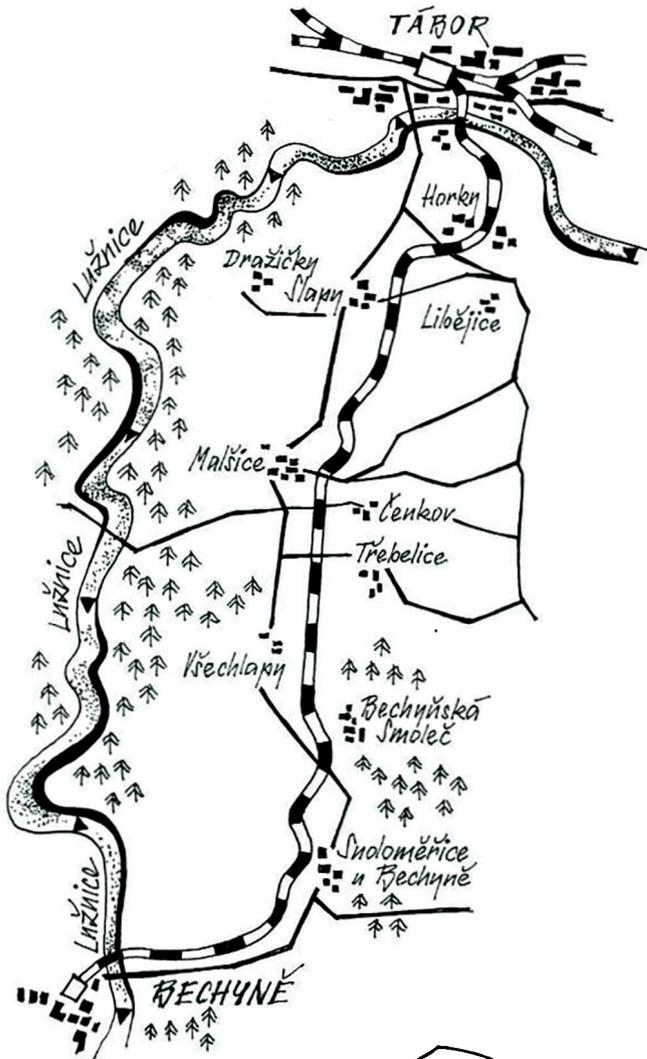


Historical track map

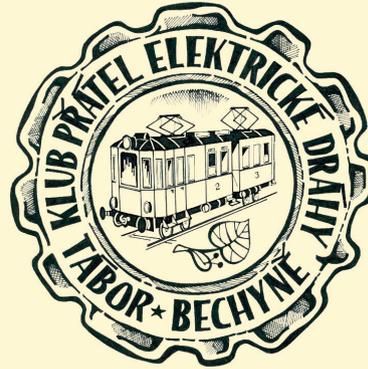


The Electric Railway Friends' Club Tábor – Bechyně

The organization was set up in 1998 as the foundation successor. Its aim is to organise activities, particularly **historical rides**, and maintain this unique track, “keep it alive” and continue with the legacy of its versatile inventor **František Křižík**.

Since the start of its activities, the club has organised a **total of 127 rides**, during which it has served 12,500 travellers. The most popular rides, which are offered once a year already for the 13th time, include the **St. Nicholas rides** when children get **small presents from St. Nicholas**.

In 2002 and 2003, the Tábor – Bechyně Electric Railway Friends' Club contributed CZK 200,000 to the general restoration of the original electric Křižík locomotive M 400 known as “Elinka” and it provided CZK 60,000 for the rebuilding of a small depot in Bechyně.



The artist Jan Stránský provided all illustrations.

