

Vapor Trails: the Last Steam Railroad in Europe (Abramowitsch)

In this thought-provoking and nostalgic documentary, Peter Abramowitsch refers to the steam locomotive as "part machine, part human and part dragon". By the end of the film the traits to which he referred become clear. This extremely well-done video chronicles the efforts of dedicated organizers and workers to preserve the steam locomotive tradition in Poland. The method of this preservation effort is to keep steam powered trains in regular service by allowing the public to pay for the experience of being an engineer and fireman on these operations. The funds raised are used to supplement the expense of this unique project.

During four weeks in Poland, Abramowitsch was able to capture on film the mood and feelings of both the land and people involved in this preservation effort. The film is not a run-of-the mill railfan production with endless runbys but an in-depth study: sometimes heartwarming, sometimes disturbing. It's a significant addition to the historical documentation of steam power. Optimistic interviews with the organizers of the project and the railroad workers who operate the steam trains are in contrast to interviews with local citizens whose complacency toward this unique operation is obvious. One can only hope that this documentary will add awareness and momentum to continue this historically significant project in Poland. — *Bill Kohler*

Nevada State Railroad Museum Fall - 2006