

[VERSION 5]

LA GRANDE ALLURE

*Travelling by train in Europe
and elsewhere Overseas*

2010's



by Peter Dawes

**La Grande Allure:
Travelling by train in Europe and elsewhere Overseas**
2010's

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FRONT COVER PHOTO

2010's-1: Author & wife Sandra pose in front of Željezice Federacije Bosne i Herzegovine (ŽFBH – Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Railways) Class 441 electric, ready to depart with Sarajevo-Zagreb train No. B396 (2013/04/20). *(This photo was taken by a friendly colleague of the driver, in the face of posters in the station tunnel showing a large camera with a red "X" through it, presumably dating back to Communist days and aimed at discouraging photography.)*

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DEDICATION

to Sylvia & the late Richard Beardshaw.

FOREWORD

This project documents my extensive train travels over the years in Europe, and to a much lesser extent in Australia and Fiji, India and Sri Lanka, Japan and Hong Kong.

The current volume covers the 2010's, which includes three holidays: • England, Wales, Scotland, France, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland and Germany (2013); • India and Sri Lanka (2016); and • Japan and Hong Kong (2019).

This is **VERSION 5** (for changes from the previous version, please see page 263).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

PETER DAWES worked as a transportation policy researcher, analyst, project manager and advisor for the Canadian Transport Commission and Government of Alberta until taking early retirement. He has had a lifelong personal and professional interest in railways and passenger trains, and resides with his wife Sandra in Edmonton, Alberta.

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PHOTO CREDITS

Dawes, Sandra [2010's-2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 35, 37, 38, 39, 42, 43, 45, 47, 49, 50, 54, 55; 56, 57, 58, 62, 63, 66, 67, 70, 71, 72, 73, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 83, 84, 86, 88, 90]

Federation of Bosnia & Herzegovina Railways employee, Sarajevo [2010's-1];

Unknown photographer, Oświęcim [2010's-11];

Dawes, Peter [*all others*].

IMPORTANT!

Please see **GENERAL NOTES AND CAVEATS** below for important information regarding copyright, ownership, use and acquisition of photos appearing in this document (specifically under **Photographs**, page 10).

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the sixth volume of my overseas rail-travel project, offering detailed accounts of train trips taken during the 2010's, featuring our 2013 holiday in Europe, 2016 in India and Sri Lanka, and 2019 in Japan and Hong Kong.

Previous volumes cover the 1970's, 1st part of the 1980's (1980, '81 and '84), 2nd part of the same decade (1985 and '88), 1990's and 2000's. There is also a comprehensive "Reprise" providing: a review of overseas rail-passenger developments by decade; an overall summary of my travels; personal ratings of trains; interesting cars and locomotives encountered; and several tables of detailed trip information. I've also prepared a "Companion Document" offering trip, train and equipment details, which may appeal to the real enthusiast.

Please note that this project follows my *No Matter Where It's Going: Travelling by train in Canada and elsewhere in North America*.

The 2010's accounted for 15% of my overseas trips. Other percentages (in descending order): 1980's, 34; 1970's, 17; 2000's, 16; and 1990's, 11. (The 2020's so far: 7%).

BEFORE PROCEEDING...

Those familiar with other volumes might wish to skip over the rest of this section.

Turning to the current volume, I begin by providing **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** of those persons without whose assistance this project could not have happened. To assist readers as they go through the year-by-year accounts, I then offer **GENERAL NOTES & CAVEATS**, **ABBREVIATIONS**, a **SAMPLE ENTRY**, and a **QUICK INDEX OF TRAINS TAKEN**.

Next comes the meat of the document. For the **decade** involved, I provide the overall context, summary of trips taken, places visited, and particularly noteworthy trips. For each **holiday** within that decade, I begin with a **SYNOPSIS** covering: the context; trips taken and distance travelled; types and numbers of cars and locomotives making up the trains; places visited; noteworthy train trips; fastest and slowest average speeds;

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and any memorable associated trips by other modes of transport.

Then, under the heading **TRIPS AND TRAIN COMPOSITION** and for each train trip, I provide the date and (in a headline) service provider, train number, embarkation point, disembarkation point, origin and final destination (if different), and train name (where applicable). I go on to show the detailed train composition in a darkly shaded box, followed by departure time, arrival time, purpose of the trip, and in some cases major enroute stops. (If more than one leg was involved, I mention the ultimate destination, trip purpose and connecting points at the start of the first leg.) I then describe any interesting aspects about the train and route taken, and things that happened along the way. I also provide a brief account of any relevant events that occurred before the train departed or after it arrived at my destination.

At the end of the entry (lightly shaded), I often provide the distance in both kilometres and miles, elapsed time and average speed. Occasionally, I also offer further details on equipment, particularly Sleeping cars and locomotives.

Now for an important explanation. I fully reference every point-to-point, inter-community *rail* trip taken, including excursions on both regular lines and preserved railways – also commuter rail trips, provided they went beyond the city or region concerned. I note, but do not fully reference, associated marine, road and air trips, as well as intra-community trips by main-line railways. Where urban transit systems are concerned, I make note of trains and trams, both underground and surface if they were of an interurban nature (such as joining a city centre with an airport), provided a direct connection between intercity stations, or enabled access to a specific event or attraction.

At the end of the volume, I provide a **GENERAL INDEX** by subject, **BIBLIOGRAPHY**, **LIST OF PHOTOS.**, and (in subsequent versions) a note describing **CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS VERSION**.

Three final points. First, please bear in mind that this is a *personal* account of rail and associated travel. It will appeal mainly to people who already enjoy train travel or might want to try it out; to railway modellers, photographers, historians or researchers; and perhaps to those who are just interested in the evolution of rail travel in Europe, also India and Sri Lanka, Japan and Hong Kong, during this period. While trip purpose, references to travelling companions, and anecdotes are included, I present this information in such a manner as to be easily avoided by those looking strictly for train composition.

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Second, more knowledgeable readers will find many comments and explanations to be old hat and obvious. If you fit this bill, please understand that you will be a lot more familiar with this subject area than others.

Third, I strongly encourage feedback – everything from factual clarifications to minor typographical corrections; to additional car and locomotive information; and to photographs that might fill in gaps or improve on my own efforts. Please contact me using the information shown on page 2 above.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to the following:

- the late Mark Bunting, Tom Matoff, Ken Mozersky, John Stilgoe, the late Brian Sullivan, and Greg Thompson for being key influences where both my interest in trains and career in transportation are concerned (as cited in the initial *No Matter Where It's Going: 1950's* volume);
- Ken Boulton, Tom Clark, Greg Gormick, Ken Holmes, the late Fred Matthews, Doug Smith and Nicholas Vincent for being kindred spirits;
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- Stefan Dringenberg for providing information on equipment; the late George Drury for his articles and books on Swiss rail travel; Jean Patenaude for advice regarding the presentation of company names in French; the late John Price for his efforts as long time editor of the seminal *Thomas Cook Continental* and *International* timetables; and Geoff Sarbutt, Neil Smith and Michael Taylor for providing information on railway equipment;
- Cindy Chow, Charlie Dawes and Dan Walter for providing valuable advice concerning this project;
- Shaun Fawcett for essential help in publishing these volumes online; and
- my wife Sandra for much-appreciated companionship on several holidays, for design suggestions, and for developing the route schematics, website and web version of these documents.

Specifically where this volume is concerned:

- Sylvia and the late Richard Beardshaw, Meghan Clancy, Margaret Dyke & Eva Young, Alison & David Stirling for providing accommodation, local tours and other forms of hospitality;
- Nigel Hanson for the tour of Severn Valley Railway carriage and paint shops; Alistair & June McWillie for escorting us around the Aberdeen/Stonehaven area; Harry Stephen for showing us around Edinburgh and helping me with photo-captioning; John Day for advice on Sri Lanka trains;
- Vinodh Wickremeratne, editor of *Lanka Railway Digest*, for providing clarifications and further information; and
- Sandra for taking many of the photographs.

Despite the assistance provided, the author remains entirely responsible for errors or omissions.

Finally, this volume is dedicated to those world travellers, the Beardshaws, for inspiring us to further rail-based adventures.

Peter Dawes
Edmonton, Alberta
January, 2026.

GENERAL NOTES AND CAVEATS

Photographs: were taken either by the author or his wife; have been chosen to support the text; **remain the property of the photographers; are protected by copyright; and must not be used in any fashion without permission** (please bear in mind that those involving early morning, late afternoon, or night trains often were taken in adverse lighting conditions);

BEFORE PROCEEDING...

Those familiar with other volumes might wish to skip over the rest of this section.

Timings: are shown in local time and taken from Cook's timetables, railway schedules, or other sources;

Distances: are taken mostly from Cook's, or from railway timetables where Cook's doesn't provide such information or does so in a manner which makes computing difficult (distances may vary from one trip to another due to routing changes or updates of information made by Cook's or service providers, and for international services are calculated to or from the nearest operating point, which might not necessarily be right at the border; are rounded to the nearest full kilometre or mile; and may vary from timetables especially where conversion back and forth between the two measures was necessary and where Cook's or the service provider used a different ratio);

Average speeds: may reflect time required for operational, servicing, passenger access, parcel and mail handling, or crewing purposes;

Intermediate stops: are either as shown in Cook's, railway timetables or other sources, or were recorded during the trip (stops may be omitted where numerous, especially on local or regional trains, or if they were of a conditional nature);

Train numbers: are shown as typically applied by continental European, Indian, Sri Lankan and Japanese railways, while in the British Isles, departure time from the boarding point is used instead of a number (as has been the common practice there);

Car numbers: were usually **not** recorded, due to the sheer number of services taken, quick station stops, and complexity of both train composition and the numbers themselves;

Locomotive numbers: were often recorded during this decade, in contrast to previous decades;

Car and locomotive names: were rarely encountered but always recorded;

Car or car type occupied: is indicated in **Bold** where there was more than one possibility (sometimes

accompanied by a Star [*] for clarity in the web version);

Distinction between classes in Coaches: was recorded during some of the earlier holidays (and in India and Sri Lanka), but is not shown in any of these volumes;

Sleeping car types: were not always recorded but have been determined where possible, based on information contained in various sources;

Locomotive hauled trains: refers to trains having one or more locomotives, or one or more powered cars pulling or pushing non-powered cars, and are shown as "d" for Diesel, "e" for Electric, or "s" for Steam (furthermore, the term "Diesel" is used instead of the more technically correct "Diesel-Electric");

Locomotive origins and destinations: are often estimated out of necessity, especially beyond the segment travelled, in which case they are shown with a question mark (e.g.: "Ee HAGEN-DĚČÍN? means an electric locomotive definitely starting at Hagen and possibly terminating at Děčín);

Train reversals enroute: are common in Europe and Sri Lanka, but are normally ignored here (especially a train entering a stub-end station, then leaving in the opposite direction, usually with a fresh locomotive attached to what had been the rear end);

Multiple Unit trains: refers to trains in which all or some cars were powered, and are indicated by the addition of an "m" (e.g., "Cmd" means Coach in a Diesel Multiple Unit train; "Cme" one in an Electric Multiple Unit train);

Equipment units: are shown in categories such as "Coaches, Pullmans & Lounges" (please note that the car types mentioned under these category titles were not necessarily encountered in every decade or period);

Equipment deadheading: is indicated by [dd];

Combination Coach/Guard/Baggage cars: are shown in these volumes as pure Coaches;

Buffet and Restaurant cars: are shown as "B" or "R" (some Buffet cars might have been recorded as Restaurant cars, and vice versa; full Buffet cars were not always distinguished from combination Buffet

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Coaches, especially in the earlier years; and Buffet cars weren't always identified as such in Electric Multiple Unit trains);

Snack-bar and cart facilities: are not indicated but one or the other typically was available on major trains;

City & other names: are shown in the local language, in some cases more than one (please see below under **ALTERNATIVE VERSION OF NAMES**);

Award of multi-service provider trips: goes to the service provider accounting for the greater or greatest distance;

Travel by non-rail means: is highlighted by a bullet, either on its own if it occurred at the start of a journey on a non-rail travel day, otherwise within the normal text;

Recording of train composition: has inevitably resulted in inaccuracies and omissions, due to: switching of equipment prior to my joining or leaving a train (or during the middle of the night); mistakes made in recording equipment types; late boarding or hurried exit from trains; and occasional grumpiness or sheer laziness – in which case assumptions have been made regarding the particular car or locomotive (or number of units), based in some cases on photos taken at the time, and shown in *Italics*.

ABBREVIATIONS

SERVICE PROVIDERS

[Note: coloured abbreviations carry through from earlier volumes]

ATW	Arriva Trains Wales
BBL	Bluebell Railway
CCT	CrossCountry
ČD	České Dráhy (Czech Railways)
CFR	Societatea Națională a Căilor Ferate Române (<i>National Society of Romanian Railways</i>)
CNL	City Night Line
DB	Deutsche Bahn (German Railroad)

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DTS	Daitetsu ("Big Iron", Japan)
EC	East Coast
EI	Eurostar International
END	Enoshima Dentetsu (Enoshima Electric Railway) (Enoden Line)
FGW	First Great Western
FR	Ffestiniog Railway
FTPE	First TransPennine Express
HŽ	Hrvatske Željeznice (Croatian Railways)
IR	Indian Railways
JRC	Tōkai-Nihon Ryōkaku Tetsudō (Central Japan Passenger Railway) (JR Central)
JRE	Higashi-Nihon Ryōkaku Tetsudō (East Japan Passenger Railway) (JR East)
JRH	Hokkaidō Ryōkaku Tetsudō (Hokkaidō Passenger Railway) (JR Hokkaidō)
JRK	Kyūshū Ryōkaku Tetsudō (Kyūshū Passenger Railway) (JR Kyūshū)
JRW	Nishi-Nihon Ryōkaku Tetsudō (West Japan Passenger Railway) (JR West)
KKT	Kurobe Kyōkoku Tetsudō (Kurobe Gorge Railway)
KW	Koleje Wielkopolskie (Greater Poland Railway)
LM	London Midland
MÁV	Magyar Államvasutak (Hungarian State Railways)
MTR	Mass Transit Railway (Hong Kong)
NVR	Nene Valley Railway
ÖBB	Österreichische Bundesbahnen (Austrian Federal Railways)
PKP	Polskie Koleje Państwowe Intercity (Polish State Railways Intercity)
PR	Przewozy Regionalne (Regional Transport – Poland)
SCR	ScotRail
SL	Sri Lanka Railways
SM	Shōnan Monorēru (Shōnan Monorail)
SPT	Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
SR	Southern Railway

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SVR	Severn Valley Railway
SWT	South West Trains
SŽ	Slovenske Železnice (Slovenian Railways)
TCT	Toyama Chihō Tetsudō (Toyama Chihō Regional Railway)
THO	Thello
TI	Trenitalia
VT	Virgin Trains
WHR	Welsh Highland Railway
ŽFBH	Željezice Federacije Bosne I Herzegovine (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Railways)
ŽRS	Željezice Republike Srpske (Serbian Republic [Bosnia] Railways)
ŽSSK	Železničná Spoločnosť Slovensko (Slovak State Railways)

ADDITIONAL RAILWAYS AND RAIL ENTITIES

BR	British Rail
CIWL	Compagnie internationale des Wagons-lits et du Tourisme (International Sleeping Car and Tourism Co.)
CP	Canadian Pacific
DBS	DB Schenker
DHR	Darjeeling Himalayan Railway
DR	Deutsche Reichsbahn (German State Railroad)
EWS	English, Welsh & Scottish Railway
FS	Ferrovie dello Stato (State Railways) (Italy)
4LCL	44422 Locomotive Co. Ltd.
GNER	Great North Eastern Railway
GWR	Great Western Railway
GWT	Great Western Trains
JLV	Jídelní a Lůžkové Vozy (Dining and Sleeping Car Co.) (ČD)
JŽ	Jugoslavenske Željeznice (Yugoslav Railways)
K&ESR	Kent & East Sussex Railway
KSR	Kalka-Simla Railway

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LCR	London & Continental Railways
LMS	London, Midland & Scottish Railway
NFR	North East Frontier Railway (IR)
NK	Nankai Koya Railway
NSRS	North Staffordshire Railway Society
NYMR	North Yorkshire Moors Railway
NXEC	National Coast Express East Coast
RFD	Railfreight Distribution
SAR	South African Railways
SJ	Statens Järnvägar (Swedish State Railways)
SLM	Stewarts & Lloyds Minerals
SNCB	Société nationale des chemins de fer Belges/Nationale Maatschappij der Belgische Spoorwegen (Belgian National Railways)
SNCF	Société nationale des chemins de fer Français (French National Railways)
TER	Towada Electric Railway
VCC	Virgin Cross Country

RAIL EQUIPMENT

B	Buffet
BL	Buffet Lounge
C	Coach
Cfl	Cafe Lounge
CX	Coach Baggage
d	Diesel
dd	Equipment deadheading
DMU	Diesel Multiple Unit train
DTC	Driving Trailer Coach
DVT	Driving Van Trailer
E	Engine
e	Electric
EMU	Electric Multiple Unit train
ex-	Formerly

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m	Self-propelled multiple-unit train
OBS	Open Observation
OL	Observation Lounge/Saloon
PC	Power Car Coach
R	Restaurant
RMB	Restaurant Miniature Buffet
S	Sleeper
SV	Service Vehicle (Kitchen/Guard/Toilet)
s	Steam
T	Couchette
X	Baggage/Generator/Guard

TRAIN MARKETING NAMES

AVE	Alta Velocidad Española (High Speed Spain)
EC	EuroCity
EN	Euro Nacht/Notte/Night/Nuit
E225	Electric 225
HST	High Speed Train
IC	Intercity
ICE	Inter City Express
LP	Lokalni Potniški (Local Passenger)
R	Regionale
RV	Regionale Veloce (Fast Regional)
TGV	Train à grande vitesse (High Speed Train)
TLK	Twoje Linie Kolejowe (Your Railway Lines)

SLEEPING ACCOMMODATIONS

dc	Double-berth compartment
qc	Quadruple-berth compartment
tc	Triple-berth compartment

EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS

ABB	ASEA Brown Boveri
ABH	Ausbesserungs Werke (Halberstadt)
ADT	ADtranz
ALCO	American Locomotive Co.
ALS	Alstom
ASEA	Allm��nna Svenska Electriska Aktiebolaget
BBC	Brown Boveri
BBD	Bombardier
BR	British Rail
BREL	British Rail Engineering Ltd.
CLW	Chittaranjan Locomotive Works
CRL	Central Railway Locomotive Shop
CSR	China South Locomotive & Rolling Stock Corp.
DLW	Diesel Locomotive Works
DWA	Deutsche Waggonbau AG
EP	Electroputere
FF	Fiat Ferroviaria
FHI	Fuji Heavy Industries
FR	Festiniog Railway
GECAL	GEC-Alstom
GVG	Ganz-M��VAG
GWRW	Great Western Railway Works
HCP	H. Cegielski (Pozna��)
HIT	Hitachi
HT	Henschel Thyssen
ICF	Integral Coach Factory (Chennai)
J-TREC	Japan Transport Engineering Co.
KHI	Kawasaki Heavy Industries
KS	Kinki Sharyo
KON	Kon��car
MC	Metropolitan Cammell

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MHI	Mitsubishi Heavy Industries
NBL	North British Locomotive Co.
NS	Nippon Sharyo
NT	Niigata Tekkō
PFLP	Pierwsza Fabryka Lokomotyw w Polsce
PFW	Państwowa Fabryka Wagonów
SAJC	Société Anonyme John Cockerill
SFT	Softronic
ŠKD	Škodovy Závody (Skoda Works)
SLR	Sri Lanka Railways
SMT	Siemens Transportation
TCC	Tōkyū Car Corp.

COUNTRIES

B-H	Bosnia-Herzegovina
CR	Czech Republic
Cro.	Croatia
Eng.	England
Ger.	Germany
H.K.	Hong Kong
Hung.	Hungary
Ind.	India
It.	Italy
Jpn	Japan
Pol.	Poland
Rom.	Romania
Scot.	Scotland
S.L.	Sri Lanka
Slo.	Slovenia
Wal.	Wales

ALTERNATIVE VERSION OF NAMES

Bruxelles/Brussel	Brussels
Bucureşti	Bucharest
Chennai	Madras
Dana/Donau	Danube
Firenze	Florence
Ghum	Ghoom
København	Copenhagen
Kolkota	Calcutta
Kraków	Cracow
Kyiv	Kiev
Milano	Milan
Moskva	Moscow
Mughalsarai	Moghulsarai, Mughal Sarai, etc.
Mumbai	Bombay
München	Munich
Nanu Oya	Nanu-Oya or Nanuoya
Oświęcim	Auschwitz
Padova	Padua
Praha	Prague
Roma	Rome
Sankt Peterburg	St. Petersburg
Simla	Shimla
Tangalle	Tangalla
Thessaloniki	Thessalonica
Varanasi	Benares
Venezia	Venice
Warszawa	Warsaw
Wien	Vienna

SAMPLE ENTRY

21 APR:**HŽ-MÁV 205 [RIJEKA] ZAGREB-BUDAPEST DÉLI Agram**

Ee	[HŽ]	ZAGREB-GYÉKÉNYES [1141 303]
Ee		GYÉKÉNYES-BUDAPEST [431 337]
C*	[3]	[HŽ]
C	[5]	[HŽ] ZAGREB-KOPRIVINCA [OSIJEK]
R		GYÉKÉNYES-BUDAPEST
C	[4]	"
C	[6]	[KESZTHELY] BALATONSZENTGYÖRGY-BUDAPEST
Ee		"

To **BRATISLAVA**, Slovakia, via Budapest, Sighișoara and Wien, departing 15 minutes late at 1015, arriving Déli (meaning "South") station 40 minutes late at 1715, including stops at Križevci, Koprivnica, Gyékényes (Hung.), Balatonszentgyörgy and Székesfehérvár [**equipment MÁV unless indicated otherwise**]; * We occupied one of three clean and comfortable HŽ Coaches; * 352 km in 7 hrs, or 50 km/h (220 mls/31 mph); * No. 431 337 (GVG, 1963-82; ex-V43 337); * Cook's tables show originating Ljubljana & Restaurant originating Zagreb; * Split of MÁV Coaches originating Gyékényes & Keszthely assumed but totalled 10; * By Metró Line 2 direct to Keleti (East) station.

Explanations:

21 APR:

- departure date;

HŽ-MÁV 205

- service providers were Hrvatske Željeznice (Croatian Railways) and Magyar Államvasutak (Hungarian State Railways); train number 205;

[RIJEKA] ZAGREB-BUDAPEST

- segment travelled, Zagreb to Budapest, Déli station (train originating at Rijeka);

DÉLI

- name of train;

Agram

Ee [HŽ] ZAGREB-GYÉKÉNYES
[1141 303] • Croatian Locomotive No. 1141 303 originating at Zagreb and terminating at border point of Gyékényes (the “e” indicating Electric);

Ee GYÉKÉNYES-BUDAPEST
[431 337] • Hungarian Locomotive No. 431 337 originating at Gyékényes and terminating at Budapest (all equipment being MÁV Hungarian unless indicated otherwise);

C* [3] [HŽ]
C [5] [HŽ] ZAGREB-
KOPRIVINCA [OSIJEK]
R GYÉKÉNYES-BUDAPEST
C [4] “
C [6] [KESZTHELY] BALA-
TONSZENTGYÖRGY-
BUDAPEST
Ee “ • three Croatian Coaches running through from Rijeka to Budapest (the **Bold** & * indicating we occupied one of these cars);

• five Croatian Coaches running from Zagreb to Osijek, switched out of this train at Koprivinca;

• Hungarian Restaurant car attached at border for Budapest;

• four Hungarian Coaches likewise;

• six Hungarian Coaches originating at Keszthely and running to Budapest, attached to this train at Balatonszentgyörgy;

• one Hungarian Locomotive likewise

* 352 km in 7 hrs, or 50 km/h
(220 mls/31 mph) • distance travelled, elapsed time, and average speed in kilometres (*and miles*);

* No. 431 337 (GVG, 1963-82;
(ex-V43 337) • Locomotive built by Ganz-MÁVAG, during this production run, formerly numbered V43 337.

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THE 2010's



2010's-2: Darjeeling Himalayan Railway 0-4-0ST No. 805, IRON SHERPA, Ghum station (2016/04/18) [SANDRA DAWES].

