

THE HISTORY OF THE LITTLE TRAIN OF PELION

The miniature train of Pelion has been a dynamic element of culture and development leaving an intense mark on the history and environment of the area. For 76 years (1895-1971) it climbed the mountain carrying passengers and freight, thus immensely contributing to the rapid development of the area. The man who had the inspiration of its manufacturing, under the auspices of the Thessaly Railroads Company, was the Italian engineer Evaristo de Kyriko, father of the famous painter Giorgos de Kyriko, who was born in our town in 1888, lived a happy childhood here and carried this place over his paintings in symbolic forms, particularly during his metaphysical era, which made him immortal. Evaristo De Kyriko built one of the best in the world railroads, of only 60 cm width, through the olive groves on the slopes of the Centaurs' Mountain. A masterpiece which will always be adored for its high esthetics, the harmony in its form and the perfection of its manufacturing. The quaint form of the minute train which used to climb the mountain at 25 - 30 Km per hour, carrying hundreds of people and goods, combined perfectly with the tiny railroad stations in Agria, Lehonía and Milies with the stone and metal bridges as well as with the building of the railway station in Volos, dating back in 1884 and still remaining a symbol of an era of beauty foregone but still moving. The first floor of the building houses the Railroad Museum of Thessaly, displaying rare exhibits, a real asset to our city. The little train, running on Belgian engines "Milee", "Jason", "Pelion", "Volos" and "Tsagarada", could also serve the city's needs as a tram and it was the only public transportation available in those days that's why it was connected with most of the historic moments of the area and was loved by everyone. Later it was slowly removed from the scene with the advent of the automobile until it was completely stopped as uneconomical in June 1971. Today, this unique steam train thanks to the continuous efforts of its "Friends" and after 25 years of immobility climbs the Pelion mountain once more at 25 km per hour. Beginning its journey temporarily from Lehonía (soon the terminal will be in Volos) the train climbs up the slopes through the olive groves past the traditional villages of Ano Gatzéa, Agia Triada, Agio Athanasio Pinakaton, Argyreika and arrives at its terminal in Milies, having offered a unique experience of magic and beauty to its passengers, something rarely found in our days. People traveling on this train can enjoy a breathtaking view of the sea from the mountain and can pause and take pictures of the renowned bridges of De Kyriko, the old stately houses, the little chapels and monasteries, living signs of a foregone era.