More information
www.cd.cz/nostalgie

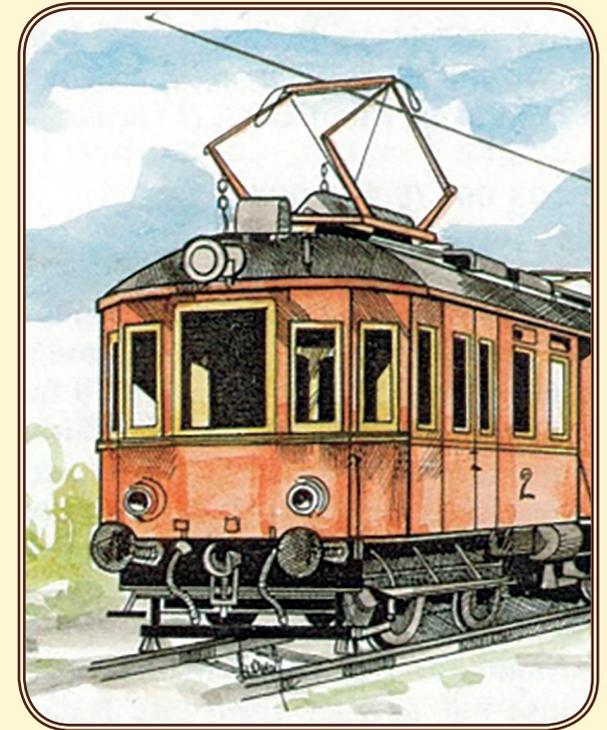
Event partners



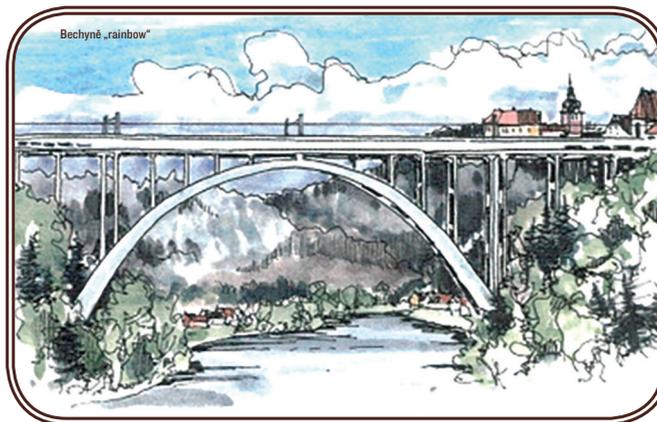
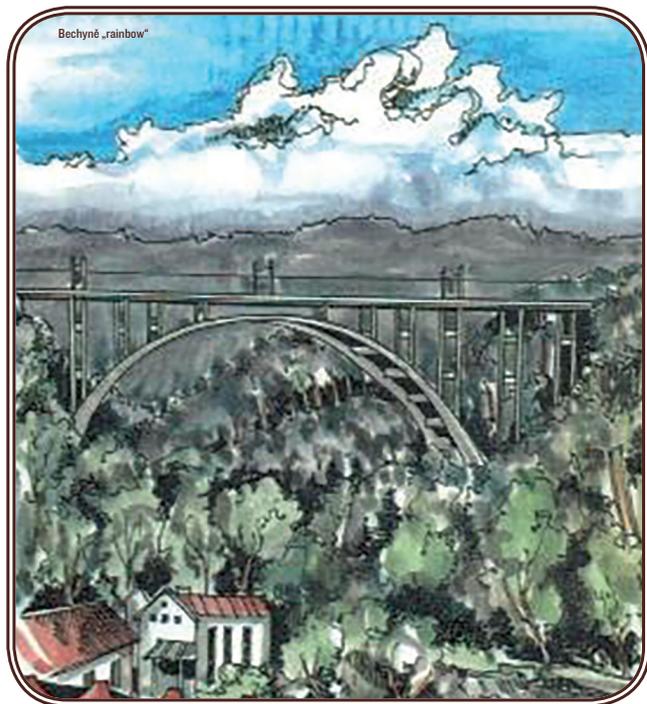
A ride with Elinka along the Bechyňka