*ENGLAND/WALES/SCOTLAND/FRANCE
ITALY/SLOVENIA/CROATIA/BOSNIA-
HERZEGOVINA/HUNGARY/CZECH
REPUBLIC/ROMANIA/AUSTRIA
SLOVAKIA/POLAND/GER-
MANY/INDIA/SRI LANKA
JAPAN/HONG KONG*



[Sources: arriva, VT: itravelnet.com; bluebell-railway.co.uk; cd.cz; cfr.ro; cnl: cacherdealz.de; wiki/Croatian Railways; wiki/CrossCountry; db.de; eastcoast.co.uk; wiki/Enoden; FGW, FTPE: firstgroup.com/scotrail; fr.wiki/Fichier: Eurostar logo; FR, WHR: "upgrade" ticket; JR: westjr.co.jp/global/en; londonmidland.com; mav-start.hu; wiki/MTR; nvr.org.uk; oebb.at; [helspl.wiki/Koleje Wielkopolskie](http://helspl.wiki/Koleje_Wielkopolskie); wiki/Ōigawa_Railway_Ōigawa_Main_Line; wiki/PKP Intercity; wiki/Przewozy Regionalne; scotrail.co.uk; wiki/Shonan_Monorail; southernrailway.com; wiki/SL M-Ticket; wiki/South West Trains; spt.co.uk; svr.co.uk; slovakrail.sk; wiki/Thello; trenitalia.com; zeleznice.si; ŽFBH: photo of loco; ŽRS: photo of coach; wiki/Indian Railways]

OVERALL CONTEXT

Travelling in Sri Lanka by train will teach you a lot about people, as well as about yourself. Don't be scared. Sri Lanka is safe if you are not foolish and, if you are foolish, some kindly soul will come to your rescue. You are sure to find rail travel in Sri Lanka much more fun than in India, or even in your home country.

Royston Ellis
(“*Rail Travel Two Decades Ago*”, 5)

Our 2010's holidays were made from our usual Edmonton base, and respectively were in celebration of Sandra's official retirement the day before we departed for Europe in 2013, and perhaps a desire to visit more exotic locales in 2016 and 2019 – namely, India, Sri Lanka (Sandra having spent four months there back in the day, on an exchange program called Canada World Youth), Japan and Hong Kong. The above quotation speaks to rail travel in one south Asian country, and takes a shot at such travel in another.

In the United Kingdom, the rail industry continued to experience great difficulty throughout the second decade of the 21st century. The national government still owned the infrastructure, which was managed by Network Rail on its behalf. “Directly Operated Trains” was established to operate several failed passenger franchises which no private company wanted, the biggest one being East Coast, formed after National Express East Coast walked away in 2009. (Virgin Rail Group subsequently took over in 2015, but the government had to step back in during 2018.) So many franchises traded hands that it was

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difficult to keep up. Planning for a network of high-speed lines connecting London with the Midlands and north of England proceeded, but faced serious opposition from land owners in particular. On the freight side, Deutsche Bahn-owned DB Schenker took over English, Welsh & Scottish Railway (later called DB Cargo), while other companies still provided niche services. Leasing companies continued to own much of the carriage and locomotive fleet.

On the Continent, European Union policy still required that new entrants, such as Romania and Croatia, split their railways into infrastructure and operating entities, in some cases leading to spinoffs of regional services to provincially funded operators. This led to some new passenger and freight "open access" services, both within countries and internationally. By 2013, the timings of *Eurostar* trains had been reduced to around 2 hours between London and Bruxelles/Brussel, and 2 hours 15 minutes between London and Paris, utilizing a new international terminal at St. Pancras station and high-speed line within England. The French completed their *Train à Grande Vitesse* (TGV) Perpignan-Figueres line in 2010, connecting at the latter point with a Spanish *Alta Velocidad Española* (AVE) line to Barcelona and Madrid. Société nationale des chemins de fer Français (*French National Railways*) completed its Est line to Strasbourg in 2016, and two extensions of the Atlantique line opened in 2017. In Germany, the Köln-Aachen (for Bruxelles/Brussel) high-speed line was completed in 2011, and the full München-Berlin line opened in 2017.

Where overnight trains were concerned, Sleeping car services continued to be provided by state owned railways, consortia of the latter at the start of the decade, or by private-public partnerships such as Thello, which operated the old *Artesia* train between Paris and Venezia. *Euro Notte/Nacht/Night/Nuit* (as well as *NachtZug*) trains provided overnight trains equipped with new or refurbished Sleepers. However, Deutsche Bahn eliminated all City Night Line services by the end of 2016, having discontinued routes between Berlin/København and Paris in 2014. (Other service providers did pick up some routes.) In Britain, by the end of the decade, outmoded Sleeping cars were still offered between London and both Scotland and the West Country, by Serco Group and First Great Western, respectively.

Steam tourist lines abounded in Britain, most notably the reopened Welsh Highland between Porthmadog and Caernarfon in northern Wales, under the management of adjacent Festiniog Railway. Steam-hauled regular trains ran between Poznań and Wolsztyn in western Poland, operated by the regional Koleje Wielkopolskie (*Greater Poland Railway*).

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Finally, rail passes continued to be essential for our way of travelling. In 2013, we used these first-class passes: • 21-day Eurail "Global" (boosted to 24 days at no extra charge, through a promotion); • 5-day "Eurail One Country" for Poland; and • 15-day BritRail "Consecutive". (The Global pass was valid everywhere on the Continent we went, except Poland and Bosnia-Herzegovina.)

As far as India was concerned, Indian Railways continued as a traditional state owned enterprise, carrying huge numbers of intercity and commuter passengers, given the population (1.3 billion) and expansive geography. Most track was 1,676 mm (5' 6"), usually double, signalled and well-ballasted. What we would call "divisions" were styled as railways, determined on a regional basis. Infrastructure and operations were combined. Most equipment had been built domestically, but tended to be old and, outside of some recently introduced services, below European or even North American standards. There was nothing resembling a true high-speed train, and the typical long-distance express featured many stops and low average speeds. Sleeping and Couchette-like cars were included in most overnight trains, in a multitude of classes. Obtaining accurate information about trains and onboard services – both beforehand and while in the country – proved a challenge, despite English being widely used. Indrail Passes were available in various configurations, and included the cost of day seats and overnight berths. We used the 21-day "AC" (for Air Conditioned) version.

Sri Lanka Railways was also a state owned enterprise, handling large intercity and commuter traffic, in a small country of 30 million. All track was Indian gauge. Key segments were double tracked and signalled, but most lines were single, used a "Lock & Key" system to control track occupancy, and were minimally ballasted. Infrastructure and operations were combined, but private companies provided what were styled first-class cars on certain trains. Outside of some units introduced in recent years, most equipment tended to be old and substandard, much having been built in India, China, and even Canada. Compared to India, trains between the larger cities were slow. Traditional "mail" trains ran on key longer distance routes, complete with Sleeping cars, but despite the wide use of English, getting information about them (or anything else) was frustrating, online or in person. Finally, Sri Lanka Railways did not provide a Eurail or Indrail-like pass for visitors.

In Japan, there were seven private "operating companies" formed out of the old Japanese National Railways. Shares of the largest companies – JR Central, JR East and JR West – were privately held, while those of the others remained, of necessity, with the government. Unlike Europe, the passenger railways took care of their track, and made it available to the freight company (JR Freight) as needed. Passengers enjoyed a high degree of cooperation, coordination and honoring of through tickets. In

LA GRANDE ALLURE: 2010's

addition to the operating companies, there were many private railways which ran their own trains over their own tracks. Of course, Japan was famous for its high-speed Shinkansen lines and trains, operating on world standard gauge, while the old lines were mainly 1,067 millimetre (3 ft 6 in). Essentially, this was a passenger-rail system, with freight playing a minor role. Most lines were at least double track and electrified, and featured multiple unit trains. Stations normally were centrally located and highly developed as retail, food and entertainment centres, thus contributing greatly to railway revenue. Customer service was of the highest level where staff, signage and announcements (ubiquitously in English as well as Japanese) were concerned. A wide array of rail passes was available, nationally (Japan Rail Pass) and on the various railways, offering great value for foreign tourists. Some railways allowed full online booking from abroad with rail passes, but others did not, meaning you had to wait and take your chances upon arriving in the country. There were a number of preserved steam operations, such as the Ōigawa Steam Railway operated by Daitetsu. Sleeping car services had been reduced to just one (albeit with two branches), operated by JR West.

Hong Kong's confined nature, geographically, meant that most rail lines were of a high-volume commuter/regional nature, thus the operator's name, Mass Transit Railway. There were intercity trains to Guangzhou in China proper, and overnights featuring Sleeping cars to Beijing and Shanghai. A new high-speed line opened in 2018 between Kowloon (Hong Kong) and Guangzhou.

TRIP DETAILS

On our three holidays during this decade, we took 145 train trips and travelled 25,275 kilometres (15,774 miles), including: 5,341 km (3,333 mls) in Japan; 4,923 km (3,072 mls) in India; 4,445 km (2,849 mls) in the British Isles; 1,737 (1,084 mls) in Sri Lanka; 1,615 km (1,010 mls) in France; 1,194 km (745 mls) in Poland; 1,078 km (673 mls) in Bosnia-Herzegovina; 905 km (565 mls) in Germany; 887 km (554 mls) in Hungary; 775 km (484 mls) in Italy; 736 km (459 mls) in Romania; 698 km (436 mls) in Czech Republic; 435 km (271 mls) in Croatia; 266 km (166 mls) in Slovenia; 84 km (52 mls) in Austria; 64 km (41 mls) in Slovakia; and 24 km (15 mls) in Hong Kong.

Number of trips by service provider: **15** – Indian Railways (IR) and JR East; **13** – Sri Lanka Railways (SL); **10** – JR Central (JRC) and JR West (JRW); **7** – ScotRail (SCR); **6** – Daitetsu (DTS); **4** – Arriva Trains Wales and Trenitalia; **3** – Regional Transport (Poland), Severn Valley, Slovenian Railways (SŽ), South West Trains, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, and Toyama Chihō, **2** – Czech (ČD), East Coast,

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Enoshima Electric, Eurostar International (EI), Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (ŽFBH), Greater Poland (KW), Hungarian State (MÁV), JR Hokkaidō, JR Kyūshū (JRK); Kurobe Gorge, Mass Transit Railway (MTR); Nene Valley, Polish State Railways Intercity, Serbian Republic (Bosnia) (ŽRS), Southern Railway and Welsh Highland (WHR); 1 – Bluebell, City Night Line (CNL), CrossCountry, Festiniog, First Great Western, First TransPennine, London Midland, Romanian (CFR), Shōnan Monorail, Thello and Virgin.

PLACES VISITED

*(Note: * indicates by non-rail means)*

England: Ashford (Mid.), Birmingham, Bridgnorth, Chaddesley Corbett*, Doncaster, East Grinstead, Haywards Heath, Highley, Kidderminster, London, Manchester, Ombersley*, Peterborough, Scunthorpe*, Sheffield Park, Staines, Wansford, Wolverhampton and Worcester. **Scotland:** Aberdeen, Alcaig*, Bishopton, Conon Bridge, Clydebank*, Dunlop, Edinburgh, Erskine*, Glasgow, Inverness and Stonehaven. **Wales:** Blaenau Festiniog, Caernarfon, Llandudno Jct., Machynlleth and Porthmadog.

Austria: Wien. **Bosnia-Herzegovina:** Sarajevo. **Croatia:** Dubrovnik*, Ploče and Zagreb. **Czech Republic:** Praha. **France:** Paris. **Germany:** Berlin. **Hungary:** Budapest. **Italy:** Gorizia, Padova, and Venezia. **Poland:** Kraków, Oświęcim, Poznań, Warszawa and Wolsztyn. **Romania:** Sighișoara. **Slovakia:** Bratislava. **Slovenia:** Jesenice, Ljubljana and Nova Gorica.

India: Agra, Chennai, Darjeeling, Delhi, Fatehpur Sikri, Ghum, Kalka, Kolkata, Mughalsarai, New Jalpaiguri, Simla and Varanasi. **Sri Lanka:** Badulla, Colombo, Dambulla*, Galle, Goyambokka*; Haputale, Habarana, Kandy, Matara, Nanu Oya, Nuwara Eliya*, Palugaswewa, Sigiriya* and Tangalle*.

Japan: Akita; Aomori; Bijodaira*; Diakanbō*; Enoshima; Fuji; Fujisawa; Hakata; Hiroshima; Kakegawa; Kamakura; Kanaya; Kanazawa; Kawane Koyama; Keyakidiara; Kita Kamakura; Kurobe; Kurobecko*; Kurobidaira*; Kyōto; Morioka; Murodō*; Muroran; Nagano; Nagasaki; Nara; Nikkō; Ōfuna; Ōgizawa*; Ōmiya; Ōsaka; Sapporo; Senzu; Tateyama; Tōkyō; Toyama; Unazuki; Unazukionsen; Utsunomiya; and Yokohama.

Hong Kong: Hong Kong Island; Kowloon; Lo Wu; Mui Wo* and Ngong Ping*.

PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY TRIPS

2013 – SŽ LP4214, Nova Gorica to Jesenice (through the beautiful Slovenian Alps, albeit on a nondescript Diesel Multiple Unit train); **HŽ (Croatian Railways)-ŽRS-ŽFBH B397**, Zagreb to Sarajevo (through a beautiful but still divided country showing much evidence of the 1991-95 war; over three railway companies, two of them Bosnian); **ŽFBH-HŽ B391**, Sarajevo to Ploče (crossing highly scenic, mountainous terrain down to the Adriatic Sea, in decrepit coaches donated by the Swedes); **MÁV-CFR Ister**, Budapest Keleti to Sighișoara (in a refurbished Romanian Sleeping car featuring a nice washroom and shower in our compartment); **KW Os777324**, Poznań Główny to Wolsztyn (on a regularly scheduled local train hauled by a Polish State Railways steam engine, serviced at a round house featuring a plethora of such locomotives); **CNL Perseus**, Berlin Hauptbahnhof to Paris Est (overnight to the French capital on a German train, so as to catch a *Eurostar* back to London, our compartment again having a shower); **EI 9010**, Paris Nord to London St. Pancras International (non-stop through the Channel Tunnel by *Eurostar*, with a nice, at-seat lunch); **WHR 1310**, Caernarfon to Porthmadog (occupying rear seats in a newly built "Pullman" observation car, in the company of a family of friendly Welsh-speakers as Snowdonia Mountain passed by, our train powered by a former narrow-gauge, Garratt steam locomotive formerly operated by South African Railways); and **SCR Caledonian Sleeper**, London Euston to Aberdeen (overnight on one of ScotRail's two Sleeper trains, this one involving Aberdeen, Inverness and Fort William portions combined as far as Edinburgh).

2016 – IR Gatimaan Express, Agra Cantt to Delhi Hazrat Nizamuddin (nice equipment and good service on the fastest train in the country, but nothing approaching high-speed); **IR Shivalik Deluxe Express (Kalka-Simla Railway)**, Simla to Kalka (decent meal in an otherwise ratty 1st class, narrow-gauge car during the evening darkness, station staff guiding our way with torches through each station); **IR Dibrugarh Rajdhani Express**, Mughalsarai to New Jalpaiguri (stepping from a rat-infested platform into a 21-car, all-Sleeping car train for a long run through the Indian night); **IR No. 52548 (Darjeeling Himalayan Railway)**, Darjeeling to Ghum & return (short ride on a tiny, street-running steam train, no less than four such engines being serviced across the road from Darjeeling station); **SL Podi Menike (No. 1005)**, Kandy to Badulla (climbing the "Main Line", then descending through tunnels and across impressive viaducts into the terminating station); **SL No. 1126**, Nanu Oya to Haputale (riding 3rd class on a mixed train running a couple of hours late); **SL No. 1596**, Haputale to Nanu Oya (watching as a work gang hitched a ride by attaching their "hand-trolleys" to our Observation Saloon carriage, by means of ropes); and **SL Podi Menike (No. 1006)**, Nanu Oya to Colombo Fort (being treated to music and songs by an extended Sri Lankan family who had reserved all of the seats in

the 1st class Coach, except ours).

2019 – JRC Nozomi (No. 305), Shin-Yokohama to Shin-Ōsaka (riding on the fastest service type operating over the original Tōkaidō Shinkansen, in a standard, 16-car, N700A Electric Multiple Unit train); **DTS No. 101**, Shin-Kanaya to Senzu (our only steam-train experience in Japan, over the Ōigawa Steam Railway, behind a 2-6-4T tank engine; enlivened by an entertaining conductor and sales ladies); **JRK Kamome (No. 35)**, Hakata to Nagasaki (excellent forward viewing right behind the driver; beautiful evening scenery over some single track segments); **JRW Sakura (No. 548)**, Hakata to Shin-Ōsaka (lots of interesting scenery, despite considerable tunnelling in an 8-car, N700 Shinkansen, at the highest average speed of our Japanese travels: 243 kilometres [151 miles] per hour); **Kurobe Gorge Railway**, Unazuki to Keyakidaira (two small electric locomotives hauling 13 cars up into the scenic Japanese Alps, the first six open to the elements, the last seven enclosed and heated); **JRE Yamabiko (No. 141)**, Tōkyō to Utsunomiya (on a Tōhoku Shinkansen service featuring two trains hooked together, a 10-car, E-5 Yamabiko set destined for Sendai, and a 7-car, E-6 set *Tsubasa* for the Yamagata "Mini-Shinkansen"); **JRE**, Nikkō to Utsunomiya (returning from this temple & shrine city through picturesque towns and beside numerous rice paddies); **JRE Komachi (No. 9)**, Morioka to Akita (slow running over another mini-Shinkansen, using an old right-of-way regauged to standard); **JRE Rizōto (Resort) Shirakami**, Akita to Aomori (one of several "Joyful" trains designed to be ridden just for the fun of it, this one featuring beautiful seaside and mountain scenery); and **MTR (1015)**, Kowloon Hung Hom to Lo Wu (a standard Hong Kong commuter/regional train from Kowloon up to the border with mainland China).

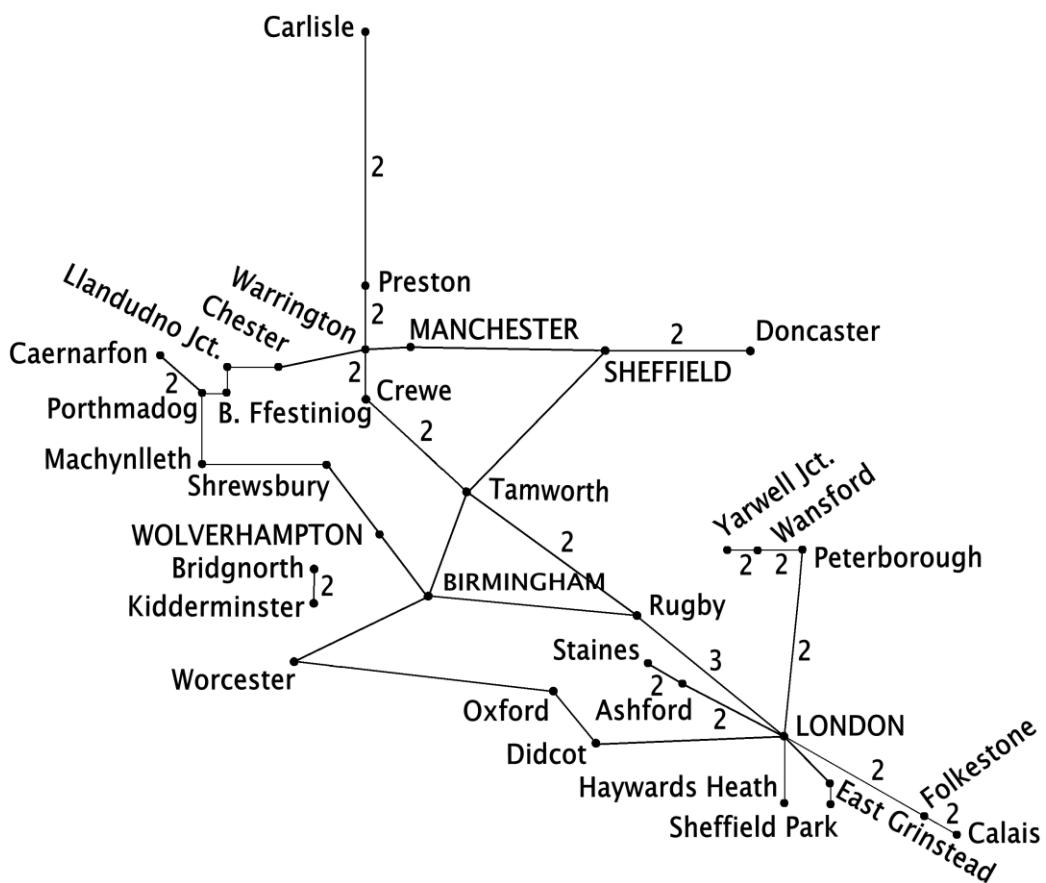
TIMINGS

... are taken from detailed trip cards, railway timetables, station-display boards, and websites, plus various editions of Thomas Cook and European Rail Timetable Ltd.'s *European Rail Timetable* (these variously including overseas sections for Hong Kong, India, Japan and Sri Lanka).

