

## THE TWO LIVES OF THE FINNISH SOCIETY FOR THE HISTORY OF TECHNOLOGY

Petri Paju

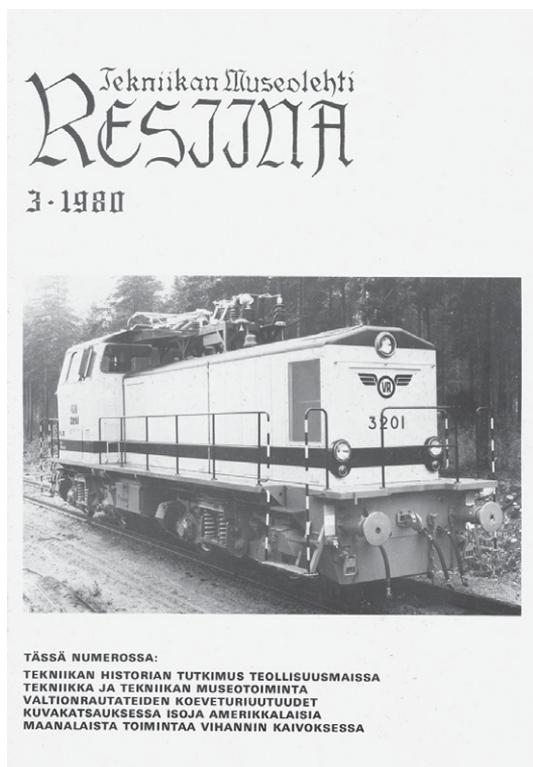
The Finnish Society for the History of Technology has led two lives for the past thirty years. Its more recent life started in 1980, when the Society, then called the Finnish Society for the Museum of Technology, became a joint publisher in the journal *Resiina*. 'Resiina' is Finnish for a railway inspection trolley or handcar. The journal was first published in 1969 and is still published today by railway history organisations. In 1983, after a few years' cooperation with *Resiina*, the Society decided to start publishing its own periodical *Tekniikan Waiheita*, the Finnish Quarterly for the History of Technology, which would gradually make the Society more devoted to the study of the history of technology.

The Society's origins are in the work of an earlier organisation devoted to preserving the history of technology. In 1926–28, the Finnish Society for the Museum of Technology (Suomen Teknillinen Museoyhdistys) was founded jointly by several government ministries and engineering associations. Eventually, its goal of establishing a permanent Museum of Technology was achieved: in the early 1970s the museum gradually opened its exhibitions to visitors in Helsinki. After this success, the Society began to search for a new purpose, or a second life, and produced the journal now in its 31st year of publication.

To manifest this transformation, the Society changed its name in 1995 to the 'Finnish Society for the History of Tech-

nology' (Tekniikan Historian Seura – Teknikhistoriska Samfundet, in Finnish and Swedish, respectively). According to its new statutes, the purpose of the Society is to increase general knowledge of and interest in the history of technology, engineering and industry, and to promote research and museum activity in this field. In addition to its publication activities, the Society has been active in organising conferences and seminars, both at a national and an international level.

The cover of the third issue of *Resiina* magazine in 1980 in which the Finnish Society for the Museum of Technology first started as a journal publisher.



In recent years, as the scope of Finnish research in the history of technology has become more international, the Society has further promoted the visibility of this research among colleagues abroad. In 2010, when a large conference on the history of technology and industry, called *Reusing the Industrial Past* was held in Tampere, some Society members organised a collection of the international publications in the history of technology by Finns or concerning Finland. This bibliography is available on the Society's website and serves as an introduction to this diverse field in this country.

The membership of the Society is around 300, and the circulation of its journal around 1000 copies. Given the small population of Finland (approximately 5.4 million), makes its distribution and availability quite high in international terms,

compared with other history of technology journals.

Instead of creating conflict or trouble, the two parallel lives of the Society have proven productive and complemented each other, although one could wish for even more debate on the pages of *Tekniikan Waiheita*. Similarly the Society has brought together engineers and scholars from various disciplines. Most importantly, because of these two lives or historical layers of the Finnish Society for the History of Technology, we can in 2013 celebrate the 85th anniversary of the Society and 31 years of publishing of a Finnish journal focused on the history of technology.

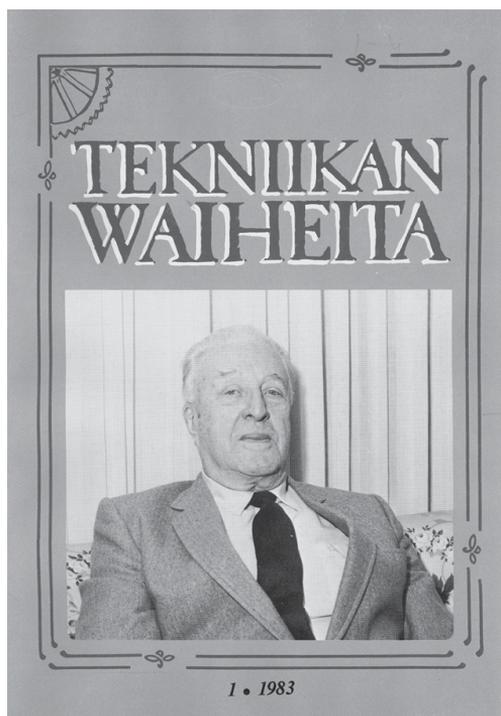
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*Bibliography of Histories of Technology by Finns or about Finland, in languages other than Finnish or Swedish*. Eds. Petri Paju & Riikka Jalonen. Circulated as a print, in the conference *Reusing the Industrial Past* (ICOHTEC, TICCIH, Worklab). Tampere, Finland, 10–15.8.2010, and available as a PDF file in: <http://www.ths.fi/bibliography.htm>



The cover of the first issue of *Tekniikan Waiheita*, depicting Professor Edward Wegelius who was the President of the society from 1970 to 1985.