bulgaria the Class 86 locomotives have confusingly been re-numbered as Class 85. Bulmarket have the following -

85001-3	Orion	BoBo electric	BR, Doncaster / 1965 [Built as British Railways class AL6 E3129, entered service 11/1965] [Withdrawn as 86701] [Exported to Bulgaria 04/2016]
85002-1	Cassiopeia	BoBo electric	English Electric 3725 Vulcan Foundry E385 / 1966 [Built as British Railways class AL6 E3144, entered service 03/1966] [Withdrawn as 86702] [Exported to Bulgaria 04/2016]

85003-9	Lancashire Witch	BoBo electric	English Electric 3485 Vulcan Foundry E331 / 1965 [Built as British Railways class AL6 E3193, entered service 12/1965] [Withdrawn as 86213] [Exported to Bulgaria 04/2016]
85004-7	Novelty	BoBo electric	English Electric 3486 Vulcan Foundry E332 / 1966 [Built as British Railways class AL6 E3194, entered service 01/1966] [Withdrawn as 86235] [Exported to Bulgaria 04/2016]
85005-4	Lady of the Lake	BoBo electric	BR, Doncaster / 1965 [Built as British Railways class AL6 E3126, entered service 11/1965] [Withdrawn as 86231] [Exported to Bulgaria 04/2016]
85006-2		BoBo electric	English Electric 3736 Vulcan Foundry E396 / 1966 [Built as British Railways class AL6 E3155, entered service 04/1966] [Withdrawn as 86234] [Exported to Bulgaria 04/2016]

86233 was purchased by Bulmarket for spares.



Above: Not yet renumbered into the Bulgarian series 85, ex-BR 86605 and 86622, formerly E3185 and E3174, awaiting attention by Express Service of Ruse

Previous page: 85.004 "Novelty", formerly E3194, at the Bulmarket exchange sidings at Ruse. Both June 2024. VCK Allen

Former British Rail Class 87

87009-4	BoBo electric		BREL, Crewe / 1973
			[Built as British Railways 87009, entered service 11/1973] [Exported to Bulgaria 10/2012]
87017-7	BoBo electric		BREL, Crewe / 1974
			[Built as British Railways 87017, entered service 03/1974] [Exported to Bulgaria 10/2012]
87023-5	Velocity	BoBo electric	BREL, Crewe / 1974
			[Built as British Railways 87023, entered service 04/1974] [Exported to Bulgaria 10/2012]
87025-0	BoBo electric		BREL, Crewe / 1974
			[Built as British Railways 87025, entered service 04/1974] [Exported to Bulgaria 10/2012]



These attractive narrow gauge (760mm) Henschel diesels date from 1965 and are only now being replaced by more modern locos.

We have requested haulage by one of these veterans on our day on the section of the scenic narrow gauge Rhodope Mountain line from Septemvri to Velingrad. This one was photographed at Yakoruda in October 2022 *Photo © VCKAllen*

The other Photos :

Cover page - 85.004 - formerly B.R. No. E3194 - at the Bulmarket sidings in Ruse. © VCK Allen

Insets – 86233 passing Rugby on 2 June 2003 with the 12:45 Euston - Wolverhampton service. © Chris Milner. Bulmarket 85002-1, formerly BR 86702 © Bulmarket

Maritza Iztok Complex



One of the numerous East German-built EL2 electric locomotives working a lignite train in the Maritza Iztok complex.

A highlight of the Classic Traction Tour will be the visit on Tuesday 21 October to the Maritza Iztok Complex. Our Charter train will be brought to Ljubenovo by the ex BR Class 86 where a Maritza Iztok locomotive will take over.

Most of the Maritza Iztok network is electrified at 1,500vDC and is operated by East German EL2 electric locomotives. The railway also operates diesel locomotives of classes 06, 52 and 55.

We have been promised the journey in the complex with our Charter train pulled by a local locomotive will be about 12km in total. The group will be able to get off the train at one of the stations, where the locomotive and wagon depots will be visited on foot.

The Maritza Iztok company was originally established in 1951. The present company was formed in 1993. Three coal mines are in operation, as follows –

- Troyanovo-1 (opened 1952)
- Troyanovo-North at Kovachevo (opened 1964)
- Troyanovo-3 at Mednikarovo (opened 1969)

The coal mines supplies three thermal power plants (TPP) and one briquette factory –

- Maritza Iztok -1 TPP
- Maritza Iztok -2 TPP
- Maritza Iztok -3 TPP

Photo : Maritza Iztok East German EL2 electric locomotive 126 on 18 June 2024 © VCK Allen