ROUTE SCHEMATIC 1A: BRITISH ISLES

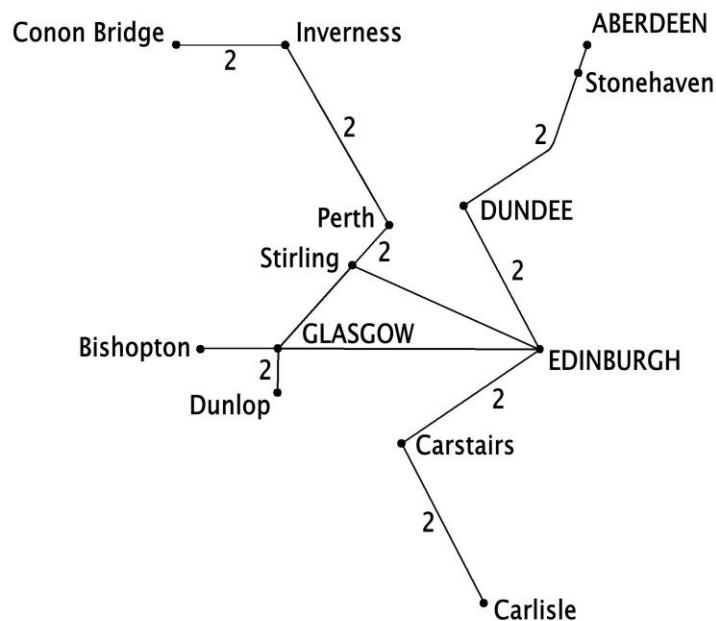
ENGLAND & WALES

**[Showing one-way trips by route segment
(one such trip unless shown otherwise)]**



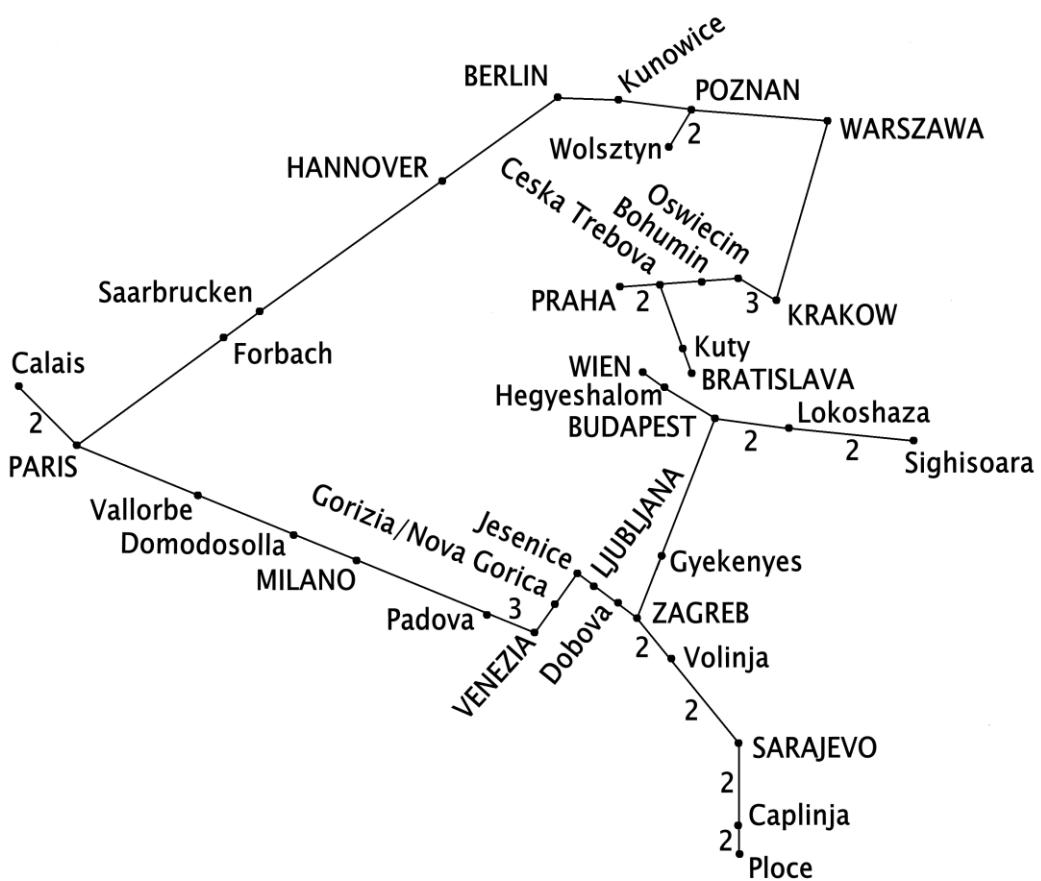
ROUTE SCHEMATIC 1B: BRITISH ISLES
SCOTLAND

*[Showing one-way trips by route segment
(one such trip unless shown otherwise)]*



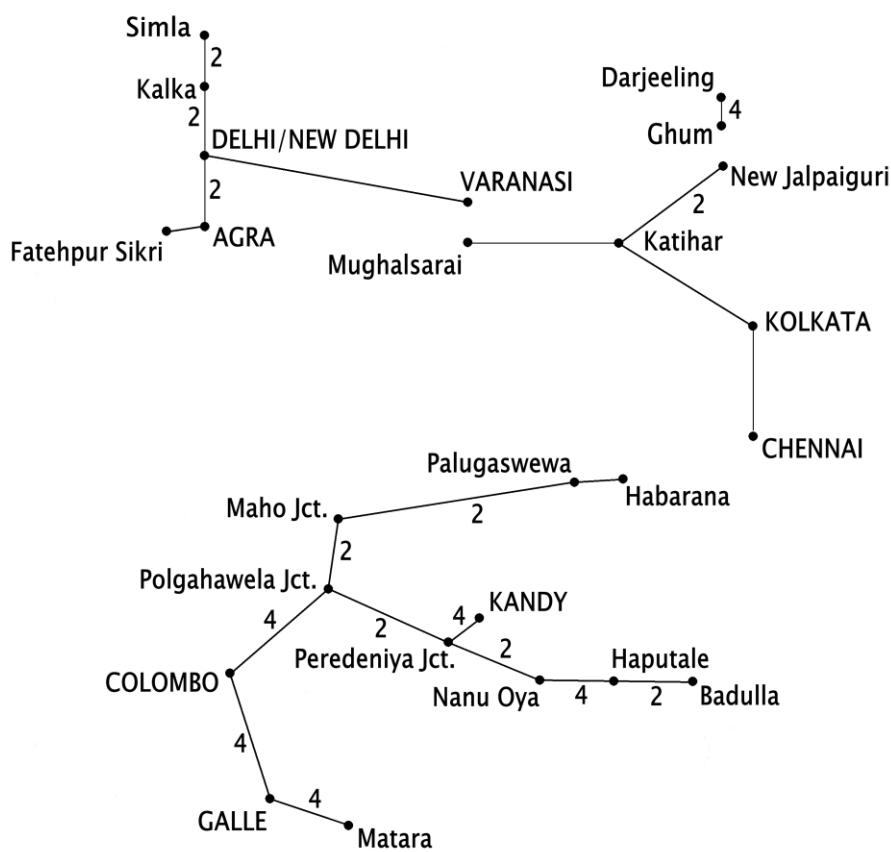
ROUTE SCHEMATIC 2: THE CONTINENT

*[Showing one-way trips by route segment
(one such trip unless shown otherwise)]*



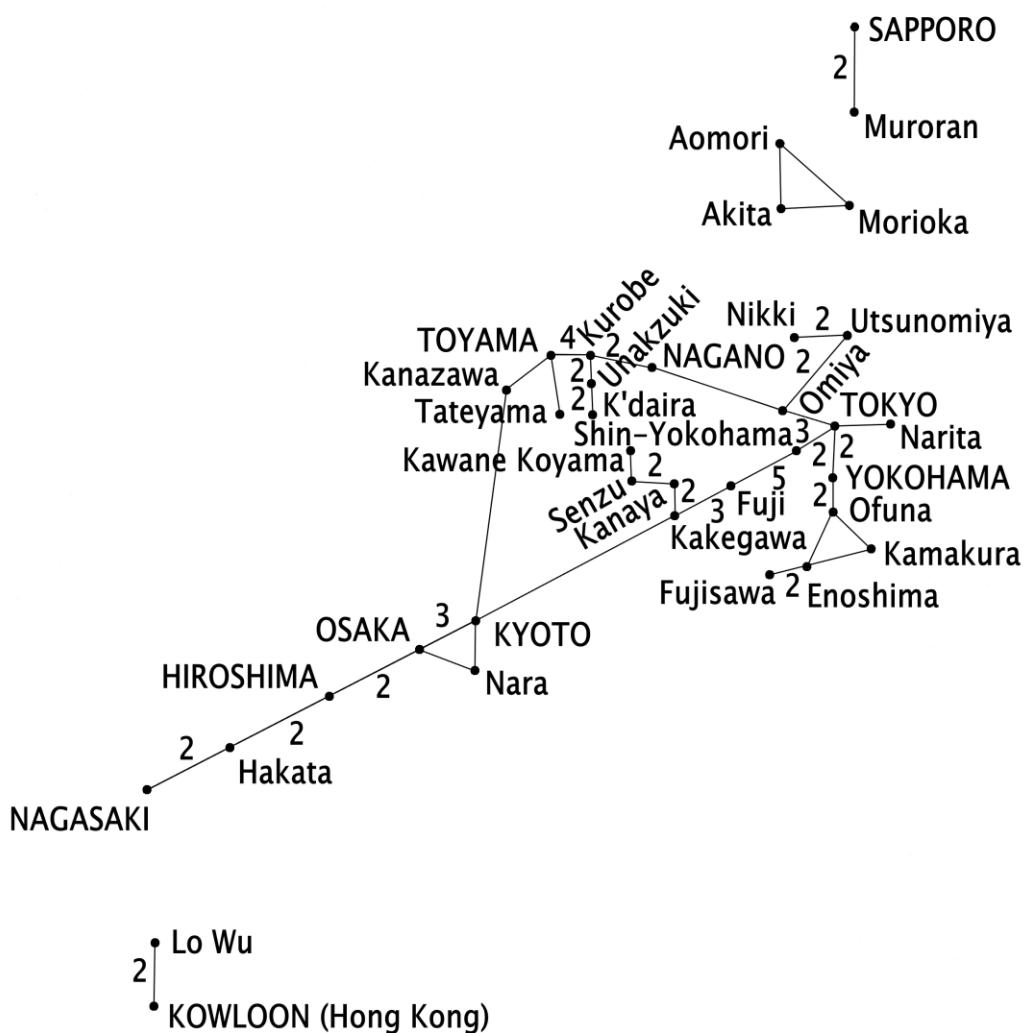
ROUTE SCHEMATIC 3: INDIA & SIR LANKA

*[Showing one-way trips by route segment
(one such trip unless shown otherwise)]*



ROUTE SCHEMATIC 4: JAPAN & HONG KONG

[Showing one-way trips by route segment (one such trip unless shown otherwise) (Kawane Koyama-Senzu, 2) (K'daira=Keyakidaira) (Unazuki/Unazukionsen)]



2013

*ENGLAND/SCOTLAND/WALES
FRANCE/ITALY/SLOVENIA
CROATIA/BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA
HUNGARY/ROMANIA/AUSTRIA
SLOVAKIA/CZECH REPUBLIC
POLAND/GERMANY*



[Eurail Global Pass (2013/04/10)] [SANDRA DAWES].

SYNOPSIS

This was my fourteenth overseas holiday (ninth with Sandra), featuring just short of three weeks in Britain (split among England, Scotland and Wales) and a bit more than three on the Continent (primarily Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Romania and Poland). Our primary home bases were at: the Brook Green Hotel in Hammersmith, west London; Margaret Dyke & Eva Young's place in Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire; Richard & Sylvia Beardshaw's country home near Chaddesley Corbett, Worcestershire, and Alison and David Stirling's suburban home in Erskine, Renfrewshire, Scotland. The Eurailpass shown on the opening page reflects our use of this long-standing travel device, by now encompassing 24 countries.

Trips taken: We took 62, covering 13,162 kilometres (*8,214 miles*), 35 in the British Isles, 7 in Poland, 4 each in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Italy, 3 each in France and Slovenia, 2 each in Czech Republic and Hungary, and 1 each in Germany and Romania. Fifty-five of the trips were in my "Coaches, Pullmans & Lounges" category and 7 in "Sleeping & Couchette Cars", with the latter accounting for 45% of the total distance. Thirty-eight were on locomotive hauled, compared to 24 on self-propelled trains, the latter covering only 15% of that distance. There were 10 trips behind steam, 8 in Britain and 2 in Poland.

Equipment units: 475, made up of 60 Locomotives & Related Units and 415 cars (Coaches, Pullmans & Lounges, 332; Sleeping & Couchette Cars, 58; Restaurant & Other Meal Cars, 22; Baggage & Miscellaneous Cars, 3).

BRITISH ISLES

Places visited in England: Ashford (Mid.), Birmingham, Bridgnorth, Chaddesley Corbett*, Doncaster, East Grinstead, Haywards Heath, Highley, Kidderminster, London, Manchester, Ombersley*, Peterborough, Scunthorpe*, Sheffield Park, Staines, Wansford, Wolverhampton and Worcester. **Scotland:** Aberdeen, Alcaig*, Bishopton, Conon Bridge, Clydebank*, Dunlop, Edinburgh, Erskine*, Glasgow, Inverness and Stonehaven. **Wales:** Blaenau Festiniog, Caernarfon, Llandudno Jct., Machynlleth and Porthmadog. (**Note:** * indicates by non-rail means.)

Noteworthy rail trips: *ScotRail Caledonian Sleeper*, London Euston to Aberdeen; *Virgin Trains 1323*, London Euston to Wolverhampton; *Welsh Highland (WHR) 1050*, Caernarfon to Porthmadog; *Festiniog 1015*, Porthmadog to Blaenau Festiniog; *Severn Valley 1035*, Kidderminster to Bridgnorth; *Nene Valley 1100*, Peterborough to Wansford; *Bluebell 1100*, Sheffield Park to East Grinstead.

Fastest average speed: *East Coast 1003*, London King's Cross to Peterborough: 158 km/h (99 mph). **Slowest:** *FR 1015*, Porthmadog to Blaenau Festiniog, & *WHR 1050*, Porthmadog to Caernarfon, both 18 km/h (11 mph).

Memorable non-rail trips: by automobile from: • Chaddesley Corbett to Ombersley and Worcester (Eng.); • Aberdeen via Dunnottar Castle to Stonehaven (Scot.); and • Erskine to Mugdock Castle ruins, Clydebank and return (Scot.).

THE CONTINENT

Places visited in Austria: Wien. **Bosnia-Herzegovina:** Sarajevo. **Croatia:** Dubrovnik*, Ploče and Zagreb. **Czech Republic:** Praha. **France:** Paris. **Germany:** Berlin. **Hungary:** Budapest. **Italy:** Gorizia, Padova, and Venezia. **Poland:** Kraków, Oświęcim, Poznań, Warszawa and Wolsztyn. **Romania:** Sighișoara. **Slovakia:** Bratislava. **Slovenia:** Jesenice, Ljubljana and Nova Gorica. (Note: * indicates by non-rail means.)

Noteworthy rail trips: *Thello EN221*, Paris Lyon to Padova; *Slovenian Railways (SŽ) LP4214*, Nova Gorica to Jesenice; *SŽ Mimara*, Ljubljana to Zagreb; *Croatian Railways (HŽ)-Serbian Republic (Bosnia) Railways-Federation of Bosnia & Herzegovina Railways (ŽFBH) B397*, Zagreb to Sarajevo; *ŽFBH-HŽ B391*, Sarajevo to Ploče; *HŽ-Hungarian State Railways (MÁV) Agram*, Zagreb to Budapest Déli; *MÁV-Romanian Railways Ister*, Budapest Keleti to Sighișoara; *Czech Railways-Polish State Railways Intercity (PKP) Silesia*, Praha Hlavní to Kraków Główny; *Regional Transport (PR) R30114*, Kraków Główny to Oświęcim; *PKP Warma*, Kraków Główny to Warszawa Centralna; *Greater Poland Railways Os777324*, Poznań Główny to Wolsztyn; *City Night Line Perseus*, Berlin Haupt to Paris Est; *Eurostar (EI) 9010*, Paris Nord to London St. Pancras International.

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Fastest average speed: *EI 9010*, London St. Pancras International to Paris Nord: 214 km/h (134 mph). **Slowest:** *PR R30421*, Oświęcim to Kraków Główny: 32 km/h (22 mph).

Memorable non-rail trips: by DDSG Blue Danube Catamaran, Wien to Bratislava.

HIGHLIGHTS!

Taking the ŽFBH-HŽ solitary train south out of Sarajevo to Mostar and Ploče, Croatia, occupying a hand-me-down, nominally first-class, Swedish Coach with spacious seats and malfunctioning toilets (the only amenity being the equivalent of an old-time North American “Newsie” selling incredibly strong coffee and not much else). No. B391 snaking through the spectacular Dinaric Alps, then along the Neretva River to the port of Ploče on the Adriatic. Also, riding the recently opened Welsh Highland Railway from Porthmadog on the Irish Sea past Snowdonia Mountain to Caernarfon and back, luxuriating in a replicated Pullman observation car on a train powered by a former South African Railways, 2-6-2+2-6-2, narrow-gauge Garratt locomotive.

MILESTONE

The Eurailpass family had grown to include major railways in 24 European Union (EU) countries, recent additions including Czech Republic, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia. Of the other continental nations in which we rode trains, neither Bosnia-Herzegovina nor Poland yet participated, the latter on the outside despite being a full member of the EU.



[From cover of Eurail Pass Guide, 2013]

TRIPS AND TRAIN COMPOSITION

- **2-3 APR:** To **LONDON** Heathrow non-stop overnight on an Air Canada, 1980's-era, Boeing 767-300, then by *Heathrow Express* from Terminal 3 into Paddington station and Transport for London's Hammersmith & City line to the Brook Green Hotel/Pub in Shepherd's Bush Road, Hammersmith, using 7-day "Oyster" debit cards (five nights there); * We got right into it, taking Central and Northern lines to Leicester Square that same evening to see the wonderful *Singin' in the Rain* at the Palace Theatre (reprising the 1952 Gene Kelly movie), then back by the same tube route, weary but happy.

4 APR:

SWT 1620 LONDON WATERLOO-STAINES [READING]

Cme [8]

To **ASHFORD**, Middlesex, to visit cousin Kitty Stacey and family, after taking Central and Jubilee lines to Southwark to visit the Shakespearean Globe Theatre (in a sleety snow, yet!), then Tate Modern; * Depart 1620, arrive 1653, stopping at Clapham Jct., Richmond and Feltham on a South West Trains Class 450 Blue Desiro EMU train built by Siemens; * We went via Staines because I mistakenly selected a Reading express which skipped Ashford (a bad start to our train-riding adventures!); * 31 km in 33 mins, or 56 km/h (19 mls/35 mph); * Class 450 (SMT, 2003-4).

SWT 1703 [WINDSOR & ETON?] STAINES-ASHFORD [LONDON WATERLOO]

Cme [8] [450 566 front]

Depart 1703, arrive 1706, non-stop, after which Kitty and Roger drove us to their home for supper; * 3 km in 3 mins, or 60 km/h (2 mls/37 mph).

SWT 2107 [WINDSOR & ETON?] ASHFORD-LONDON WATERLOO

Cme [4] [450 559]

Returning, depart 2107, arrive 2145, including stops at Feltham, Hounslow and Clapham Jct. (followed by Bakerloo and Central lines back to Hammersmith); * 32 km in 38 mins, or 51 km/h (20 mls/32 mph); * Next day, we took a No. 94 bus into the City, then Northern and Piccadilly lines for various purposes, ending with another musical, this one based on the 1935 Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers movie, *Top Hat*, at the Aldwych Theatre, before heading home on the Piccadilly and Central lines.

6 APR:

EC 1003 LONDON KING'S CROSS-PETERBOROUGH [ABERDEEN]

Ee [91117 *West Riding Limited*]

C* [5]

CfL

C [3]

DVT [82208]

To **WANSFORD**, Cambridgeshire, to ride the preserved Nene Valley Railway, starting with an Aberdeen-bound, East Coast express to Peterborough (access to King's Cross by Central and Piccadilly lines); * Depart 1003, arrive Peterborough 1050 non-stop, on an Electric E225 service headed by a Class 91 locomotive, with a Driving Van Trailer at the rear; * 123 km in 47 mins, or 158 km/h (77 mls/99 mph); * No. 91117 (*BREL, 1989-91; ex-BR, GNER, NXEC 91017, GNER Cancer Research UK, Commonwealth Institute*); * No. 82208 (*MC, 1988; ex-BR, GNER, NXEC*).

EAST COAST

... was a subsidiary of "Directly Operated Trains", established by the British government to run franchises cancelled because the incumbent had failed to meet its obligations or simply bowed out, and no one else was interested in taking over. It was formed in 2009 when the incumbent, National Express East Coast, walked away from its franchise, which it had won away from Great North Eastern Railway late in '07. The government's intention was to return the franchise to the private sector by 2015.



[[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Coast_\(train_operating_company\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Coast_(train_operating_company))]

NVR 1100/1330 PETERBOROUGH-WANSFORD & RETURN

Es [44422]

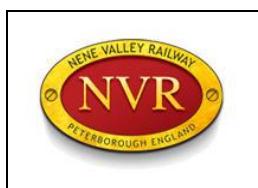
Ed [14029] [*on 1100 only*]

C [6] [**E25347, E25639, E35239, M4686, E4919, E35248**]



2010's-3: Nene Valley train arriving Peterborough 75 minutes late, led by 0-6-0 No. 44422, assisted by a diesel-hydraulic tuck-ed in behind (2013/04/06) [SANDRA DAWES].

Depart 1215, arrive 1240 (75 minutes late in both cases), stopping at Orton Mere and Ferry Meadows; * Leading the way was a 0-6-0, 4F-type freight engine running backwards, assisted by a diesel; * Returning, depart 1330, arrive 1415, via Yarwell Jct., where the engine moved to the other end, then ran frontwards – this junction being 2 km (1 ml) west of Wansford; * 10 km in 25 mins, or 24 km/h (6 mls/15 mph), returning, 12 km (7 mls); * No. 44422 (LMS, 1927; 4LCL; ex-BR, NSRS); * No. 14029 (BR, 1965; ex-D9529, SLM, NYMR, KESR); * E4919 (BR, 1962).



[nvr.org.uk]

NENE VALLEY (NVR)

... was a preserved railway operating over a former London & North Western (later London, Midland & Scottish) line joining Peterborough and Rugby. Passenger service ended in 1966, freight in '72. Based at Wansford, NVR reopened part of the line in 1977, and extended it to Yarwell Jct. in 2007, the railway being noted for its extensive collection of Continental rolling stock. We found the modest Peterborough station only after a brisk, meandering 10-minute walk from the main-line station. No. 44422 had encountered mechanical problems, requiring a rescue by a diesel-hydraulic engine which helped pull the carriages into Peterborough over an hour late. Upon arrival at Wansford, repairs were made and No. 44422 took the next departure back to Peterborough, via Yarwell Jct., on her own.

EC 1536 [LEEDS] PETERBOROUGH-LONDON KING'S CROSS

Ee [91128]

C [3]

CfL

C* [5]

DVT [82204]

Depart 1536, arrive five minutes late at 1634, on a Leeds-originating E225, this locomotive nameless in East Coast guise; * Becoming lost on the way back from the Nene Valley station, we found ourselves marooned on the wrong side of the "dual carriageway" that divides Peterborough city centre from the station (British urban and road planning at its best!); * Back in London, we took the Piccadilly Line to Leicester Square, later walked to Queen Elizabeth Hall to take in the London Philharmonic Orchestra (LPO) doing Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* (magnificent, with LPO and Trinity Boys choirs reminding us of our dear friend and LPO alumnus, Tom Clark), and finally back to our hotel by Bakerloo and Central lines; * 123 km in 58 mins, or 127 km/h (77 mls/79 mph); * Next day (Sunday), we took a No. 148 bus into the city for some sightseeing, then returned by Jubilee and Central lines to Shepherd's Bush to watch Queens Park Rangers almost defeat Wigan Athletic, taking the lead but settling for a point in injury time when they needed three to have any chance of avoiding relegation in only their second season back in the Premier League – Rangers subsequently going down while we were in Croatia, or some other, far-away country of which the English knew little (apologies to Neville Chamberlain!).



2010's-4: Eurostars lined up in St. Pancras International station, London, waiting to depart for Paris or Bruxelles/Brussel (2013/04/05) [SANDRA DAWES].

8 APR:

EI 9010 LONDON ST. PANCRAS INTERNATIONAL-PARIS NORD Eurostar

Ee [3006]

C [5]

CfL

C [6]

CfL

C* [5]

Ee [3005]

To **PADOVA**, Italy, via Paris, starting with our first-ever *Eurostar* out of St. Pancras International station (accessed by Central and Bakerloo lines); * Depart 0831, arrive seven minutes early at 1149, non-stop, powered by Class 373 electrics, these trains now provided by Eurostar International Ltd.; * After activating our Eurailpasses at Gare de Lyon, we spent the afternoon walking around Paris, using the Métro variously between Gare du Nord, Châtelet-Les Halles, Gare de Lyon and St-Germain-des-Prés (Lignes 4 & 14), dropping in on our

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favourite overpriced and haughty café, Les Deux Magots; * 492 km in 2 hrs 18 mins, or 214 km/h (307 mls/134 mph), taking into account 1-hour time difference; * Nos. 3005, 3006 (GECAL, 1992-6; LCR; ex-ES).

EUROSTAR INTERNATIONAL LTD. (EI)

... had been operating this service since 2010, owned 55% by Société nationale des chemins de fer Français (SNCF – French National Railways), 40% by London & Continental Railways, and 5% by Société nationale des chemins de fer Belges/Nationale Maatschappij der Belgische Spoorwegen (SNCB – Belgian National Railways). EI operated over track owned by rail infrastructure companies in each country, with some private investment in station and other facilities. St. Pancras International had replaced Waterloo International as London terminal in late 2007.



[fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichier:
Eurostar_logo_2011.png]

8-9 APR:

THO EN221 PARIS LYON-PADOVA [VENEZIA SANTA LUCIA] *Thello*

Ee [SNCF] [36010]

T

S [2]

R

T* [5]

Depart 1959, arrive next morning on time at 0848, calling at Dijon, Milano (It.), Verona and Vincenza via the Simplon Tunnel, an earlier *Thello* having departed for Firenze and Roma at 1914 hours – both behind SNCF 36000 series, triple-voltage electrics; * 1,023 km in 12 hrs 49 mins, or 80 km/h (638 mls/50 mph); * No. 36010 (ALS, 1997-2002); * Sleepers: FF, 1972, 13tc; ex-CIWL,FS.



2010's-5: Thello's Paris-Venezia overnight waits to depart Gare de Lyon, behind triple voltage No. 36010 (2013/04/08) [PETER DAWES].

THELLO

... was a partnership between Italian train operator, Trenitalia, and French-based private public transportation company, Veolia TransDev (part of a multinational water/waste/energy/transportation group). Its trains operated over SNCF, Schweizerische Bundesbahnen/Chemin de fer fédéraux Suisse/Ferrovie Federali Svizzere (Swiss Federal Railways), and Ferrovie dello Stato (State Railways) of Italy. Having taken over the Paris-Venezia and Paris-Roma overnight trains formerly operated by FS and SNCF under the *Artesia* brand in 2011, Thello provided Sleeping cars with 13, 3-berth compartments (sold as 1, 2 or 3 berths), and Couchettes (6-berths, but only 4 sold in some compartments, including ours). The Restaurant car was manned by LSG Sky Chefs, a Deutsche Lufthansa subsidiary. Locomotives were leased from Akiem, a component of SNCF's Geodis freight transportation and logistics division.