Tábor – Bechyně and back

From the history of our first
electrified railway track



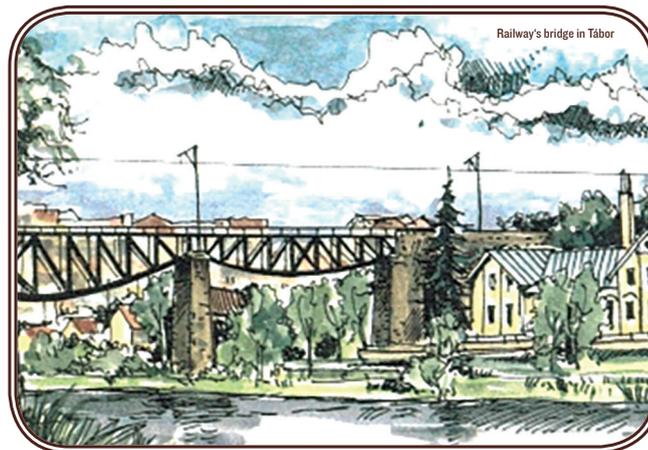
There are many historical monuments and impressive works in the Czech Republic where we can admire the brains and devotion of the railway engineers and investors of past ages. The Bechyňka track, however, stands out in one respect: it was the first public electrified railway line in our country! Therefore, let's pay a visit to this essential historic railway attraction!



Construction

Compared with other local side tracks, certain concessions were made to the Union in the licence. The smallest bending radius, for example, was shortened to 125 m. Also, 21.75 kg/m rails could be used instead of the 26 kg/m rails found on other tracks. Regarding other technical requirements, the maximum speed on bends shorter than 150 m was topped at 15 km/hour, while on the other tracks trains could go 30 km/hour. The average gradient of the track was 35 per mille. The track had to be adjusted to the terrain. The only shortcut is only 4 m deep. It was not only these measures that helped the builders save almost 200 tonnes of steel. Although alternating current was preferred at that time, direct current was actually used.

The steel bridge over the river Lužnice in Tábor and the power plant structure at this bridge were the most challenging structures along the entire route. The bridge is 174 meters long and reaches a height of 20 m above the river water level. The stones for the bridge pillars come from the Pod Klokoť quarry near Tábor. The construction costs amounted to CZK 2,795,000.



Operation and development

The first test ride was carried out already one year since construction start, on 1 June, 1903. The grand opening ride, which marked the beginning of regular track operations, took place on 21 June, 1903. Initially two electric vehicles ran on the track. The third one was added in 1905, followed by another one in 1908. Two vehicles were of shared design and later identified as EM 400 (001, 002). The third vehicle (003) and fourth vehicle (004), however, had a different design. One vehicle (M400.01), still in working condition, forms part of the collection of the National Technical Museum.

In 1929 the track was extended to cover the other bank of the river Lužnice in Bechyň, where the river was bridged by a new reinforced concrete bridge. The bridge was built to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the founding of Czechoslovakia. Called the "Bechyň Rainbow", the bridge deck is shared between the railway and road vehicles, a unique thing for that time.

The year 1938 marked another milestone: the traction and power supply system were upgraded. Besides the Elinka vehicle, such machines operated on the track as the E 410 001 and E 422.0 (Bobinka), E 424.002 (Bastila), E 436.0 and even steam locomotives of series 310.0 and 423.0, and later the E 423.0 locomotives.



How the track was founded

František Křižík worked tirelessly to implement electric railway operations in practice. However, Austria-Hungary at that time lacked experience with electric railways, so it was left to entrepreneurs to break ground on such projects. Jan Sedlák, the CEO of František Křižík Works, was a pioneer in this respect. In 1898 he met with the Bechyň Union, an association founded for the construction of the Bechyň – Tábor track, and negotiated the preparation of a design for a system with an electric drive.

It did not take long for the Railway Ministry to agree with the design of this track, even though other local lines still preferred the conventional way of doing things, i.e. steam locomotives.

The Union was granted the licence to build the electric track on 19 April, 1902. This licence said that construction must be completed by 1904. The municipal committee then reduced this period to until 1 June, 1903.

Technical specifications

- Original track length 23.267 km
- New track length 24.092 km
- Number of stops and stations: 13
- Journey time: approx. 50 minutes