AN INTERESTING NIGHT ON THE LO

We slept in upper and lower berths in a 4-berth Couchette compartment this time, located in a car filled with excited high-school kids heading back to Italy. I had reserved a Sleeper compartment for the night before, but the Queens Park Rangers-Wigan football match was subsequently moved ahead a day for television purposes, meaning that I had to alter our departure for the Continent accordingly – by which time, the two Sleeping cars were sold out. We had company in the form of two young Africans from Mali, one right out of Paris, the other joining his friend at Dijon. Italian immigration officials turned up at the border and took a keen interest in these young men, checking their papers, going through their minimal baggage, and swabbing them under the chin and around the ears – presumably looking for drugs. All was in order, and they disembarked in Milano at 0530.

9 APR:

TI R5493 [VERONA PORTA NUOVA] PADOVA-VENEZIA SANTA LUCIA

C [5]

Ee *[E 464 452]*

Into **VENEZIA** for the day (after checking in at Hotel San Antonio, as during our previous 2007 visit, for one night), departing 1000, arriving 1051 on a Verona-originating “Regional” train, including a stop at Venezia Mestre; * A Class 464 electric headed this train, Trenitalia having almost 700 of these versatile units; * We spent the rest of the day travelling around on the Nos. 1, 2 and 6 *Vaporettos*, down the Canal Grande over to Lido, back to Piazza San Marco, and so on; * 37 km in 51 mins, or 44 km/h (23 mls/27 mph); * No. E 464 452 (BBD, 1997-2013).

TRENITALIA

... continued to be the train-operating division of FS, the infrastructure being handled by the Rete Ferroviaria Italiana division. This was in line with European Union policy, the theory being that rail infrastructure should be on a level playing field with other modes of transportation, while the operating side should be open to competition, domestic and international.

TI RV2245 VENEZIA SANTA LUCIA-PADOVA [BOLOGNA CENTRALE]

C [7]

Ee [E 464 320]

Returning, depart 1743, arrive 1810, on a *Regionale Veloce* (RV – fast regional) express destined for Bologna; * We spent the evening recuperating from our overnight train trip by Couchette and the Vaporetto-riding, getting lost as we ventured out in a downpour in this medieval city to find our intended restaurant – a friendly university student pointing out the way; * 37 km in 27 mins, or 82 km/h (23 mls/51 mph).

10 APR:

TI RV2224 [BOLOGNA CENTRALE] PADOVA-VENEZIA MESTRE [SANTA LUCIA]

C [10]

Ee [E 464 500]

To **LJUBLJANA**, Slovenia, via Venezia Mestre, Gorizia and Nova Gorica (Slo.), starting with another RV as far as Mestre; * Depart 0950, arrive Mestre 1004, non-stop; * 28 km in 14 mins, or 122 km/h (17 mls/76 mph).

VENEZIA TO LJUBLJANA

... was no longer possible on the traditional route travelled by the famed *Simplon-Orient* and *Direct-Orient*, Wagons-Lits expresses, apparently due to some difference of opinion between the respective national railways. (This was especially annoying considering that both countries were members of the European Union.) One normally could take a train as far as Trieste, then an historic, interurban-like tram the approximately 30 km (19 mls) to Villa Opicina (It.), and a taxi the remaining 7 km (4 mls) across to Sežana (Slo.) – except that the tram line was closed for rebuilding. This left a route via Gorizia and adjacent Nova Gorica as the best alternative.

TI RV1820 [VENEZIA SANTA LUCIA] MESTRE-GORIZIA CENTRALE [TRIESTE CENTRALE]

Ee [E 464 567]

C [5]

Depart 1016, arrive 1240 on another RV, including stops at Treviso, Pordenone and Udine, followed by a regular transit bus transfer over to the Slovenian side of town – there being no physical boundary, such as a river, dividing the two sectors; * 160 km in 2 hrs 24 mins, or 67 km/h (100 mls/42 mph).

SŽ LP4214 NOVA GORICA-JESENICE

Cmd [2]

Depart 1414, arrive 1616, on a local Diesel Multiple Unit train absolutely covered with graffiti, including stops at Most na Soči, Bohinjska Bistrica, and Bled Jezero; * 89 km in 2 hrs 2 mins, or 44 km/h (56 mls/27 mph).

SLOVENSKE ŽELEZNICE

... (SŽ – *Slovenian Railways*) was formed out of the old Ljubljana division of Jugoslavenske Željeznice (JŽ – *Yugoslav Railways*), upon the breakup of that country in 1991. SŽ operated everything from LP (*Lokalni Potniški* – Local Passenger) to tilting ICS (*Inter City Slovenija* passenger) services on major routes. Thanks to Slovenia having been part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, Ljubljana was well situated on two “Pan European” rail corridors: “V”, Venezia-Kyiv; and “X”, Salzburg-Thessaloniki. The railway was a member of the “Cargo 10” organization with neighbouring countries, particularly benefitting by carrying freight to the Slovenian port of Koper on the Adriatic.

SŽ EC213 [FRANKFURT-AM-MAIN HBF.] JESENICE-LJUBLJANA [ZAGREB] Mimara

Ee VILLACH-ZAGREB [541 010]

C [3] [ÖBB]

Depart 1740, arrive 1831, including stops at Lesce-Bled and Kranj; * 64 km in 51 mins, or 54 km/h (40 mls/34 mph); * No. 541 010 (SMT, 2009).

MIMARA

... was a EuroCity train originating in Frankfurt early that morning and destined for Zagreb. Named after a noted art museum in Zagreb, it was made up of only three Österreichische Bundesbahnen (ÖBB – *Austrian Federal Railways*) Coaches, hauled by a Slovenian Class 541 electric locomotive. *Mimara* had been much longer up to the Austrian border town of Villach, where a portion for Klagenfurt was detached.



[slo-zeleznice.si]

CROSSROADS

We booked into Hotel Center for three nights, perhaps a 5-minute walk from the SŽ station and 10 minutes from the city centre, but situated over a bar and basement lounge which provided loud music until 0500 or so on weeknights when the students were in town. (Fortunately, they moved us to a room as far away as possible from the noise.) Ljubljana had a long history of being at the crossroads of the Slavic world on the one hand, and Latin and Germanic on the other. Strangely for eastern Europe, trams had been absent since the 1950's, but the city was most walkable, as we found out on an excellent tour hosted by a personable young man. (The funicular up to the castle was also well worth the effort.)

ŽELEZNIŠKI MUZEJ SLOVENSKIH ŽELEZNIC

... (*Slovenian Railway Museum*) proved to be a real find, located 10 minutes from both our hotel and the station. It featured a large number of locomotives, communications and signalling equipment, also wonderful paintings by noted Slovenian artist, Stane Kumar. We lucked in when 2-8-2 steam locomotive No. 06-018, built in Berlin in 1930, returned light to the museum grounds after hauling a morning charter, then was serviced and nudged back into her museum stall.

13 APR:

SŽ-HŽ EC211 [VILLACH] LJUBLJANA-ZAGREB [VINKOVCI] Sava

Ee		VILLACH-DOBOVA [541 012]
Ee	[HŽ]	DOBOVA-VINKOVCI [1142 015]
C*	[2]	[HŽ]
C	[3]	

To **ZAGREB** on the way to Sarajevo – a lack of overnight trains requiring multiple day segments in this part of Europe **[equipment SŽ unless otherwise indicated]**; * Depart 1445, arrive 1713, on a EuroCity express, including stops at Zidani Most, Sevnica and Dobova (one night at Hotel Dubrovnik); * Sava was powered by an SŽ Class 541 electric built by Siemens as far as the border at Dobova, then HŽ Class 1142 built by Končar beyond; * 143 km in 2 hrs 28 mins, or 58 km/h (89 mls/36 mph); * No. 1142 015 (KON, 1984-9).



2010's-6: Slovenian Railways EuroCity Sava, ready to depart Ljubljana for Zagreb behind a Class 541 electric (2013/04/13) [PETER DAWES].

SAVA

... was a EuroCity train originating in Villach and destined for Vinkovci in eastern Croatia, operated on this leg by SŽ and Hrvatske Željeznice (HŽ – Croatian Railways). Named after the river which it paralleled for much of this segment, Sava was made up of Slovenian and Croatian Coaches, with the Restaurant car promised by Cook's absent, at least on this trip.

HRVATSKE ŽELJEZNICE

... was formed out of the old JŽ, and consisted of three entities: Putnički Prijevoz (passenger); Cargo; and Infrastruktura. Lines in eastern Croatia had been seriously damaged during the 1991-95 War of Independence. HŽ now played an important role in the European transportation network, particularly Pan European rail corridor "X" between Salzburg and Thessaloniki. Another key rail route was Zagreb to Ploče on the Adriatic coast, through Bosnia-Herzegovina.

14 APR:**HŽ-ŽRS-ŽFBH B397 ZAGREB-SARAJEVO**

Ee	[HŽ]	ZAGREB-VOLINJA [1141 376]
Ee		VOLIJA-DOBROJ [441 ???]
Ee	[ŽFBH]	DOBROJ-SARAJEVO [441 901]
C	[HŽ]	
C	[2]	[51 44 21-10 012-4]

To **SARAJEVO**, departing 0909, arriving 48 minutes late at 1900, including stops at Volinja, Dobrljin (B-H), Novi Grad, Banja Luka, Dobroj and Zenica [**equipment ŽRS unless indicated otherwise**]; * Our train was powered by Class 441 electrics throughout: HŽ to the border at Volinja (by now designated as Class 1141); ŽRS to Dobroj; and ŽFBH to Sarajevo; * By taxi to Hotel Kovači (two nights there); * 496 km in 9 hrs 51 mins, or 50 km/h (310 mls/31 mph); * Nos. 1141 376 (ex-JŽ 441 376), 441 ???, 441 901 (ex-JŽ) (all KON/ASEA, 1961-80); * No. 51 44 21-10 012-4 (ABH, 1984; ex-DR); * Next day, we took a No. 1 tram from our hotel to the station to buy our tickets to Ploče (for Dubrovnik), these vehicles being old and hopelessly delayed by motor-vehicle traffic.

ZAGREB TO SARAJEVO

... was over HŽ to the border at Volinja, Željezice Republike Srpske (ŽRS – *Serbian Republic Railways*) to Dobroj, and Željezice Federacije Bosne I Herzegovine (ŽFBH – *Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Railways*) to the Bosnian capital. Since the inconclusive Bosnian war of 1991-95, the country remained split based on an uneasy alliance of Bosnians and Croats as Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina on the one hand, and Serbian Bosnians as Serbian Republic (within Bosnia) on the other – thus, separate railways. As evidenced by our train, the two outfits cooperated with each other (and with the Croatians) to continue this international link. The Coaches went through, while engines and crews were changed at Volinja and Dobroj.



[ŽFBH (left) & ŽRS logos (from photos of locomotive 441 911 & Coach 51 44 21-10 012-4, taken at Sarajevo (2013/04/20)] [PETER DAWES].

BORDER TROUBLE

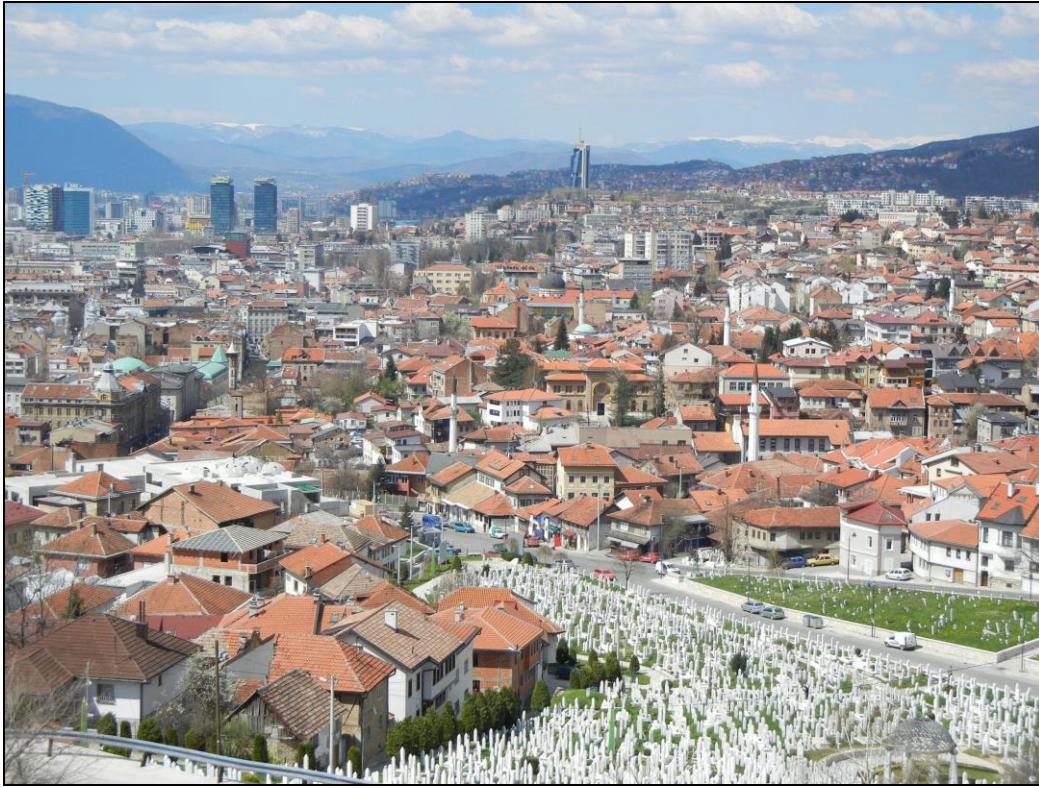
Because neither ŽRS nor ŽFBH honoured Eurailpasses, we had to buy regular tickets for the segment of our trip within Bosnia. Unfortunately, the clerk at Zagreb station issued these tickets, not from the Croatian border point of Volinja, but from the Bosnian equivalent of Dobrljin – meaning that, technically we were ticketless for the 15 minutes or so from Volinja to Dobrljin. Although not a happy camper, the Bosnian conductor let it go. Our stress level only increased when an immigration official took all non-Bosnian passports (including ours) off the train and into a shack adjacent to the station – thankfully bringing them back after 10 minutes or so.

BE PREPARED!

Zagreb-Sarajevo train No. 397 did not provide the best creature comforts, especially where the washrooms were concerned in the trailing ŽRS car. The men's in particular featured a broken toilet seat, no soap and no water – leading us to bring a “toilet bag” on future Bosnian trains. (The builder's plate on this car specified “Ausbesserungs Werke, Halberstadt, DR, 1984”, meaning it had been built in East Germany.) The pungent smell of Bosnian cigarettes pervaded this train, especially the corridors. We shared a compartment with two university students, who were happy to practice their English for a couple of hours – typical of younger people all over Europe.

FASCINATING BUT SOBERING CITY

Sarajevo was the most interesting city we visited during this holiday. Many buildings remained pockmarked or severely damaged from shelling by Serbian forces from the surrounding hills during the Siege of 1991-95. The highlight of our limited time was a 3-hour tour of the city and surroundings, conducted by a young man who was 13 when the Siege began and therefore had vivid memories. He took us through the preserved segment of a crucial supply tunnel built under the airport runway, then through a section of the city controlled by Bosnian Serbs, whose own police conducted check-stops as we drove by. We also visited the site where, in 1914, Bosnian-Serb militants famously assassinated Arch Duke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and his wife, triggering World War I.



2010's-7: Panoramic view of Sarajevo from hills occupied by Serbian forces during the Siege of 1991-95 (note cemetery in the forefront) (2013/04/15) [SANDRA DAWES].

16 APR:

ŽFBH-HŽ B391 SARAJEVO-PLOČE

Ee	SARAJEVO-ČAPLJINA [441 911]
Ee	[HŽ] ČAPLINJA-PLOČE [1141 043]
C	[3] [50 50 10-05 401-1]

To **DUBROVNIK**, Croatia, via Ploče, starting with this train departing five minutes late at 0656, arriving Ploče 10 minutes late at 1108, including stops at Konjic, Mostar, Čaplinja and Metković (Cro.) [**equipment ŽFBH unless indicated otherwise**]; * Another ŽFBH Class 441 pulled three Coaches to the border, replaced by an HŽ Class 1141 beyond; * Onward by Casmatrans Dalmacija bus to Dubrovnik, taking 2 hours, 15 minutes (three nights at Karman Apartments); * 194 km in 4 hrs 12 mins, or 46 km/h (121 mls/29 mph).



2010's-8: Rail line snaking along the Bosnian mountains by means of switchbacks and viaducts, photo taken from ŽFBH No. B391, Sarajevo to Ploče (2013/04/16) [SANDRA DAWES].

SARAJEVO TO PLOČE

... was over ŽFBH to the border at Čaplinja, then HŽ to this Adriatic port city. Donated by the Swedish government, the three ex-Statens Järnvägar (SJ – *Swedish State Railways*) Coaches went through (their internal signage in Swedish), while locomotives and crews were changed at Čaplinja. The line was only extended from Čaplinja to Ploče in 1967 as a branch off of the Sarajevo-Dubrovnik main, which was cut back to Čaplinja in '75. (At one point, there had been both day and overnight trains between Sarajevo and Dubrovnik.)

NEUM CORRIDOR

... was part of Bosnia-Herzegovina and extended right to the Adriatic Sea, thereby cutting off Dubrovnik from the rest of Croatia. This meant rail passengers from Sarajevo (also Zagreb and other places in Croatia) had to bus it from Ploče – actually, quite a pleasant trip, with fabulous scenery along the coast. There were border posts at each end of the corridor, but only the one inspection by the Bosnians upon entry.

PEARL OF THE ADRIATIC

From our suite located a stone's throw from the walls and harbor, we did an unescorted walk on the walls, then an escorted one within the town. One highlight was taking the cable lift up to the heights, affording a wonderful view of the walled city and Adriatic beyond, also an appreciation of the tactical advantage Serbian forces had in bombarding the city during the 1990's war. Cultural treasures abounded, including the Dubrovnik String Quartet playing Pachelbel, Mozart, Hayden and other favourites, and the Dubrovnik Symphony Orchestra doing Schumann and Brahms in the 16th century Revelin fortress, located near Ploče gate.

16 APR:

HŽ-ŽFBH B390 PLOČE-SARAJEVO

Ee	[HŽ]	PLOČE-ČAPLINJA [1141 043]
Ee		ČAPLJINA-SARAJEVO [441 9??]
C	[3]	[50 50 10-05 401-1]

Back to **SARAJEVO**, on our return to Zagreb, starting with an ATP Šibenik bus to Ploče, then this train departing on time at 1706, arriving 17 minutes late at 2120 [**equipment ŽFBH unless indicated otherwise**]; * By taxi back to Hotel Kovači for one last night.



[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Croatian_Railways]



2010's-9: Walled city of Dubrovnik on the Adriatic Sea, taken from the height of land and showing the cable lift (2013/04/18) [SANDRA DAWES].

20 APR:

ŽFBH-ŽRS-HŽ B396 SARAJEVO-ZAGREB

Ee	[ŽFBH]	SARAJEVO-DOBROJ [441 911]
Ee		DOBROJ-BANJA LUKA? [441 809?]
Ee		DOBROJ-VOLINJA [441 521]
Ee	[HŽ]	VOLINJA-ZAGREB [1141 901]
C	[ŽFBH]	[51 50 19-70 001-9]
C*	[2]	[51 44 21-10 012-4; 51 44 30-10 010-7]

To **ZAGREB**, departing 1117, arriving 71 minutes late at 2120 [**equipment ŽRS unless indicated otherwise**], after taking Tram No. 3 from our hotel to a stop two blocks from the station – much of the delay occurring at Dobrljin (B-H) where a lady was detained by border officials before being allowed to continue into Croatia; * Our northbound train differed from the southbound of 14 APR in having two ŽRS electrics over at least part of that railway's segment, and a ŽFBH instead of HŽ Coach accompanying two ŽRS units; * By foot to Hotel Dubrovnik for one night; * 496 km in 10 hrs 3 mins, or 47 km/h (310 mls/29 mph); * No. 1141 901 recorded as 441 901.

21 APR:**HŽ-MÁV 205 [RIJEKA] ZAGREB-BUDAPEST DÉLI Agram**

Ee	[HŽ]	ZAGREB-GYÉKÉNYES [1141 303]
Ee		GYÉKÉNYES-BUDAPEST [431 337]
C*	[3]	[HŽ]
C	[5]	ZAGREB-KOPRIVNICA [OSIJEK]
R		GYÉKÉNYES-BUDAPEST
C	[4]	"
C	[6]	[KESZTHELY] BALATONSZENTGYÖRGY-BUDAPEST
Ee		"

To **BRATISLAVA**, Slovakia, via Budapest, Sighișoara and Wien, departing 15 minutes late at 1015, arriving Dél (meaning "South") station 40 minutes late at 1715, including stops at Križevci, Koprivnica, Gyékényes (Hung.), Balatonszentgyörgy and Székesfehérvár **[equipment MÁV unless indicated otherwise]**; * We occupied one of three clean and comfortable HŽ Coaches; * 352 km in 7 hrs, or 50 km/h (220 mls/31 mph); * No. 431 337 (GVG, 1963-82; ex-V43 337); * Cook's tables show originating Ljubljana & Restaurant originating Zagreb; * Split of MÁV Coaches originating Gyékényes & Keszthely assumed but totalled 10; * By Metró Line 2 direct to Keleti (East) station.

AGRAM

... was operated by HŽ and Magyar Államvasutak (MÁV – Hungarian State Railways) between Rijeka, Zagreb and Budapest, with portions added at Zagreb for Osijek (Cro.), and at Balatonszentgyörgy from Keszthely (Hung.) – the Hungarian passenger-rail entity called MÁV-START. Bearing the historic Austro-German name for Zagreb, Agram swelled to 14 cars within Hungary, one electric locomotive pulling, another pushing. Although Cook's showed this train as originating at Ljubljana, there was no evidence of this, in fact, the front three HŽ Coaches were re-labelled from "Rijeka-Zagreb" to "Zagreb-Budapest" during the train's stopover in Zagreb. Furthermore, although Cook's had the Restaurant car originating at Zagreb, it was not added, this day at least, until the Hungarian border.

21-22 APR:**MÁV-CFR EN/IC 473 BUDAPEST KELETI-SIGHIȘOARA [BUCUREȘTI NORD] *Ister***

Ee	[477 498]
S [2]	[61 53 70-91 002-3]
T	
R	
C [2]	
C [4] [MÁV]	BUDAPEST-LŐKÖSHÁZA

Depart Keleti station 1910, arrive next morning 28 minutes late at 0748, including stops at Békéscsaba, Lőkosháza, Arad (Rom.), and Mediaș [**equipment CFR unless indicated otherwise**]; * This train was powered by a Romanian Class 477 electric the entire way to București, and we occupied one of two Romanian Sleeping cars; * 593 km (est.) in 11 hrs 38 mins, or 51 km/h (310 mls/32 mph); taking into account 1-hour time difference; * No. 473 was designated EN Euro Night on MÁV, IC Inter City on CFR; * No. 477 498 (EP/SFT, 1965-??, modernized 2006); * No. 61 53 70-91 002-3 (DWA, 19??; 12tc; ex-DB, rebuilt CFR 2012); * Alba Iulia-Copșa Mică segment missing from Cook's, estimated at 80 km.

ISTER

... was operated by MÁV and Societatea Națională a Căilor Ferate Române (CFR – *National Society of Romanian Railways*) between Budapest and București. CFR was divided into the usual group of entities, including passenger (CFR Călători), freight and infrastructure. Named after the lower Danube River, *Ister* consisted of mainly CFR equipment, including our rebuilt "WLABmee"-type Sleeping car which featured some compartments (including ours) equipped with a washroom and shower – water leaking onto the floor but contained within the unit. I failed to notice that there would be a change of time zones from Central to Eastern European upon entering Romania, and our car attendant did not inform us. As a result, we awoke only 15 minutes before our scheduled arrival at Sighișoara, meaning a quick shower in our luxurious compartment for Sandra but none for me – although I could have had one, considering we were (unknowingly) running half an hour late.



2010's-10: Lutheran Biserica din Deal ("Church on the Hill"),
Sighișoara, Romania, part of the citadel of this walled
medieval city (2013/04/22) [SANDRA DAWES].

SIGHIȘOARA

... was an interesting citadel town in an area settled by Saxon mercenaries during the 12th century. Featuring an impressive Lutheran church and cemetery, it was also the reputed birthplace of Count Dracula, leading to a proliferation of Draculian souvenirs around town. There were plenty of peasant-looking women selling flowers, and Roma families sending their children out begging for money from the tourists. While waiting for our Wien train that evening, one Roma mother seemed amused as her two young kids jumped from the platform down onto the ballast, climbed onto freight cars stopped on the track, then placed stones right in front of the wheels – despite the reality that the train could have started moving at any moment.



[cfr.ro/]

22-23 APR:**CFR-MÁV-ÖBB IC/EN/EN 346 [BUCUREŞTI NORD] SIGHIŞOARA-WIEN WEST *Dacia***

Ee	[ÖBB]	BUDAPEST-WIEN [470 007]
Ee		BUCUREŞTI-BUDAPEST [477 753]
Ee		BUCUREŞTI-ARAD [477 ???]
C	[3]	"
R		"
C	[3]	"
C	[2]	
T		
S	[2]	[61 53 71-70 008-4]

Depart 27 minutes late at 1830, arrive next morning on time at 0816, including stops at Mediaş, Arad, Lőkösháza (Hung.), Békéscsaba, Budapest, Györ and Hegyeshalom [**equipment CFR unless indicated otherwise**]; * This train was powered by two Romanian Class 477 electrics as far as Arad, then one thereafter as far as Budapest Keleti where an Austrian dual-voltage Class 470 took over; * We occupied one of two Romanian Sleeping cars; * 865 km (est.) in 14 hrs 18 mins, or 60 km/h (540 mls/37 mph); * Designated IC Inter City on CFR only; * No. 470 007 (SMT, 2002); * No. 61 53 71-70 008-4 (DWA, 19??; 12tc; ex-DB, rebuilt CFR 2005); * No. of cars, Bucureşti-Arad only, shown as between 4 & 9 on platform display, assumed as 6 here; * Copşa Mică-Alba Iulia segment missing from Cook's, estimated at 80 km; • **23 APR:** From Wien to Bratislava on a "DDSG Blue Danube" TWIN CITY LINER Catamaran, flying down the Donau (this after variously taking U-Bahn Linie 3 and 1, then an S2 streetcar around the Ring to Stadiongasse/Parlement stop for coffee at nearby famed Viennese Café Central, then back to Swedenplatz).

DACIA

... was operated by CFR, MÁV and Österreichische Bundesbahnen (ÖBB – Austrian Federal Railways) between Bucureşti and Wien, from late April to end of September and at Christmas time only. CFR supplied all the cars, but the Restaurant went only as far as Arad, Romania, instead of Wien as advertized – because, according to our car attendant, this was *Dacia*'s first westbound run of the season. Using good English, he also warned us to lock our compartment because of "many thieves in Hungary." We passed through, but did not stop at, Wien Hauptbahnhof, a major redevelopment of the old Südbahnhof and now open only to regional and suburban trains – long-distance

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services (such as *Dacia*) not scheduled to begin stopping until late 2014.

TWIN CITY LINER

... was a nice break from the trains, departing 1230 and arriving 1345, over the approximately 65-km (40-mile) route from Wien to Bratislava, for an average speed of 52 km/h (32 mph). We booked into Hotel Avance (located a block from the river) for one night, then hired a guide for a 2-hour tour of this beautiful, walkable city, with its rich – if not always happy – Austrian and Hungarian-influenced heritage. This was one of those “we wish we had more time” cities, with its vibrant café and night life.

24 APR:

ŽSSK-ČD EC174 [BUDAPEST KELETI] BRATISLAVA HLAVNÁ-PRAHA HLAVNÍ [HAMBURG ALTONA] Ján Jesenský

Ee [ŽSSK] BUDAPEST-PRAHA [350 012]
C [2] [DB]
C [5]
R
C* [2]

To **KRAKÓW** via Praha, departing 5 minutes late at 0818, arriving on time at 1221, including stops at Kúty, Břeclav (CR), Bruno, Pardubice and Kolin [**equipment MÁV unless indicated otherwise**]; * We occupied a Hungarian 1st class Coach in a EuroCity train hauled by a Slovakian Class 350 locomotive; * 396 km in 4 hrs 3 mins, or 98 km/h (247 mls/61 mph); * No. 350 012 (ŠKD, 1973-5).



[slovakrail.sk/sk/preprava-osob/slovensko/prepravny-poriadok]

JÁN JESENSKÝ

... was a EuroCity train operated by MÁV, Železničná Spoločnosť Slovensko (ŽSSK – *Slovak State Railways*), České Dráhy (ČD – *Czech Railways*), and Deutsche Bahn (DB – *German Railroad*), between Budapest, Bratislava, Praha and Hamburg. Named after a Slovak physician, politician and philosopher who lived and worked all over central Europe in the 16th into 17th century (*Ján Jesenius* in German), this train consisted mainly of Hungarian cars, supplemented by a couple of German Coaches. Our stay in Praha was short this time, but we managed to brave the tourist hordes to visit the main sites for old time's sake, also a wonderful restaurant (Pivovarský Dům, Jecňá Kípová 15) which featured real Czech food, its own brewed beer, and trams running down a reserved right-of-way outside the window.

24-25 APR:**ČD 443/403-PKP 403 PRAHA HLAVNÍ- KRAKÓW GŁÓWNY *Silesia***

Ee		PRAHA-BOHUMIN [362 042]
Ee	[PKP]	BOHUMIN-KRAKÓW [EU07 446]
S	[PKP]	[BUDAPEST] OSTRAVA-KRAKÓW
T	[PKP]	"
S		[51 54 70-80 212-2]
T		
C	[2]	
S	[PKP]	[WIEN] OSTRAVA-KRAKÓW
T	[PKP]	"
S	[PKP]	PRAHA-BOHUMIN [WARSZAWA]
T	[PKP]	"
C	[2]	"
C	[3]	PRAHA-HRANICE NA MORAVĚ [HUMENNÉ]
T		"
S	[2]	"

Depart 2229, arrive next morning at 0629, including stops at Kolin, Pardubice, Olomouc, Hranice na Moravě, Ostrava, Bohumin, Zebzydowice (Pol.) and Oświęcim [**equipment ČD unless indicated otherwise**]; * We

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occupied a compartment in a Czech Sleeper (possibly MU type), part of a long overnight express hauled initially by a Czech Class 362 locomotive, later a Polish EU07, then booked into Hotel Wielopole for three nights; * 502 km in 8 hrs, or 63 km/h (313 mls/39 mph); * No. 362 042 (ŠKD, 1990); * No. EU07 446 (HCP, 1983-94); * AB30 Sleeper No. 51 54 70-80 212-2 (*manufacturer unknown, 1955-65, 10tc*); * Change of locomotives possibly at Zebzydowice instead of Bohumin.

SILESIA

... was an overnight train operated by ČD and Polskie Koleje Państwowe (*PKP – Polish State Railways*) between Praha and Kraków (with portions joining from both Budapest and Wien), also between Praha and Warszawa. Named after the region through which it passed, *Silesia* operated in tandem as far as Bohumin with ČD's Šírava, bound for Humenné, located at the far eastern end of Slovakia beyond Košice. Our Jídelní a Lůžkové Vozy (*Dining and Sleeping Car Co.*) Czech Sleeper was unbearably hot while in Praha Hlavní, but soon cooled down and was comfortable the rest of the way to Kraków.

I'M A NAZI?

Główny station was confusing, especially at 0630 in the morning, the platforms adjacent to a new shopping complex but perhaps 200 metres (*650 feet*) from the actual station. This led to an unpleasant situation in which an elderly man glued himself to us as soon as we stepped down from the train, offering to escort us to the station. Despite making it clear that we would find our own way, he insisted on accompanying us, then needlessly tried to interpret as I made an ongoing reservation. When a policeman told him to desist, we thought we'd seen the last of him, but he followed us half way to our hotel (perhaps a 15 minute walk), calling me a "Nazi" when I finally lost my temper and told him to get lost. Apart from some polite begging on the part of Roma children in Sighișoara, this was the only time we were panhandled in six weeks of roaming around Europe.



[[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/
PKP_Intercity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PKP_Intercity)]

26 APR:

PR R30114/R30421 KRAKÓW GŁÓWNY-OŚWIĘCIM & RETURN

Cme [3] [EN71-031ra] [on R30114 only]

To **OŚWIĘCIM** for the day, to visit the Auschwitz/Birkenau museum; * Depart 0927, arrive 1118, stopping at Trzebinia and a whole bunch of other places, on an ancient, rough-riding, 3-car, EMU local train operated by PR, after taking Tram 24 from our stop (Pcozta Główny) to the station; *We had travelled over this Oświęcim-Kraków segment two nights earlier on *Silesia* from Praha; * Returning, depart 1744, arrive 1945; * 65 km in 1 hr 51 mins, outbound, or 35 km/h (313 mls/22 mph); returning, 2 hrs 1 min, or 35 km/h (22 mph); * No. EN71-031ra (PFW, 1965).

EVERYONE SHOULD EXPERIENCE ...

... Auschwitz I and Auschwitz II (Birkenau) concentration, forced labour and extermination camps at Oświęcim, part of a network of 45 camps in this area designed to rid Europe of Jews and other “undesirables”, while feeding the German industrial and war machine. These two camps had been turned into a museum in memory of the 1.5 million people who perished, 90% of them Jews, the majority Hungarian. Back in the city, the Fabryka Schindlera (*Schlinder's Factory*) had been turned into a museum which comprehensively portrayed how the invaders systematically attempted to transform Kraków into a German city, ethnically, economically and culturally.

RAILWAYS IN POLAND

... by now consisted of: • Polskie Koleje Państwowe SA (*PKP – Polish State Railways*), featuring two semi-independent units, PKP Intercity and PKP Cargo; • a separate Przewozy Regionalne (*PR – Regional Transport*), owned by provincial governments, and • several local outfits, including Koleje Wielkopolskie (*KW – Greater Poland Railway*), which we would use later out of Poznań.



[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Przewozy_Regionalne; pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koleje_Wielkopolskie]



2010's-11: A different type of train: Hungarian Jews arriving at Birkenau for “selection”, left to the gas chambers, or right to hard labour and almost certain death anyway (1944/05/??) (en. [wikipedia.org/wiki/Auschwitz_concentration_camp](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auschwitz_concentration_camp)).

NOT QUITE HOOLIGANS

Our return train from Oświęcim was enlivened by a group of Wisła Kraków football fans, who sang songs and drank beer while the conductor looked on, but who otherwise caused no problems. Travelling to watch their team play regional rivals, Widzew Łódź, they suddenly disembarked at a suburban stop, probably after being tipped off about a heavy police presence at Kraków Główny – perhaps two dozen armoured vehicles manned by swat-squaddish-looking police. (Final score: Wisła 1, Widzew 0.)



[24-hour transit ticket, Kraków (kmk.krakow.pl/)]

LA GRANDE ALLURE: 2013



2010's-12: Older KMK (*Komunikacja Miejska w Krakowie*) tram, resting at Bronowice Male loop, before departing in Kurdwanów direction (2013/04/27) [PETER DAWES].

A WONDERFUL CITY

Kraków turned out to be everything we'd hoped for, from its pedestrianized city centre and square, the "Wavel" (castle) of former Polish kings, baroque Church of Peter and Paul (one of many in this very Catholic city), and the city museum in the old Schindler factory. Tram lines – especially Nos. 18 and 24 for us – provided easy access, featuring impressive brand new Bombardier vehicles alongside well-maintained older ones. You can tell a great city when you see everyone from students to beautiful women using the trams, not only to get to work but for social purposes in the evening. This is what we saw over and over again in Kraków!

28 APR:

PKP TLK35500 [ZAKOPANE] KRAKÓW GŁÓWNY-WARSZAWA CENTRALNA [OLSZTYN] Warma

Ee

[EP09 009]

C* [2]

B

LA GRANDE ALLURE: 2013

C [5]

To **POZNAŃ** via Warszawa, departing 1043, arriving 1415, including stops at Miechów, Północ and Radom, behind a Class EP09 electric; * 292 km in 3 hrs 32 mins, or 83 km/h (182 mls/52 mph); * No. EP09 009 (PFW, 1986-97; ex-PKP).

WARMA

... was a Sunday-only, PKP Intercity express originating at Zakopane high in the Tatra mountains, bordering on Slovakia, and terminating at the northern city of Olsztyn, capital of Warmia-Masuria province. TLK was a PKP InterCity brand standing for Twoje Linie Kolejowe (*Your Railway Lines*). A faster Kraków-Warszawa express, called *Kinga*, departed right in front of us at 1020, despite not appearing in our January Cook's.

PR RE18122 [WARSZAWA WSCHODNIA] CENTRALNA-POZNAŃ GŁÓWNY [SZCZECIN GŁÓWNY] Mewa

Ee [EU07 087]

C [6]

Depart 1500, arrive 1805, including stops at Kutno, Konin and Słupca, behind a Class EU07 electric; * One night at Hotel Rzymski * 306 km in 3 hrs 5 mins, or 99 km/h (191 mls/62 mph); * No. EU07 087 (PFW, 1965-74; ex-PKP).

MEWA

... was a crowded, Sunday afternoon, PR "Regional Express" between Warszawa and Szczecin (on the German border close to the North Sea; known as Stettin in German), calling at our destination, Poznań, capital of Wielkopolska (Greater Poland province). We could have taken the faster *Berlin-Warszawa Express* (depart 1443; arrive 1725), but it required seat reservations, and we would be taking it, in any case, onward from Poznań to the German capital the next evening.

29 APR:

KW Os77324/Os77331 POZNAŃ GŁÓWNY-WOLSZTYN & RETURN

Es [O/149-69]

C [2]



2010's-13: PKP 2-6-2 No. O149-69 on the turntable at Wolsztyn, after bringing our local down from Poznań, other locomotives also under steam in the background (2013/04/29) [PETER DAWES].

Day excursion to **WOLSZTYN** departing 0906, arriving 1056, including stops at Szreniawa, Strykowo and Granowo; * Returning, depart 1332, arrive 10 minutes late at 1540; * 81 km in 1 hr 50 mins, or 44 km/h (51 mls/27 mph, outbound direction; * No. O149 69 (PFLP, 1951-4; ex-PKP).

POZNAŃ TO WOLSZTYN

... was on a KW local train powered by a Class O149, 2-6-2 steam locomotive – said to be the last, steam-hauled, regularly scheduled main-line train in Europe. KW was a regional company owned by the government of Greater Poland province, located in the northwestern part of the country (capital: Poznań), charged with operating local trains. This line was being rebuilt with concrete ties and new shelters and platforms, under a European Union program. The conductor on the outbound train accepted our Polish passes, but his counterpart on the return did not, forcing us to pay a modest cash fare.

WOLSZTYN STEAM FESTIVAL

We took the Wolsztyn train on the Monday after a weekend steam extravaganza involving a whole bunch of Polish locomotives and some from neighbouring countries. Several (including one from Czech Republic) were still at the impressive Wolsztyn round house, and still in steam. Two friendly Americans were in the cab of our locomotive, an older gentleman who had paid to help run the locomotive and a younger fellow who acted as fireman.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY

Our return journey to Poznań was delayed 15 minutes when a young woman suffered what appeared to be a diabetic episode during the trip. The train crew quickly summoned an emergency measures van to remove her from the train at the next station.

A RARITY IN POLAND

In contrast to our previous experience, we encountered a language problem at Poznań Główny station when I tried to reserve seats on the *Berlin-Warszawa Express* for Berlin. Despite providing a card outlining train number, name, origin, destination, class of seats, and date, we were turned away by two clerks before a third summoned a younger woman from the office who could understand English. Strange, considering clerks from Sarajevo to Praha had had no problem deciphering my daily train cards!

PKP IC-DB EC42 [WARSZAWA WSCHODNIA] POZNAŃ GŁÓWNY-BERLIN HBF. *Berlin-Warszawa Express*

Ee	[370 009]
C	[4]
R	
C*	[2] [DB]

To **BERLIN**, departing 15 minutes late at 1745, arriving 12 minutes late at 2030, including stops at Zbaszynek, Rzepin, Kunowice, Frankfurt-an-der-Oder (Ger.) and Berlin Ost, behind a PKP Class 370 electric **[equipment PKP unless indicated otherwise]**; * By taxi to Grand City Hotel (one night); * 266 km in 2 hrs 45 mins, or 97 km/h (166 mls/60 mph); * No. 370 009 (SMT, unknown).

BERLIN-WARSZAWA EXPRESS

... was a PKP Intercity-DB express originating at Warszawa, whose PKP-owned cars were marked with the train name. We enjoyed a nice meal in the Polish Restaurant car, operated (along with Sleeping cars) by the venerable "WARS" train-catering company. An American couple in our Coach jumped off the train at the Ostbahnhof (East Main Station) with three young children, then quickly re-boarded when they realized they wanted to continue (as we did) to the gleaming Hauptbahnhof (Main Station), recently built between the old Ost (located in former East Berlin) and Friedrichstrasse (West Berlin) stations.

WHAT A TRANSFORMATION!

We took a 5-hour walking tour of Berlin, led by a young Jewish woman whose Estonian father had lost his family in the extermination camps, but who loved the city of her birth, regardless. We began by walking 10 minutes from our hotel to Zoologischer station, where we caught an S5, S-bahn train to Hackescher Markt in old East Berlin, then walked past many historic buildings, the Holocaust memorial (proof that Germans do face up to their past), the Wall, Hitler's bunker, "Checkpoint Charlie" (extremely tacky), Opernhaus and more. Perhaps most interesting was the former Unter den Linden U-Bahn station, now reopened as Brandenburg Tor. This was one of the "ghost stations" in old East Berlin through which, from 1946 to '90, trains ran on a closed-door basis from one part of West Berlin to another. We returned by S57 train from Friedrichstrasse to Zoo station and our hotel.



[From photo taken of WARS Restaurant car at Berlin Hauptbahnhof (2013/04/29)] [SANDRA DAWES].

30 APR-1 MAY:

CNL 450 [BERLIN KREUZ] HBF.-PARIS EST *Perseus*

Ee	BERLIN-SAARBRÜCKEN [120 104]
Ee	[SNCF] SAARBRÜCKEN-PARIS [126159]
S	[61 80 72-90 004-5]
T	[2]
C	
S	
T	[2] [HAMBURG] HANNOVER-PARIS
S	[2]
T	[2]
C	

To **PORTHMADOG** in northern Wales, via Paris, London, Wolverhampton and Machynlleth, in Wales; * Depart Hauptbahnhof 2007, arrive Gare de l'Est next morning on-time at 0924, including stops at Hannover and Saarbrücken [**equipment DB unless otherwise indicated**]; * By Métro Ligne 4 the short distance over to Gare du Nord; * 1,190 km in 13 hrs 17 mins, or 90 km/h (166 mls/56 mph); * No. 120 104 (*BBC etc., 1987-9*); * No. 126159 (*Builder & year unknown*); * No. 61 80 72-90 004-5 (*Builder & year unknown; 12tc*).

PERSEUS

... was a City Night Line train running over DB and SNCF, picking up a Hamburg portion at Hannover. Named after the first hero of Greek mythology (and a constellation in the northern sky), it was essentially the old *Nord Express* in routing, if not amenities, once operated by the Compagnie internationale des Wagons-lits et du Tourisme (C/IWL – *International Sleeping Car and Tourism Co.*) between these points, as well as other places beyond such as Warszawa, Moskva, Sankt Peterburg, København and Stockholm.



[From 1927 poster (artyfactory.com)] [A.M. CASSANDRE].



2010's-14: Washroom in compartment of City Night Line Sleeper, Berlin-Paris *Perseus*, including shower to the left (2013/04/30) [SANDRA DAWES].

CITY NIGHT LINE

... was essentially a DB brand for overnight trains, including our *Perseus* (Berlin-Paris), the associated *Andromeda* (Hamburg-Paris), and other routes such as *Komet* (Hamburg-Zürich/Brig) and *Kopernikus* (Amsterdam-Praha). These trains featured ordinary Sleepers (including some double-deckers), Couchettes (4- and 6-berths), and Coaches – much like the *Thello* brand we took earlier from Paris to Padova but with the addition of ordinary Coaches. Our Sleeper was a “WLABmz” type, offering three compartments with washroom equipped with basin, toilet and shower, and nine with just a washbasin (toilet and shower down the corridor). As with some of our other Sleeper reservations, RailEurope imposed a surcharge because we were travelling on Eurailpasses, in this case, \$25 extra, for a total price of \$238 US for a “Double Family Shower” compartment.

MIT DOUCHE!

We took an S75 train from Zoo station to catch our evening CNL *Perseus* to Paris, then came across a DB first-class lounge at the Hauptbahnhof featuring comfortable seats and complimentary snacks, drinks and reading material. Mind you, we got the once over from the two ladies at the front desk, who seemed fixated on our 30-year-old back packs; indeed, we must have stood out among the many power-dressed business types (men and women) waiting for their trains home to München, Hamburg and so on. After checking our tickets, one DB lady said to the other, “auch mit Douche!” – meaning, they’re not only going 1st class Sleeper, they have a shower, too!

1 MAY:

EI 9023 PARIS NORD-LONDON ST. PANCRAS INTERNATIONAL *Eurostar*

Ee [3209] [*The Da Vinci Code*]

C* [5]

CfL

C [6]

CfL

C [5]

Ee [3210] [*The Da Vinci Code*]

Depart 1113, arrive 10 minutes late at 1240, non-stop, taking into account the time change; * By foot over to Euston station (10 minutes); * Nos. 3209, 3210 (*GECAL*, 1992-6; *SNCF*).

NICE TOUCH ON A FAMOUS TRAIN SET

RailEurope had booked us in what might be termed “intermediate class” on this train, which gave us a nice, at-seat brunch (including wine) as we sped over the TGV Nord line. Eurostar did their pricing airline style, meaning by season, day, time of day, advance sales, etc., and the tickets were unclear. Occasional users only discovered what they were getting once they found their seats and the lunch arrived. This train set was named THE DA VINCI CODE back in 2006, after it carried actor Tom Hanks all the way from London to the Festival de Cannes for the opening of the film, billed as the longest “high-speed journey” ever, some 1,421 km (887 m/s).

VT 1323 LONDON EUSTON-WOLVERHAMPTON

Cme [11] [390 125 Virgin Stagecoach]

Depart 1323, arrive 1511, including stops at Watford Jct., Coventry, Birmingham International, New Street and Sandwell & Dudley; * We killed time after arrival and between trains by visiting Mom's home city, especially beautiful West Park with its Victorian conservatory; * 202 km in 1 hr 48 mins, or 112 km/h (126 mls/70 mph); * No. 390 125 (ALS, 2009-12).

LONDON TO WOLVERHAMPTON

... was on a Virgin EMU Pendolino tilting train, featuring two Coaches with "driving motors" (one at either end), four "intermediate motor" Coaches, and five "intermediate trailer" Coaches. The third car from the front included a "Shop/Buffet", and the "driving motor" adjacent to the 1st class Coaches had a kitchen. Our 1st class Britrail passes enabled us to sit in the best seats and enjoy modest refreshments, attentively served. The name of this set, VIRGIN STAGECOACH, honoured the Scottish-based international transport group that owned 49% of Virgin Trains (mega-entrepreneur Richard Branson retaining control with 51%). In 2012, Virgin appeared to have lost this, the West Coast franchise, but was granted an extension to '17.

ATW 1842 [BIRMINGHAM NEW STREET] WOLVERHAMPTON-MACHYNLETH [ABERYSTWYTH]

Cmd* [2] BIRMINGHAM-MACHYNLETH [158 832]

Cmd [2]

Depart 1842, arrive five minutes early at 2042, including stops at Shrewsbury (where the train reversed), Welshpool (Wal.) and Caersws; * 145 km in 2 hrs, or 73 km/h (90 mls/45 mph); * No. 158 832 (BREL, 1989-92).



[From photo taken of Class 158 Sprinter, Machynlleth, Wales (2013/05/01)] [SANDRA DAWES].

ATW 2120 MACHYNLETH-PORTHMADOG [PWLLHELI]

Cmd [2] [158 833]

Depart 2120, arrive 2309, including stops at Aberdovey, Twynn and Barmouth (two nights at Porthmadog); * 72 km in 1 hr 49 mins, or 40 km/h (45 mls/25 mph).

WOLVERHAMPTON TO PORTHMADOG

... was on an Arriva Trains Wales (ATW), DMU Sprinter train as far as Machynlleth (originating Birmingham and terminating Aberystwyth), then another onward (this one ending at Pwllheli). One would have expected this train to split at Machynlleth, with one, 2-car set going forward to Aberystwyth and the other to Pwllheli, but while the leading set indeed went onward to Aberystwyth, the rear one headed to a small maintenance facility – meaning that an entirely different, 2-car set took the Pwllheli schedule. Our Porthmadog taxi driver located our excellent Harbour Court Accommodation bed-and-breakfast after several abortive tries, close to the harbour.

2 MAY:

WHR 1050 PORTHMADOG-CAERNARFON & RETURN

Es	[SAR]	[87]
C	[2]	[24,122]
OBS		[2022]
C	[4]	[2044,2042,2041,2043]
SV		[2010]
OL		[2100 Glaslyn]

Day excursion to **CAERNARFON**, departing 1050, arriving 1315 (five minutes late throughout), stopping at Pont Croesor Halt, Beddgelert, Rhyd Dhu, Waunfawr and Dinas, behind a former South African Railways, 2-6-2+2-6-2, Garratt steam locomotive and occupying Observation Lounge GLASLYN; * Returning, depart 1430, arrive 25 minutes late at 1725; * 41 km in 2 hrs 20 mins, or 18 km/h (25 mls/11 mph) on the outbound train; * Consist in reverse order on outward trip; * No. 87 (SAJC, 1937; ex-SAR); * No. 2100 (FR, 2008-9).

**RHEILFFYRDD FFESTINIOG AC ERYRI
FFESTINIOG & WELSH HIGHLAND RAILWAYS**

[From Welsh Highland 1st Class “Upgrade” ticket, Porthmadog-Caernarfon (2013/05/02)]



2010's-15: Welsh Highland's 1430 service, Caernarfon to Porthmadog, powered by former South African Railways, narrow-gauge, Garratt steam locomotive No. 87 (2013/05/02) [SANDRA DAWES].

FFESTINIOG & WELSH HIGHLAND RAILWAYS 0295			
SEAT RESERVATION			
NAME:	Dames		
FROM:	CAERNARFON	PORTHMADOG	
TO:	PORTHMADOG	CAERNARFON	BLAENAU FF.
Date	Train Time	Carriage No.	Seat No.
02/05	10.50	2100	01

PLEASE KEEP THIS RECEIPT WHICH MUST BE SHOWN ON DEMAND

[Issued by Festiniog Railway, Porthmadog (Ffestiniog being the Welsh spelling), 2013/05/01]

RHEILFFORDD ERYRI/WELSH HIGHLAND RAILWAY

... was a beautiful, 597 mm (*1 ft 11½ in*) gauge, tourist line between Porthmadog and Caernarfon, a distance of 41 kilometres (*25 miles*) – the Welsh language part of the title meaning “Snowdonia Railway”. This was an extended version of a line completed only in 1922, although segments dated back to 1864. Closed to passenger traffic in 1936 and freight in '37, it was reopened in 2011 under the control of neighbouring Festiniog Railway. The steam engine was a Garratt built in 1937 in Belgium and a veteran of narrow-gauge lines in South Africa. On our return, we could see a narrow-gauge, rack-and-pinion, Snowdon Mountain Railway train ascending the last kilometre to the summit. We were delayed half an hour at Rhyd Dhu by a late running Caernarfon-bound special, and later met a photographers' double headed special at Pont Croesor Halt, operated because the Festiniog would be celebrating its 150th anniversary that coming weekend.

GLASLYN

We did the Welsh Highland in 1st class “Observation Saloon” No. 2100, named after the river paralleling some of the line before running through Porthmadog and into the Irish Sea. Despite sporting the Pullman name and livery, the car had been built only during 2008-9 by Festiniog staff at their Boston Lodge shops. Returning, we enjoyed some locally brewed ale from the rear two seats, and the company of a family of Welsh-speakers in this Welsh-speaking part of Wales.

3 MAY:

FR 1015 PORTHMADOG-BLAENAU FESTINIOG

Es	[10 <i>Merddin Emrys</i>]
C [6]	[17,26,118,120,106,121]
SV	[124]
C	[103]
OL	[100]

To **SCUNTHORPE**, North Lincolnshire, via Blaenau Festiniog, Llandudno Jct., Manchester (Eng.) and Doncaster, starting with a Festiniog steam train to Blaenau Festiniog; **[continued on next page]**



2010's-16: Festiniog's 1015 service, Porthmadog to Blaenau Festiniog, behind 0-4-40T "Double Fairlie" MERDDIN EMYRS (2013/05/03) [SANDRA DAWES].

* Depart Porthmadog 1015, arrive 1130, stopping at Minffordd, Penrhyn, Tan y Bwlch, Dduallt and Tanygrisiau; * 22 km in 1 hr 15 mins, or 18 km/h (14 mls/11 mph); * No. 10 (FR, 1879); * No. 100 (FR, 2007).

FESTINIOG RAILWAY (FR)

This was my third trip (Sandra's second) on this wonderful narrow-gauge railway, previous trips being in 1976 and '88. For us, FR played a pure transportation as well as tourist role, as it kicked off our relocation across Britain from Porthmadog to Scunthorpe. FR and sister Welsh Highland were both built to 597 mm (1 ft 11½ in) gauge), and provided a great experience, singly or together. Opened in 1836 and closed in 1946, FR's main original purpose was to haul slate down to the sea; then it was gradually reopened as a tourist railway between 1954 and '82. Our power this day was 0-4-4-0T "Double Fairlie" MERDDIN EMYRS, built in-house way back in 1879 and named after a 6th century Welsh poet. We again went 1st class, in Observation Saloon No. 100.

ATW 1145 BLAENAU FESTINIOG-LLANDUDNO JCT. [LLANDUDNO]

Cmd [2] [150 280]

Depart 1145, arrive 1244, including stops at Betws-y-Coed, Llanwrst and Glan Conwy; * 40 km in 59 mins, or 40 km/h (25 mls/24 mph); * No. 150 280 (BREL, 1984-7).

FROM STEAM BACK TO THE ORDINARY

After a short walk over from the Festiniog, we travelled on three Diesel Multiple Unit trains. These were: • ATW Class 150 Sprinter to Llandudno Jct.; • ATW Class 175 Coradia to Manchester Piccadilly, and • First TransPennine Express (FTPE) Class 185 Sprinter to Doncaster. From there, a “replacement bus” took us the 37 kilometres (23 miles) to Scunthorpe, due to a landslide which had originated in an adjacent colliery and had taken out the railway back in February. (The information guy at Manchester Piccadilly thought it was very funny that someone existed who didn't know about the landslide, despite my obvious status as a visitor to the country.)

ATW 1253 [LLANDUDNO] LLANDUDNO JCT.-MANCHESTER PICCADILLY

Cmd [3] [175 114]

Depart 1253, arrive 1457, including stops at Colwyn Bay, Chester, Helsby Jct. and Warrington; * 137 km in 2 hrs 4 mins, or 66 km/h (86 mls/41 mph); * No. 175 114 (ALS, 1999-2001).

FTPE 1520 [MANCHESTER AIRPORT] PICCADILLY-DONCASTER

Cmd [4] [185 134]

Depart 1520, arrive 1635, including stops at Stockport, Sheffield and Meadowhall; * Onward by replacement bus, departing the adjacent Doncaster terminal at 1650, arriving **Scunthorpe** 1735; * 99 km in 1 hr 15 mins, or 79 km/h (62 mls/49 mph); * No. 185 134 (ALS, 1999-2001).

LAID-BACK IN SCUNTHORPE

We enjoyed three nights, chez Sandra's university pal Eva and partner Margaret, a welcome respite from all the train-travelling, even I would admit. Highlight was a surprisingly good feast at The Honest Lawyer pub, the televised Queens Park Rangers versus Arsenal game thankfully almost over as we arrived – a 0-1 home loss and another nail in Rangers' relegation coffin.

6 MAY:

CCT 1058 [NEWCASTLE] DONCASTER-BIRMINGHAM NEW STREET [BOURNEMOUTH]

Cmd [4] [220 020 Wessex Voyager]

To **WORCESTER**, via Birmingham, starting with a bus from Scunthorpe to Doncaster, departing 0920, arriving 1000; * Depart Doncaster on the train at 1058, arrive 1227, stopping only at Sheffield and Derby; * 154 km in 1 hr 29 mins, or 104 km/h (96 mls/65 mph); * No. 220 020 (BBD, 2000-1; ex-VCC).

SCUNTHORPE TO WORCESTER

... involved a replacement bus to Doncaster, a CrossCountry Trains (CCT) Voyager DMU service to Birmingham, and London Midland (LM) Turbostar DMU to Worcester. CCT operated 34 Voyager train sets inherited from the previous Train Operating Company, Virgin Cross Country, on a network of secondary mainline routes centred on Birmingham and extending all the way to Penzance in the southwest and Aberdeen in the northeast. Having taken over the West Midlands franchise from Central Trains in 2007, LM was owned by Govia group, which also operated the Southern and Southeastern companies.

LM 1249 BIRMINGHAM NEW STREET-WORCESTER FOREGATE STREET [HEREFORD]

Cmd [2] [170 502]

Depart 1249, arrive 1330, including stops at Bromsgrove and Droitwich Spa; * Onward by car to **Chaddesley Corbett**, thanks to our QE2 friends, the Beardshaw's; * 41 km in 41 mins, or 60 km/h (26 mls/37 mph); * No. 170 502 (ADT, 1999-2000, ex-CT).



[crosscountrytrains.co.uk/
londonmidland.com/]



2010's-17: Severn Valley's 1210 ex-Bridgnorth, departing Highley with former Great Western 2-8-0 No. 2857 in the lead (2013/05/07) [PETER DAWES].

7 MAY:

SVR 1035 KIDDERMINSTER-BRIDGNORTH

Es	[GWR]	[2857]
C	[4]	[SC16767, E4509, E4345, M80776]
B		[E1853]
C	[2]	[M25498, W1602]

Day excursion to **HIGHLEY**, starting with an automobile trip to **Kidderminster**, then Severn Valley train to Bridgnorth; * Depart 1035, arrive 1141, stopping at Bewdley, Arley, Highley and Hampton Loade; * Our locomotive this day was an ex-Great Western 2-8-0, running backwards on the outward trip and hauling ex-BR carriages from Western, Eastern, Midland and Scottish regions; * 26 km in 1 hr 6 mins, or 24 km/h (16 mls/15 mph); * No. 2857 (GWR, 1918; ex-BR); * No. M25498 (BR, 1958); * No. E1853 (BR, 1961; ex-RMB – recorded as M1853).

THE QE2 KEEPS PAYING DIVIDENDS

We stayed two nights with our old QUEEN ELIZABETH 2 shipmates, Sylvia and Richard Beardshaw, in their Chaddesley Corbett, Worcestershire, converted barn. On the first afternoon, they took us around Worcester, some of whose medieval character had survived (including the magnificent cathedral and restored Greyfriars House), accentuated by the beautiful Severn River and canals. Our SVR experience was enriched by visits to "The Engine House" at Highley and Carriage Works & Paint Shop at Kidderminster. The latter wasn't open to the public but was accessible to us because the boss, Nigel Hanson, was a good friend of the Beardshaws – even turned up with his wife at Chaddesley Corbett for dinner the same evening. Also enlivening our outing was a group of well-behaved elementary school kids, teachers, and parents, all dressed up as if they were being evacuated from London by train during World War II – an excellent way of teaching history.

SVR 1210 BRIDGNORTH-HIGHLEY [KIDDERMINSTER]

[As for train directly above]

Depart 1210, arrive 1238, stopping at Hampton Loade, with No. 2857 at the front running frontwards.

SVR 1428 [BRIDGNORTH] HIGHLEY-KIDDERMINSTER

Ed	<i>[D1062 Western Courier]</i>
C	<i>[E4550]</i>
B	<i>[SC1855]</i>
C [4]	<i>[E4690, E2125, E4993, M25346]</i>

Depart 27 minutes late at 1455, arrive 20 minutes late at 1527, behind an ex-BR diesel-hydraulic which was filling in for a steam locomotive having "operational difficulties"; * By automobile back to **Chaddesley Corbett**; after looking through SVR's excellent gift shop and museum; * 15 km in 32 mins, or 28 km/h (9 mls/17 mph); * No. D1062 (BR, 1963); * No. M25346 (BR, 1957).



[svr.co.uk/]

8 MAY:

FGW 1559 [HEREFORD] WORCESTER FOREGATE STREET-LONDON PADDINGTON HST

Ed [43056]

C* [2]

BC

C [5]

Ed

To **EDINBURGH**, via London, Aberdeen (Scot.) and Stonehaven, starting with an automobile transfer to Worcester, stopping at Ormondsley on the way for an excellent pub lunch; * Depart Foregate Street station five minutes late at 1605, arrive Paddington on time at 1828, including stops at Worcester Shrub Hill, Oxford, Reading and Slough, on a diesel HST (High Speed Train); * 195 km in 2 hrs 23 mins, or 82 km/h (122 mls/51 mph); * No. 43056 (BREL, 1976-8; ex-BR, GWT).

NORTH TO SCOTLAND!

The next phase of our holiday involved this First Great Western HST into Paddington station, a transfer to Euston via Bakerloo and Victoria lines, ScotRail's (SCR) *Caledonian Sleeper* overnight to Aberdeen to visit with a distant cousin of Sandra's, then SCR from Stonehaven to Edinburgh to stay with the daughter of Saskatoon friends and meet up with another of Sandra's distant relatives.

8-9 MAY:

SCR 2115 LONDON EUSTON-ABERDEEN *Caledonian Sleeper*

Ed [EWS] EDINBURGH-ABERDEEN [67008]

Ee [DBS] LONDON-EDINBURGH [90018]

S [2] LONDON-EDINBURGH [FORT WILLIAM]

S [4] [10693]

BL

C

S [5] LONDON-EDINBURGH [INVERNESS]

BL "

C "

Depart Euston station at 2115, arrive Aberdeen next morning 15 minutes early at 0720, including stops at

LA GRANDE ALLURE: 2013

Watford Jct., Preston, Carlisle, Edinburgh (Scot.) (operational), Dundee, Arbroath and Stonehaven; * We occupied a comfortable SLE-type Sleeper with 13 Double Compartments, and went on to spend the morning and early afternoon driving along the beautiful North Sea, visiting Dunnottar Castle and exploring Stonehaven, courtesy Alistair and wife June; * 856 km in 10 hrs 5 mins, or 85 km/h (534 mls/53 mph); * No. 67008 (ALS, 1999-2000); * No. 90018 (BREL, 1987-90; DBS; ex-BR 90027, RFD, EWS 90127); * SLE No. 10693 (BR, 1981-4, 13dc).

CALEDONIAN SLEEPERS

ScotRail continued to provide two *Caledonian Sleeper* trains behind locomotives formerly operated by England, Welsh & Scottish Railway but now DB Schenker, an international rail-freight company owned by DB, this one to Aberdeen (four Sleepers), Inverness (five), and Fort William (two), with the train dividing at Edinburgh, the other to Glasgow and Edinburgh (splitting at Carstairs). Ours was powered by a Class 90 Electric as far as Edinburgh, then Class 67 diesel beyond, the latter built by General Motors in London ON under contract to Alstom. We repeated our Berlin Hauptbahnhof trick and used the rather tawdry-in-comparison-to-DB, 1st class lounge at Euston, run by Virgin Trains but open to 1st class ScotRail passengers, too.

THE GERMAN INFLUENCE

Our *Caledonian Sleeper* reservation slip had been issued by DB for New York-based RailEurope and was mostly in German – not so surprising, in that DB was the leading owner of RailEurope. But a German-owned and liveried engine in Euston station? When I asked our car attendant about this, he took a shot at his employers by saying he wished DB would come in and run the Sleeper trains as well. He also mentioned that DB already did the reservations for *employee* travel on these trains – which seemed odd, to say the least.



[From side of Class 90 locomotive, London Euston (2013/05/08)] [SANDRA DAWES].

LA GRANDE ALLURE: 2013

 Reservierung CIV 1080		2 Bettplätze	
ATOCA MEMBER OPERATED SERVICE			
 	VON 08.05 21:15 LONDON EUSTON	->NACH ->ABERDEEN.	 
			Klasse Class 0.0 07:34
Zug 2115 GB Wagen D Bettplätze 7L 8U			
2 Double			
		Beförderer: 1170	Preis EUR *** 84,60
119281986 473190675 32265744-01		701411580611 BARZAHTIMG	619924040 Chicago 05.03.13 21:31 © CIT 1996

[Caledonian Sleeper reservation, as made by Deutsche Bahn for New York-based RailEurope]

9 MAY:

SCR 1420 [ABERDEEN] STONEHAVEN-EDINBURGH

Cmd [3] [170 407]

Depart 1420 (after being deposited at Alistair and June's local station), arrive 1629, including stops at Montrose, Arbroath, Dundee and Leuchars, on a Class 170 Turbostar DMU (one night, courtesy, Meghan Clancy); * 184 km in 2 hrs 9 mins, or 86 km/h (115 mls/53 mph); * No. 170 407 (ADT, 1999-2001); * Next day, we (and Meghan) spent the afternoon being guided around this historic city by Harry Stephen, another distant relative of Sandra's.

ANOTHER FIRST

ScotRail was now part of Aberdeen-based FirstGroup, along with Great Western, TransPennine Express (as encountered earlier in this document), and several other Train Operating Companies. Despite being owned by the group, ScotRail marketed itself primarily as "Scotland's Railway". (FirstGroup also had extensive bus holdings in Britain, Canada and other countries, and even owned Greyhound Canada.)



2010's-18: DB Schenker diesel 67021 [*left*] (in former owner's English, Scottish & Welsh colours) and electric 90021 (in "First ScotRail" livery), at Edinburgh Waverley station (Martyrs Obelisk and castle like Governors House in the background) (2013/05/10) [PETER DAWES].

10 MAY:

SCR 1600 EDINBURGH-GLASGOW QUEEN STREET

Cmd [3] [170 415]

To **ERSKINE**, via Glasgow, Dunlop and Bishopton; * Depart 1600, arrive 1651, including stops at Falkirk and Croy, on another 3-car Turbostar; * 76 km in 51 mins, or 89 km/h (47 mls/55 mph).



[scotrail.co.uk]

FOR OLD TIME'S SAKE

The purpose of this segment of our trip was to visit the mother of one ex-girlfriend in Dunlop (just south of Glasgow), then another old girlfriend and family in Erskine (west of the city, down the Clyde).

SPT 1742 GLASGOW CENTRAL-DUNLOP [CARLISLE]

Cmd [4] [156 508]

Depart 1742 (after walking for 20 minutes or so in a light rain from Queen Street to Central), arrive 1804, including a stop at Barrhead, on a 4-car, Class 156, Super Sprinter DMU express operated by ScotRail for Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (formerly called Passenger Transport Executive); * 27 km in 22 mins, or 75 km/h (17 mls/47 mph); * No. 156 508 (MC, 1987-9; ex-BR).

SPT 2041 [KILMARNOCK] DUNLOP-GLASGOW CENTRAL

Cmd [2] [156 494]

Depart 2041 (after having tea with Maria Batey), arrive 2113, including stops Barrhead, Nitshill, Priesthill & Darnley, on a 2-car Super Sprinter local; * 27 km in 32 mins, or 51 km/h (17 mls/32 mph).

SPT 2136 GLASGOW CENTRAL-BISHOPTON [WEMYSS BAY]

Cme [3] [380 021]

Depart 2136, arrive 2158, including stops at Hillingdon East, Hillingdon West and Paisley, on a Desiro EMU train; * By automobile, courtesy Alison and David Stirling, to nearby **Erskine** (three nights at their place); * 20 km in 22 mins, or 61 km/h (12 mls/38 mph); * No. 380 021 (SMT, 2009-11).

MAKING A SPLASH AT CENTRAL STATION

ScotRail's cheery (and somewhat bored) gatekeepers at Glasgow Central called out, "It's the backpackers again," while waving us through to the Bishopton train – our third time past this gate in four hours.



[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strathclyde_Partnership_for_Transport]

THE PERFECT HOSTS

Alison and David provided their usual great Scottish hospitality, one or both of them driving us into Glasgow (the highlight being a tour of Tenement House, a preserved example of housing in the early 20th century), Mugdock Castle ruins (north of the Clyde, dating back to the 13th century, and surrounded by beautiful grounds), and the site of John Brown's at Clydebank, birth place of Canadian Pacific's EMPRESS OF BRITAIN (1931), then Cunard's QUEEN MARY ('36), QUEEN ELIZABETH ('40), and QE2 ('67). By now, it was the site of a community college – only a giant preserved crane and part of the main slipway still there to remind visitors of Scotland's famous shipbuilding past.

13 MAY:

SCR 1010 GLASGOW QUEEN STREET-INVERNESS

Cmd [3] [170 412]

Back to **EDMONTON**, via Glasgow, Inverness, Conon Bridge, Inverness (again), London, Haywards Heath, Sheffield Park, East Grinstead and London (again); * Depart Glasgow Queen Street 1010 (after an SPT bus ride into the city, shepherded by Alison), arrive 1328, including stops at Stirling, Perth, Pitlochry, Kingussie and Aviemore, on another 3-car Turbostar DMU; * 291 km in 3 hrs 18 mins, or 88 km/h (182 mls/55 mph).

HEADING HOME

... via Conon Bridge in the Highlands (to visit another of Sandra's genealogy relatives), followed by another *Caledonian Sleeper* (this time, overnight from Inverness to London), and finally a quick trip on the Bluebell (the wonderful tourist steam railway located south of London) – all before flying home to Edmonton.

SCR 1334 INVERNESS-CONON BRIDGE [*KYLE OF LOCHALSH*]

Cmd [2] [158 709]

Depart 1334, arrive 1358, stopping at Beauly and Muir of Ord, on a 2-car, Class 158 DMU Sprinter, this train heading for Kyle of Lochalsh and the ferry to Skye; * Then by motor vehicle to **Alcaig**; * 26 km in 24 mins, or 65 km/h (182 mls/40 mph).



2010's-19: ScotRail's 1334 ex-Inverness departing from recently restored Conon Bridge stop for Kyle of Lochalsh (2013/05/13) [PETER DAWES].

ANOTHER GENEALOGY FRIEND

Meeting us at Conon Bridge stop was Leo Wildi, along with his son-in-law Duncan Wharton – Leo being a member of a group of McWillie family researchers which included Sandra's late uncle, Robert, and now encompasses Sandra. Closed in 1960, Conon Bridge had reopened in February of this year, the idea being to encourage commuters to take the train into Inverness (likewise visitors to the town). We were spirited by car from Conon Bridge to nearby Alcaig for a wonderful visit with Leo and wife Jacqui, Duncan and wife Michaela, the town of Dingwall and Ben Wyvis sitting in the background on the other side of beautiful Cromarty Firth.

SCR 1918 [KYLE OF LOCHALSH] CONON BRIDGE-INVERNESS [ELGIN]

Cmd [2] [158 709]

Depart 1918 (after an automobile transfer back to Conon Bridge stop), arrive 1950; * The friendly guard told me

LA GRANDE ALLURE: 2013

about her journey out to Kyle of Lochalsh and back that day, before joining her driver colleague in getting some coffee in Inverness station and continuing on to their termination point of Elgin (on the line to Aberdeen).

13-14 MAY:

SCR 2044 INVERNESS-LONDON EUSTON *Caledonian Sleeper*

Ed	[EWS]	INVERNESS-EDINBURGH [67030]
Ee	[EWS]	EDINBURGH-LONDON [90021]
S	[2]	[FORT WILLIAM] EDINBURGH-LONDON
C		[ABERDEEN] EDINBURGH-LONDON
BL		"
S	[4]	"
S*	[5]	
BL		
C		
S[dd]		

Depart 2044, arrive next morning seven minutes early at 0740, including stops at Aviemore, Blair Atholl, Perth, Edinburgh (operational), Carlisle (Eng.), Crewe and Watford Jct. – a deadheading Sleeping car on the rear out of Inverness the only difference from our earlier northbound *Caledonian Sleeper*; * Onward to Victoria station by Victoria Line; * 928 km in 10 hrs 56 mins, or 85 km/h (579 mls/53 mph).



[From side of ScotRail car, London Euston (2013/05/08)] [PETER DAWES].

DISINTERESTED SLEEPER CAR STAFF

In our past experience, *Caledonian Sleeper* attendants were typically chatty and helpful. This time, the guy on our southbound journey was a real dolt, failing to show us to our compartment and explain the gadgets (not that we needed help, but others would have), refusing to give us the upgraded morning snack package despite our 1st class Britrail passes, and being nowhere in sight upon arrival at Euston. Northbound, his counterpart had been quite gregarious, but also disappeared as we arrived in Aberdeen – both of them losing out on tips. In contrast, our Buffet Lounge crew were good, despite the electricity going out for half-an-hour or so after departure.

14 MAY:

SR 0847 LONDON VICTORIA-HAYWARDS HEATH [LITTLEHAMPTON]

Cme [4] LONDON-HAYWARDS HEATH [ORE]

Cme [4] LONDON-HAYWARDS HEATH [EASTBOURNE]

Cme [4] **[377 120]**

Depart 0847, arrive 0935 (est.), including stops at Clapham Jct., East Croydon and Gatwick Airport, on a Class 377 Electrostar consisting of three, 4-car sets for various destinations south of Haywards Heath; * Onward by taxi to **Sheffield Park** (20 minutes); * 61 km in 48 mins, or 76 km/h (38 mls/48 mph); * No. 377 120 (BBD, 2002-3).

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

As mentioned earlier, Southern was a member of the Govia group, along with Southeastern and London Midland – all in all, heavily into commuter and regional traffic, with London as the fulcrum of its network.



[southernrailway.com; en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Govia]

BBL 1100 SHEFFIELD PARK-EAST GRINSTEAD

Es	[BR]	[3205]
C		[S1464S]
B		[S1818]
C	[3]	[S5034, S4279S, S25728]

Depart 1100, arrive 1141, stopping at Horsted Keynes and Kingscote, behind an ex-Great Western 0-6-0 Class 2251 locomotive; * 18 km in 41 mins, or 26 km/h (11 mls/16 mph); * No. 3205 (*GWRW, 1946; ex-GW, possibly on loan from SDR*); * No. S25728 (*BR, 1961; ex-BR M18728, 18728*); * No. S1818 (*BR, 1960; ex-RMB*).

BLUEBELL RAILWAY

... had been extended from Kingscote to East Grinstead only in March of this year, connecting there with frequent Southern trains into London. No. 3205 was one of 120 “medium-powered” freight locomotives built between 1930 and '48 in this class. We were joined in the last compartment of the last car by an English ex-pat and his American wife, in England with two small children for a wedding. Also on the train were his grandparents, all of us part of a large crowd on this Tuesday morning service, fuelled by several bus tours.



[bluebell-railway.co.uk]

SR 1207 EAST GRINSTEAD-LONDON VICTORIA

Cme	[6]	[rear 377 306]
-----	-----	----------------

Depart 1207, arrive 1302, including stops at Oxted, East Croydon and Clapham Jct., this Electrostar consisting of two, 3-car sets; * Onward to Paddington on Victoria and Bakerloo lines, then *Heathrow Express* to Terminal 3 and home to **Edmonton** on an Air Canada Boeing 767-300; * 48 km in 55 mins, or 52 km/h (30 mls/32 mph); * No. 377 306 (*BBD, 2001-2; ex-375 316*).

2016

INDIA/SRI LANKA



[Indian Railways logo, from side of Gatimaan Express coach (2016/04/09)] [SANDRA DAWES].

SYNOPSIS

This was my fifteenth overseas holiday (10th with Sandra), featuring just short of three weeks in India, and somewhat more than three in Sri Lanka. Our primary home bases were at Hotel Grand Godwin in New Delhi, and Grand Oriental Hotel in Colombo. The Indian Railways logo shown on the opening page above depicts, even today, a highly stylized steam engine.

Trips taken: We took 28, covering 6,660 kilometres (*4,157 miles*), 15 in India and 13 in Sri Lanka. Twenty-three of the trips were in my “Coaches, Pullmans & Lounges” category and 5 in “Sleeping & Couchette Cars” (all in India), with the latter accounting for 60% of the total distance. All were on locomotive hauled trains (none self-propelled). Four short trips were behind steam (all in India).

Equipment units: 338, made up of 47 Locomotives & Related Units and 291 cars (Coaches, Pullmans & Lounges, 194; Sleeping & Couchette Cars, 80; Restaurant & Other Meal Cars, 6; Baggage & Miscellaneous Cars, 11).

INDIA

Places visited: Agra, Chennai, Darjeeling, Delhi, Fatehpur Sikri, Ghum, Kalka, Kolkata, Mughalsarai, New Jalpaiguri, Simla and Varanasi.

Noteworthy rail trips: **Gatimaan Express**, Agra Cantt to Delhi Hazrat Nizamuddin; **Shivalik Deluxe Express** (*Kalka-Simla Railway*), Simla to Kalka; **Dibrugarh Rajdhani Express**, Mughalsarai to New Jalpaiguri; **No. 52548** (*Darjeeling Himalayan Railway [DHR]*), Darjeeling to Ghum & return; **Coromandel Express**, Kolkata Howrah to Chennai Central.

Fastest average speed: **Gatimaan Express**, Agra Cantt to Delhi Hazrat Nizamuddin: 113 km/h (*70 mph*). **Slowest:** **No. 52548 (DHR)**, Darjeeling to Ghum: 10 km/h (*7 mph*).

Memorable non-rail trips: • by local bus from Agra to Fatehpur Sikri; • by jeep from New Jalpaiguri to Darjeeling.

SRI LANKA

Places visited: Badulla, Colombo, Dambulla*, Galle, Goyambokka*; Habarana, Haputale, Kandy, Matara, Nanu Oya, Nuwara Eliya*, Palugaswewa, Sigiriya* and Tangalle*. (**Note:** * indicates by non-rail means.)

Noteworthy rail trips: **No. 8050**, Colombo Fort to Matara; **No. 1019**, Colombo Fort to Kandy; **Podi Menike** (No. 1005), Kandy to Badulla; **No. 1126**, Nanu Oya to Haputale; **No. 1596**, Haputale to Nanu Oya; **Podi Menike** (No. 1006), Nanu Oya to Colombo Fort; **Udaya Devi**, Palugaswewa to Colombo Fort.

Fastest average speed: *Ruhunnu Kumari*, Galle to Colombo Fort: 63 km/h (39 mph). **Slowest:** **No. 1126**, Nanu Oya to Haputale: 12 km/h (8 mph).

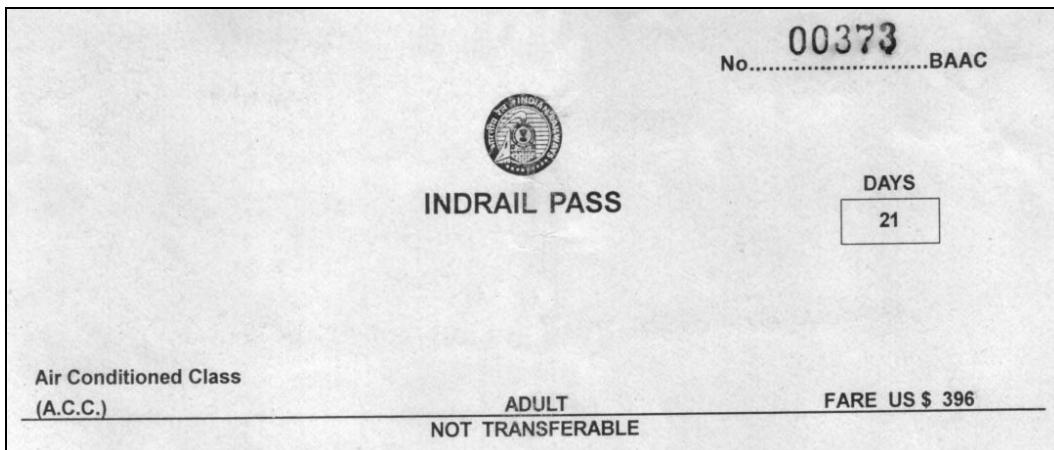
Memorable non-rail trips: • by local bus from Dambulla to Sigiriya; • by tuk-tuk from Matara to Goyambokka.

HIGHLIGHTS!

In **India**, taking the evening *Shivalik Deluxe Express* from the foothills resort of Simla back down to Kalka, enjoying a curry meal served at-seat and watching railway staff guide us through each station by means of torches. Riding the all-Sleeping car *Dibrugarh Rajdhani Express* from Mughalsarai to New Jalpaiguri, stepping from a rat-infested platform into a comfortable, 4-berth cabin for the overnight trip. Taking the street-running Darjeeling Himalayan Railway “Joyride” steam train, if only the short distance between Darjeeling and Ghum. In **Sri Lanka**, riding a mixed passenger-freight from Haputale to Nanu Oya, watching a work gang hitch a ride by tying their “hand-trolleys” to the rear Observation Saloon car. Boarding *Podi Menike* (No. 1006) at Nanu Oya and finding ourselves the only foreigners in a 1st class Coach filled with an extended family returning to Colombo from a reunion, musicians and singers entertaining us with traditional Sri Lankan folk songs.

MILESTONES

Indian Railways introducing its first, “semi-high-speed” train, *Gatimaan Express*, between Agra and Delhi – with others to follow on routes such as Delhi-Chandigarh and Mumbai-Goa. In Sri Lanka, we observed Canadian-built, Class M2 diesel No. 592 NOVA SCOTIA, sent to Sri Lanka Railways (along with 11 others) under the Colombo Plan aid program – each prominently displaying, six decades later, the name of a Canadian province or city.



[Indian Railways 21-day Indrail pass, “Air Conditioned Class” (2016)]



[Ceylon Government Railways logo, still being used by Sri Lanka Railways on ticket stock in 2016 (en.wikipedia.org)]

TRIPS AND TRAIN COMPOSITION

• **4-5 APR:** To **DELHI** on Air Canada, beginning with an Embraer 190 to Toronto, then Boeing 787 “Dreamliner” non-stop to India, involving some 14 hours in the air with minimal legroom. By taxi to Hotel Grand Godwin, a 5-minute walk from New Delhi train station, arriving at midnight (two nights there); * We got right into it next day, touring Delhi on the Metro Yellow Line (to bazaar-like Chandni Chowk), then by 3-wheeled, motorized auto rickshaw (called “tuk-tuks”) from Indian Railway’s Delhi Jct. station, through ever-present gridlock and choking clouds of vehicle exhaust, to the massive Red Fort, built by the Mughals in the 17th century and later used by what the Indians call, “The Britishers”.

7 APR:

IR 12002 NEW DELHI-AGRA CANTT [BHOPAL] Bhopal Shatabdi

Ee	[30027 Champala]
XU	
C	[19]
XU	

To **AGRA**, Uttar Pradesh, to visit the Taj Mahal, accessing New Delhi station by tuk-tuk; * Depart 0600, arrive Cantt station at 0757, stopping only at Mathura Jct., on a train hauled by a WAP-5 electric locomotive built at Chittaranjan Locomotive Works, and occupying a 1st class Coach; * 196 km in 1 hr 57 mins, or 101 km/h (122 mls/63 mph); * No. 30027 (CLW, 1997); * By tuk-tuk to Hotel Kamal (three nights), spending the afternoon at Taj Mahal, the beautiful white mausoleum dating back to the 17th century.

BHOPAL SHATABDI

... was a day express to Agra and Bhopal, the entire distance being just shy of 700 kilometres (437 miles). (If Bhopal sounds familiar, this was where a major gas leak from a Union Carbide plant occurred in 1984, killing upwards of 16,000.) “Shatabdi” means “Express”, and many trains still carried the English word in their name. We were in one of two “First AC Chair Cars”, the other 17 being 2nd class vehicles. With only one intermediate stop, this was one of the fastest trains in India – at only 97 km (60 mph). (The first and last vehicles were Baggage/Guard/Generator cars.)

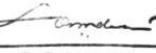


2010's-20: Indian Railways' WAP-5 Electric No. 30027 waits to take *Bhopal Shatabdi* out of New Delhi station, just before 0600 hours (2016/04/07) [PETER DAWES].

INDIAN RAILWAYS (IR)

... operated some 66,000 kilometres (41,200 miles) of primary track and 7,110 stations, carried 23 million passengers per day (half intercity; half suburban), possessed 66,400 passenger cars, and ran 12,600 passenger trains daily. It was divided into zones, each called a railway (in this case, "Northern Railway"). Mainline gauge was wide in nature (1,676 mm ([5'6"])), but we also would travel over the Kalka-Simla (762 mm [2'6"]) and Darjeeling Himalayan (610 mm [2']) railways. Annual IR revenues were around 30 billion in recent years, with a paper profit of 3 billion (both in Canadian dollars), but one assumes this would be only after the inclusion of massive subsidies on the revenue side.

- **8 APR:** To **Fatehpur Sikri** by means of a 75-minute local bus trip, to visit the imperial palace complex dating back to the late 16th century, this having been the capital of the Mughal Empire back then.

Mr PH DAWES 5805-112 STREET #304 EDMONTON AB T6H 3T4 CANADA		S.D.E.L. LONDON 29 DEC 2015  G.S.A. (UK) 	
SDEL4516-4517/11 Mr PH DAWES BAAC 372 Ms SC DAWES BAAC 373			
Dep date	dep station	arr station name	Dep Time
07-Apr-16	New Delhi	Agra Cant.	06:00:
09-Apr-16	Agra Cant.	New Delhi	17:55:
10-Apr-16	New Delhi	KALKA	07:40
10-Apr-16	KALKA	SHIMLA	12:10:
12-Apr-16	SHIMLA	KALKA	17:40:
12-Apr-16	KALKA	DELHI JN	23:55:
13-Apr-16	New Delhi	VARANASI	06:30:
16-Apr-16	VARANASI	MOGHULSARAI	08:35
16-Apr-16	MOGHULSARAI	NEWJALPAIGURI	16:10
20-Apr-16	NEWJALPAIGURI	SEALDAH	22:45
21-Apr-16	HOWRAH	MADRAS CENTRAL	06:45
			14-Apr-16
			14-Apr-16
			16-Apr-16
			17-Apr-16
			21-Apr-16
			22-Apr-16
			12562
			12312
			12002
			12137
			52455
			52452
			12011
			12424
			13010
			12378
			12841
			SHATABDI EXPRESS
			PUNJAB MAIL
			SHATABDI EXPRESS
			Himalayan Queen
			SHIVALIK EXPRESS
			KLK HWH MAIL
			Swatantrata Express
			DOON EXPRESS
			RAJDHANI EXPRESS
			Patadik Express
			CORAMANDAL EXPRESS

ALL TRAIN TIMINGS SHOULD BE CHECKED LOCALLY. THE RESERVATION FOR EACH JOURNEY MUST BE CHECKED LOCALLY AND RECONFIRMED ON ARRIVAL AT THE RAILWAY STATION.

Please ensure that you obtain the PNR No. for each of the journeys prior to travel. They can be obtained from us by telephoning us in advance (approx. 1 week prior to departure) or at the International Tourist Bureau in New Delhi station.

WHILE IN DELHI PLEASE CONTACT SUPERVISOR, "INTERNATIONAL TOURIST BUREAU", 1ST FLOOR, NEW DELHI RAILWAY STATION FOR RECONFIRMATION OF RESERVATIONS AND HELP. NOTE: THE OFFICE IS ON THE 1ST FLOOR OF NEW DELHI RAILWAY STATION IS OPEN DURING OFFICE HOURS (MON - SAT). PH:23405156. ANY OFFICES OUTSIDE THE RAILWAY STATION ARE NOT LINKED TO THE RAILWAYS. BEWARE OF TOUTS OPERATING IN AND AROUND THE RAILWAY STATIONS OF DELHI AND BOMBAY. THEY GIVE MISLEADING INFORMATION. SDEL AND INDIAN RAILWAYS DO NOT ACCEPT ANY LIABILITY ARISING OUT OF THE INFORMATION GIVEN BY TOUTS.

[Itinerary accompanying our 21-day, "A.C." Indrail Passes (2016)]

INDRAIL PASSES

My initial attempts to book trains online through Indian Railways were frustrating and unsuccessful. In theory, it could be done, and I did end up with an array of User ID's, login passwords, and "Email OTP's" on the "Cleartrip" website – but you must present an Indian mobile phone number, which I could not. (Won't even go into the fun I had earlier on, trying to obtain multiple entry tourist visas here in Canada!) Apparently, this elaborate system was designed to prevent fraudsters from cornering scarce reservations for illegal sale to the public. At one time, you could provide a fake mobile number and attempt to get IR to respond through emails, but this did not work for me. So, thanks to a tip from "The Man in Seat 61" website, I contacted S.D. Enterprises in London, England, who sold us Indrail Passes (which covered all reservation, seat and berth charges), and made all but two of the reservations we required. Subsequently, at the International Tourist Bureau in New Delhi station, IR staff found our reservations handwritten in a log book extracted from a file cabinet, then printed them off a computer – an interesting mix of old and new technology.

IR 64951 [BAYANA JCT.] FATEHPUR SIKRI-AGRA CANTT

PCe
C [4]
PCe
C [4]
PCe
C* [4]
PCe
C [4]

Return by local train, departing one hour 50 minutes late at 1545, arriving one hour 45 minutes behind schedule at 1730, making perhaps a half-dozen stops, including Mirhaker and Pathauli; * * 38 km (estimated) in 1 hr 11 mins, or 32 km/h (24 mls/20 mph), calculated as far as Igdah station.

BAYANA JCT. LOCAL

... was supposed to terminate at Agra Fort station but reached Agra Igdah station at 1656 and sat there until 1721. At this point, it reversed into Cantt station, no explanation provided, but perhaps because no platform was available at Fort during what by then had become rush hour. Our train was long, consisting of four, Power Car+4 Coach units, but was not terribly crowded – at least not by Indian standards.

9 APR:

IR 12049 AGRA CANTT-DELHI HAZRAT NIZAMUDDIN *Gatimaan Express*

Ee [30007]
XU
C [10]
XU

Return to **DELHI**, departing 1750, arriving 1930, non-stop, hauled by an ASEA Brown Boveri WAP-5 electric and occupying one of eight 1AC Coaches – this after a fascinating escorted tour of Agra, in a sense, “beyond the Taj”, involving a taxi, bicycle rickshaw, and lots of walking, then a second (and final) visit to the Taj; * 188 km in 1 hr 40 mins, or 113 km/h (117 mls/70 mph); * No. 30007 (ABB, 1997); * By taxi, after the usual bout of haggling over price, north to the Grand Godwin for the night.



2010's-21: Taj Mahal, from rooftop café of our Hotel Kamal, Agra (2016/04/09) [SANDRA DAWES].

GATIMAAN EXPRESS

... (also spelled "Gatiman") had been put into service earlier during the week, and was being touted as IR's fastest train, at 113 km/h (70 mph). (Apparently, the Hindi word "Gatimaan" can mean simply "moving", or "constantly moving", or "on the move".) We had been booked on No. 12137 *Punjab Mail*, but changed to this faster train once we discovered its existence. Surprisingly, *Gatimaan Express* was not listed on the main electronic train-information board at Agra Cantt, nor was there a directional sign on the main platform. Inquiries led to our being sent up the stairs and over the bridge to a non-existent Platform 6, when our train was sitting on a stub-end track hidden away – beside Platform 1! The train featured 10 air-conditioned passenger-carrying cars, with the usual Baggage/Guard/Generator cars at either end. The many onboard staff were decked in airline-style uniforms, and would serve a passable airline-style meal. We occupied one of eight "AC Chair" cars offering 2+3 seating, because the two, 2+2 "Executive AC Chair" cars were sold out.

10 APR:

IR 12011 NEW DELHI-KALKA *Kalka Shatabdi*

Ee [30222]
XU
C [16]
XU

To **SIMLA**, Himachal Pradesh, to enjoy the “Hill Country”, beginning with this train to Kalka; * Depart 0740, arrive on time at 1145, on a train hauled by a CLW WAP-7 electric locomotive, including stops at Panipat Jct., Gharaunda, Kurukshetra Jct., Ambala and Chandigarh. * We occupied a 1AC Coach; * 305 km in 4 hrs 5 mins, or 75 km/h (190 mls/47 mph); * No. 30222 (CLW, 2011?).

KALKA SHATABDI

... featured two 1st AC cars at the front, right behind the lead Baggage/Guard/Generator car, and ours was sold out as far as the major city of Chandigarh. In the absence of traditional dining or even buffet cars on what might be termed intercity trains, meals appeared to have been contracted out, in this case to a hotel company. We shared a table with a lawyer heading home, and a lady on her way to visit relatives – both leaving the train at Chandigarh. The lady was amazed that, on our very first full day in India, we'd taken the Delhi Metro to the notorious Chandni Chowk – described in the Lonely Planet guide as “a chaotic shopping street, mobbed by hawkers, motorcycles, stray dogs and porters with narrow lanes running off it offering the full medieval bazaar experience” [*India, 16th ed., 61*]. Actually, the rickshaw drivers were by far the most annoying thing, chasing obvious tourists through the maze in the hope of a fare.

APOLOGY, INDIAN RAILWAYS STYLE

Indian accents and sayings posed quite a challenge for us, especially announcements in railway stations – which, it must be said, are famously difficult to understand in any language or accent. We loved the standard announcement in New Delhi station, which was required all too frequently: “TA-DAH!!! The [express] from [wherever] is delayed from its ‘sche-dooled’ time of [whatever]. The inconvenience is to be regretted”.



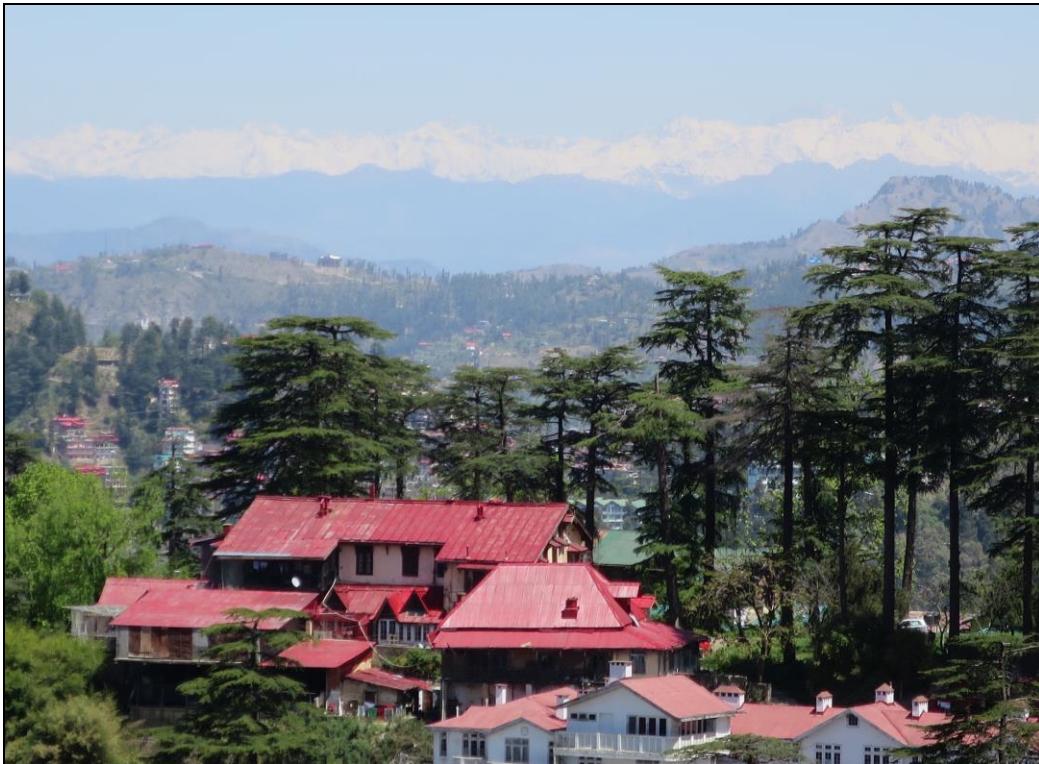
2010's-22: Indian Railways' *Himalayan Queen* crossing a viaduct on Kalka-Simla Railway, a no longer functioning semaphore signal ahead (2016/04/10) [SANDRA DAWES].

IR 52455 KALKA-SIMLA *Himalayan Queen*

Ed [710]

C [5] [KSR] [252CZ]

Depart 10 minutes late at 1220, arrive 25 off the advertised at 1745, on a train hauled by a ZDM3 class diesel built in Central Railway Locomotive Shop, including stops at Dharampur Himachal, Barog and Solan; * After occupying the lone reserved Coach, we booked into the almost-rustic, but homey, Spars Lodge for two nights, up the hill from the train station; * 96 km in 5 hrs 25 mins, or 18 km/h (60 mls/11 mph); * No. 710 (CRLS, 2014); * No. 252CZ (*details unknown*); * We spent the next two days enjoying the pedestrian mall (passing by interesting buildings that once housed Thomas Cook & Son and the telegraph office), but particularly the baronial Viceregal Lodge, summer residence of the Viceroy of India during the British Raj – for us, quite a relief from the Delhi crowds, hustlers, 42C temperatures, and choking air pollution.



2010's-23: View of shimmering Himalayan Mountains
from Simla (2016/04/11) [SANDRA DAWES].

HIMALAYAN QUEEN

... was hauled by a diesel locomotive over this 762 mm (2'6") gauge mountain line, which was opened in 1898 to provide more comfortable travel for the British, who essentially moved the entire government of India from Delhi to the cooler temperatures of Simla during summers. The five Coaches were lettered for Kalka-Simla Railway, ours being the only reserved car. Feeling cramped for a 5½-hour trip in our sold-out car, we lucked in with a nice family sitting across from us, whose aim was to escape the heat of the Indian plains. (The conductor allowed a family of six to sit on the floor at the rear end of our car, despite their having no reservations.) The scenery was spectacular, and the operations most interesting, given 102 tunnels, employees flagging our train in and out of each station, and meets with several trains heading down the mountain in the other direction.

12 APR:

IR 52452 SIMLA-KALKA *Shivalik Deluxe Express*

Ed	[706]
C [5]	[641, 638FCZ, 642, 632, 99, 627]

To **VARANASI**, Uttar Pradesh, via Kalka and Delhi, starting with this train back down to Kalka [**all equipment lettered for KSR**]; * Depart 1740, arrive 15 minutes late at 2240; * 96 km in 5 hrs, or 19 km/h (60 mls/12 mph); * No. 638FCZ (*details unknown*).

SHIVALIK DELUXE EXPRESS

... was named after a mountain range in the outer Himalayas, and was much more luxurious than the "up" *Himalayan Queen*. While a bit ratty, our Coach No. 638FCZ featured 2+1 seating and curry meals served, at seat, from a rudimentary food-preparation shelf at the rear of the car. (Eleven of the 18 seats were occupied.) When we reached Barog at 2030 hours, a huge pot of soup was delivered to our car, and duly served upon departure. (Afterwards, it was a little disconcerting to watch as the attendant washed the cutlery and dishes, right there on the floor, which was directly outside the "Latrine".) As darkness fell, staff at each station would signal us to proceed by means of blazing torches, the classic semaphore signals having been replaced by a "Lock & Key" system, which ensured that only one train could occupy a certain stretch of track.



[From sign in Simla station (2016)] [SANDRA DAWES].

12-13 APR:**IR 12312 KALKA-DELHI JCT. [KOLKATA HOWRAH] *Kalka-Howrah Mail***

Ee
 CX
 C
 T [6]
S* [5]
 C
 CX

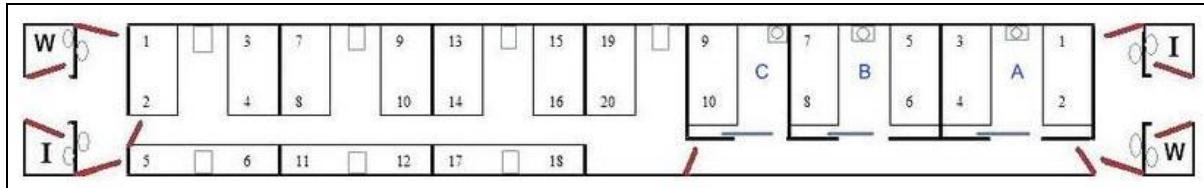
Depart 2355, arrive next morning at 0630, behind an unrecorded electric locomotive, occupying berths in a 4-berth cabin in one of two “1AC2” cars; * After negotiating ramshackle Delhi Jct. station, we took the Yellow Line Metro south to New Delhi station and a tuk-tuk over to Hotel Grand Godwin again, where we hired a room for day use; * 303 km in 6 hrs 35 mins, or 46 km/h (189 mls/29 mph); * By noon, we were on the Orange Metro Line to Daula Kuan station, then by tuk-tuk to the National Railway Museum (lots of vintage equipment, including luxury carriages used by the British during the Raj, but little restored for more than exterior viewing); * Onward by tuk-tuk to Lodi Gardens (featuring tombs of 15th century Indian rulers), after which we took a Yellow Line train from Jor Bagh station back to New Delhi station and our hotel.

KALKA-HOWRAH MAIL

... would pause at Delhi Jct. station, before continuing all the way across the country to Howrah station in Kolkata. When we pulled into Chandigarh at around 0100 hours, a friendly older lady entered our “Cabin” and took her lower berth, across from mine and under Sandra’s upper. Our train included five Sleeping cars (Indian Railways using “Tier” in place of “Class”, as we know the term; “AC” standing for Air Conditioned): • one, **1AC2** car (one 2-berth and two 4-berth “Cabins” in 1st Tier; three 4-berth and four 2-berth sections in 2nd Tier); • two **2AC** cars (seven 4-berth and nine 2-berth sections, all in 2nd Tier); and • two **3AC** cars (eight 6-berth and eight 2-berth sections in 3rd Tier). The 1st tier cabins had sliding doors; the 2nd tier sections were protected by curtains, and the 3rd tier sections had no privacy whatsoever. (IR does not use the term “section”, but this is what they most resembled in North American experience, given the use, in 2nd tier at least, of curtains. They called the 2-berth cabins, “Coupés”.) **[continued on next page]**

KALKA-HOWRAH MAIL *[continued]*

Some of the 2- and 6-berth sections were located parallel to the aisle, alongside the windows. There were also six “Sleeper Class” cars in No. 12312, this meaning, in India, downgraded European Couchette accommodations. Each car offered nine 6-berth and nine 2-berth sections, for 72 accommodations in total, transformed into berths at night. No cabins and no curtains, but reservable in advance.





2010's-24: Passengers wait on Platform 13 for *Swatantrata Sainani Express* to be positioned for boarding, New Delhi station – actually, not that crowded in comparison with other platforms we encountered (2016/04/13) [SANDRA DAWES].

13-14 APR:

IR 12562 NEW DELHI-VARANASI JCT. [JAYNAGAR] *Swatantrata Sainani Express*

Ee
XU
C [3]
T [12]
B
S* [4]
XU

Depart 20 minutes late at 2050, arrive next morning three hours behind schedule at 1130, the many stops including Aligarh Jct., Kanpur and Allahabad Jct.; * We occupied berths in a 4-berth cabin in a 1AC2 car; * By tuk-tuk to the edge of the old city, then by foot to Hotel Alka, right on River Ganges (three nights there); * 759 km in 14 hrs 40 mins, or 53 km/h (474 mls/33 mph); **[continued on next page]**

LA GRANDE ALLURE: 2016



2010's-25: Four-berth Cabin B in 1AC2 Sleeping car, *Swatantrata Sainani Express* (2016/04/13) [SANDRA DAWES].

* This holiest of Hindu cities, Varanasi, was the most interesting place we visited during the entire six weeks, tourists requiring a guide (typically a young boy associated with the hotel) in order to negotiate the confusing, rabbit warren-like alleyways (highlights including a noisy and colourful night time Hindu flotilla passing down the river right in front of our hotel-room balcony, and a beach, slightly downriver, where the wealthy were being cremated 24 hours a day, their ashes thrown into the river).



[Logo on side of Agra-Delhi *Gatimaan* Express coach (spelled here, "Gatiman"), Hazrat Nizamuddin station (2016/04/09) [SANDRA DAWES].

SWATANTRATA SAINANI EXPRESS

... (*meaning “Freedom Fighter Express”*) joined New Delhi with Varanasi, and would continue on another 476 kilometres (297 miles) to Jaynagar, in the state of Bihar. No. 12562 featured four Sleeping cars: two 1AC2; one 2AC; and one 3AC. Despite averaging just 53 kilometres (33 miles) per hour from New Delhi to Varanasi, it was subtitled, not just an “Express”, but a “Super Fast Express”! Capacity must have been around one thousand, as the chaotic scenes as the train pulled in for loading in New Delhi suggested. As we waited, a young mother allowed her toddler to relieve herself right there on the platform – which seemed perfectly natural, this being India. Fellow passengers in our 1AC2 Sleeping car cabin were two nice young guys, one going to some intermediate point well to the east of Varanasi, the other right to the end. Alas, the air conditioning in our car was cranked up so high that we had to bundle up – the only time on our Indian and Sri Lankan trains.

PLAYING THE SYSTEM

One of the fellows in our cabin spoke good English and was a frequent traveller between Delhi (where he worked) and his hometown of Jaynagar. He explained the mysteries of advance booking on Indian Railways: join the wait list on one, two or even three trains, and wait for someone else to upgrade or cancel, thus opening up a berth. IR’s reservation system was sophisticated enough to keep intending passengers instantly informed of any upgrade, through cellphones. He also advised that this train was always late, due mainly to congestion on these busy lines – and he proved correct, as we straggled into Varanasi Jct. station three hours behind.

HOT BUFFET CAR

... was in the consist of our *Swatantrata Sainani Express*, positioned between the “Sleeper Class” cars and actual Sleeping cars. Our cabin mates introduced us to railway style breakfast on this classic Indian long-distance, overnight regional train frequented by few tourists. Staff from the Buffet car would come around taking orders, then return with the food, which was consumed right in your berth, lower or upper. Obviously, the days of dining and lounge cars were long gone.



2010's-26: Evening Hindu festival along River Ganges, as viewed from balcony of Hotel Alka, Varanasi, many pilgrims watching from hired boats (2016/04/14) [SANDRA DAWES].

16-17 APR:

IR 12424 [NEW DELHI] MUGHALSARAI-NEW JALPAIGURI [DIBRUGARH] Dibrugarh Rajdhani Express

Ee	NEW DELHI-BARAUNI [30403]
Ed	BARAUNI-DIBRUGARH [40037]
XU	
S [6]	[13002/C]
B	
S [12]	
XU	

To **DARJEELING**, West Bengal, via New Jalpaiguri, starting with an early evening taxi ride from Varanasi

LA GRANDE ALLURE: 2016

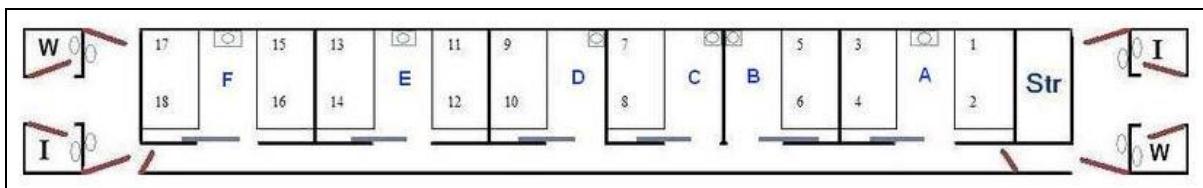
east to the major junction point of Mughalsarai (18 kilometres [*11 miles*]), through thick clouds of vehicle exhaust, thanks to severe air pollution just about as bad as Delhi's; * Depart Mughalsarai Jct. one hour late at 2355, arrive next morning 45 minutes behind schedule at 1130, stops including Patna, Barauni, Katihar and KisanGani, behind a WAP-7 electric as far as Barauni, then WDP-4B diesel beyond ; * We occupied berths in a 4-berth cabin of a 1AC car, the only one of this type in the all-Sleeping car consist; * 686 km in 11 hrs 35 mins, or 59 km/h (*428 mls/37 mph*); * Nos. 30403 (*CLW, 2014*), 40037 (*DLW, year unknown*); * Sleeping car No. 13002/C 1AC (*Builder & Year?, 3dc3qc*); * Onward through the Himalayan foothills to Darjeeling, a 3-hour 15-minute trip up a winding road complete with switchbacks, in a shared jeep sporting a steering wheel taped together and one completely bald tire, followed by check-in at Dekeling Hotel (three nights); * Graced, like Simla, with a mostly traffic-free pedestrian mall, Darjeeling's highlights included the Zoological Park (featuring Bengal Tigers and Black Leopards), Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, and Happy Valley Tea Estate – plus Darjeeling Himalayan Railway.

DIBRUGARH RAJDHANI EXPRESS

... was one of 22 all-Sleeping car trains operated by Indian Railways in and out of Delhi/New Delhi, "Rajdhani" meaning "Capital". This one featured these cars: one 1AC (ours); five 2AC; and 12, 3AC. (We had booked seats on No. 13010, *Doon Express*, from Varanasi the short distance over to Mughalsarai, but having encountered late running trains, we cancelled in favour of a taxi.) Our 1AC Sleeping car was configured in three 2-berth and three 4-berth cabins, all in 1st Tier. Arrival from New Delhi did not happen until 2345 (around an hour late), and in the meantime, two trains (also late) arrived at our platform, causing much confusion. We discovered that the solution was to visit the "Ticket Collector's Office", where one of the officials was able to check our "Journey cum Reservation Ticket" against a computer printout and determine that we were supposed to occupy Cabin C in the 1AC Sleeping car. Thankfully, given that this would be a 21-car train, he was able to tell us exactly where to stand on the platform. Sure enough, when No. 12424 finally pulled in, the attendant of our car was there in an instant and led us to the front of train. Cabin C was a 2-berth "Coupé", but instead we were shown to one of the 4-berth cabins, in which two people were already asleep, an older lady in one of the lower berths and a young gentleman in the upper berth above her – this mixing of sexes, in a room with a sliding, lockable door, apparently of no concern in India.

ONE OF THE WORST STATIONS IN INDIA?

Mughalsarai was the fourth-busiest junction station in India, and left much to be desired as a place in which to wait for our late running *Dibrugarh Rajdhani Express*. Rats scurried in and out cracks in the walls, up from and down to the tracks, and right across those intending passengers who chose to lie right on the platform. Officials did not seem to take any notice of these rodents as they ran around the Ticket Collector's Office! Another problem occurred when a typically long train of 20 some cars arrived and sat for 15 or 20 minutes of servicing, before resuming its journey. Apparently, there were no signs asking passengers to refrain from using the toilets while in a station, because the track would be covered with excrement after the train left – presumably much to the delight of the rats.



[Diagram of an Indian Railways 1AC Sleeping car in Dibrugarh Rajdhani Express, author and wife occupying one of the three, 4-berth cabins (indiamike.com)]



[Banner on side of a Sleeping car in Dibrugarh Rajdhani Express, New Jalpaiguri (2016/04/16)] [SANDRA DAWES].



2010's-27: Rear end of *Dibrugarh Rajdhani* Express being serviced at New Jalpaiguri Jct. (2016/04/17) [SANDRA DAWES].

BREAKFAST

... was provided in our Sleeping car cabin, which, by then, we had to ourselves, our companions having decamped during the night. "Meals on Wheels" were delivered to 1AC passengers right in their cabins, and while hardly the equivalent of Dining car service, the breakfast fare was acceptable, if heavy on plastic utensils and packaging. We had a standoff with the employee who had delivered the food: he brought in a tray with some condiments, along with two, 500 Rupee bills, and we soon realized that he expected the same from us – despite these words on the placemat that accompanied the meal: "We Solicit your co-operation for [Sic] not paying any tips". A bit later, the Sleeping car attendant showed up, demanding (only) 500 Rupees! On subsequent trips, several fellow passengers told us that, indeed, tipping was not necessary.



[From "Menu for Rajdhani & Shatabdi Express Trains", as accompanied breakfast on Dibrugarh Rajdhani Express (2016/04/17)]

WELCOME DRINK		• Tea/Coffee:	
• Fruit Juice/Coconut Water/Lassi/ Chaac/Aerated Cold Drink		Sugar/Sugar Free Sachet	01 No.
MORNING TEA/COFFEE		Coffee/Tea Bag	01 No.
• Digestive Biscuits	2 Nos.	Creamer Sachets	01 No.
• Tea/Coffee:			
Sugar/Sugar Free Sachet	01 No.		
Coffee/Tea Bag	01 No.		
Creamer Sachets	01 No.		
• Refreshing Tissue			
BREAKFAST			
• Cornflakes/Oats with Milk & Sugar		• 2 Vegetable Cutlet with Finger Chips and Boiled Veg	
• White/Brown Bread Slices	2 Nos.	Or	
• Marmalade/Jam Sachet	01 No.	2 Stuffed Parantha with Branded Curd & Pickle	
• Butter Chiplet	01 No.	Or	
• Assorted Fruit (Apple/Orange/Banana)	01 No.	Idli & Medu Vada with Sambhar & Chutney	
• Tomato Ketchup Sachet	01 No.	Or	
• Salt & Pepper Sachet (1 Each)		Rawa Upma & Medu Vada with Sambhar & Chutney	
		OR	
		Non-Vegetarian	
		• Capsicum/Onion/Tomato/Plain Omelette of 2 Eggs with Finger Chips & Boiled Veg	

[From "Meals on Wheels" brochure, "Menu for Rajdhani & Shatabdi Express Trains", Dibrugarh Rajdhani Express (2016/04/17)]

18 APR:

IR 52548 DARJEELING-GHUM & RETURN

Es	[NFR]	[805 Iron Sherpa]
C	[2]	[DHR] [71A, 86A]

To **GHUM**, on a short, Darjeeling Himalayan Railways "Joy Ride" excursion; *Depart 1040, arrive 1130, behind a 0-4-0ST steam engine marked "NF" for IR's North East Frontier Railway division; * We occupied one of two Coaches, pausing for five 5 minutes, mid-way, at Batasia Loop; * A "second section" followed us closely, featuring three cars hauled by a diesel; * 7 km in 40 mins, or 10 km/h (4 mls/7 mph); * No. 805 (NBL, 1928); * Nos. 71A (1968), 86A (2001) (*builders unknown*); *Returning, depart 1205, arrive 1240, the outbound and return trains carrying the same number, with one stop at "West Point Watering Point".



[Older and newer logos for Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, displayed at Darjeeling station and on side of a Coach, respectively (2016/04/18)] [SANDRA DAWES].



2010's-28: Darjeeling Himalayan Railway 0-4-0ST No. 805, IRON SHERPA, stopped for water on its return run down from Ghum into Darjeeling (2016/04/20) [SANDRA DAWES].

DARJEELING HIMALAYAN RAILWAY

... was a 610 mm (2'), narrow-gauge line opened in 1881 between New Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling, a distance of 88 kilometres (55 miles), climbing the Himalayan foothills up to this city famous for the black tea produced in and around. Styled "The Toy Train", the railway had been designated in 1999 as a protected UNESCO World Heritage Area. From 2009 to 2015, the bottom two-thirds of the line was out of action, due to landslides, and by this point, steam operations appeared to be restricted to the 7 km (4 miles) between Darjeeling and Ghum, styled as the "Joy Ride". As for Darjeeling, it boasted a large, well-kept station, although the toilets left a lot to be desired. The railway seemed quite the operation, with lots of staff scurrying around, especially at train time. For example, when a sudden downpour came in through an open window and left some water on a few seats of our car, at least three male employees showed up, then summoned two female colleagues to actually towel up the moisture! The locomotive shed across the street boasted of four steam locomotives, including IRON SHERPA, built in 1928 by North British Locomotive Co. of Glasgow.

20 APR:

IR 52548 DARJEELING-GHUM & RETURN

[As for train directly above]

Back up to **GHUM**, one more “Joy Ride” on our last day in Darjeeling, encountering the same consist as two days before – as well as the same, shrill whistling as the train made its way alongside and across the parallel road several times, each Coach hand-braked during the descent.

THE MYSTERIES OF INDIAN RAILWAYS

... were no more evident than in my several attempts to nail down information and book the “Toy Train”, the original intention being to arrive New Jalpaiguri on an earlier train from Varanasi and connect directly to the run up to Darjeeling. Our London agency said it could not reserve New Jalpaiguri-Darjeeling (no explanation forthcoming). Nor would IR’s International Tourist Bureau in New Delhi station; in fact, they made things worse by telling us that trains were running only between Kurseong and Darjeeling, which constituted only the highest third of the line. As with the other reservations, booking on-line proved futile, because one needed to provide an Indian mobile phone number even before getting to India. We only discovered that a train indeed was running over the entire route when, during breakfast in Darjeeling, an American fellow showed us his ticket for that day’s Darjeeling-to-New Jalpaiguri train – a standard, Indian Railways, computer-generated ticket! Alas, the train was then running the full distance only three times per week, took around 10 hours, was hauled by a smelly diesel, and in any case would not have fitted with our onward train reservation out of New Jalpaiguri. Regrettably, we rented a taxi for the descent.

20-21 APR:

IR 12378 NEW JALPAIGURI-KOLKATA SEALDAH *Padatik* Express

Ed	[12040]
C	[2]
S*	[9]
T	[8]
C	[2]
XU	

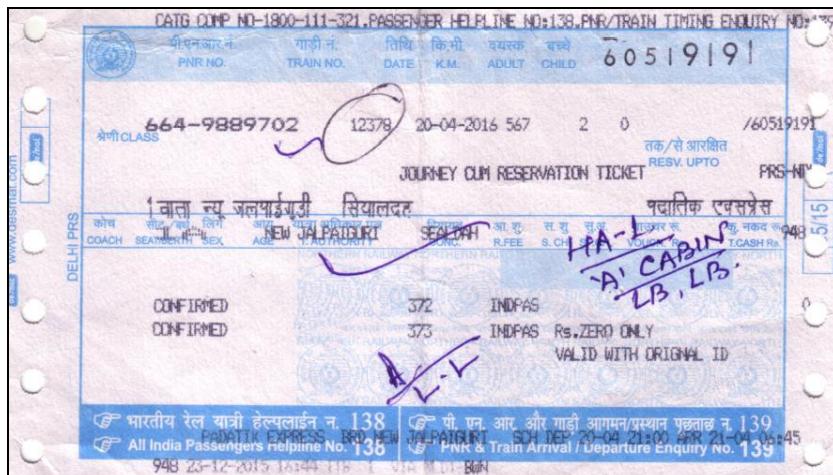


2010's-29: Partial facade of Howrah station, 23 platforms and busiest in India, several of Kolkata's no-longer-in-production, Morris-based taxis out front (2016/04/21) [SANDRA DAWES].

To **CHENNAI**, Tamil Nadu, via Kolkata, starting with a taxi down to New Jalpaiguri (NJP) (passing the NJP-originating "Toy Train" at 1540, hurrying along its way up to Darjeeling in the early evening darkness); * Depart NJP 15 minutes late at 2115, arrive Sealdah station next morning, 30 minutes late at 0715, behind a WDG-4 Class diesel, intermediate points including KisanGani, Katihar (bypass), Malda Town, Rampurhat and Bolpur; * We occupied berths in a 4-berth cabin in a 1AC car; * 573 km in 10 hrs, or 57 km/h (358 mls/37 mph); * No. 12040 (DLW, 2003); * Possibly straight Baggage rather than Baggage Generator car at rear; * We spent the seven hours between arriving on this train and catching our next on a pre-booked city automobile tour, highlights including: • the "mother house" of Mother Teresa; • Kali Buddhist temple (where a dead goat greeted us, it having just been sacrificed!); • impressive (Queen) Victoria Memorial; • lunch in an authentic, hole-in-the-wall Bengali restaurant; • visit to a huge dump, passing nearby family dwellings of the "pickers" who spent their lives combing through the garbage, in a primitive system of recycling; and • straight to Howrah station for our next (and final) train in India.

PADATIK EXPRESS

... was an overnight service from New Jalpaiguri (NJP) to Kolkata Sealdah station, featuring nine Sleeping cars: one 1AC (ours); one 1AC2; two 2AC; and 5 3AC. It also carried eight "Sleeper Class" cars, and four non-reserved Coaches. (With the latter, it was interesting to watch hundreds of passengers form a queue, at this provincial station, towards the non-reserved Coaches at the front – quite a contrast with the chaos witnessed at big city stations.) As at Mughalsarai, we sleuthed out the "Ticket Collectors Office", discovering that we would be in 4-berth Cabin A of Car H-1, lower berths. Despite this train starting its journey at NJP, our Sleeping car attendant had not made up the beds, and there much confusion as to who held what berth – which we straightened out with the other passengers, some of whom moved to another car.



[“Journey cum Reservation Ticket” for New Jalpaiguri-Kolkata, Padatik Express, 1AC Sleeping car, Line No. HA1, Cabin A, Lower Berths]



[Indian Railways beverage coaster, called just “Railway” here]

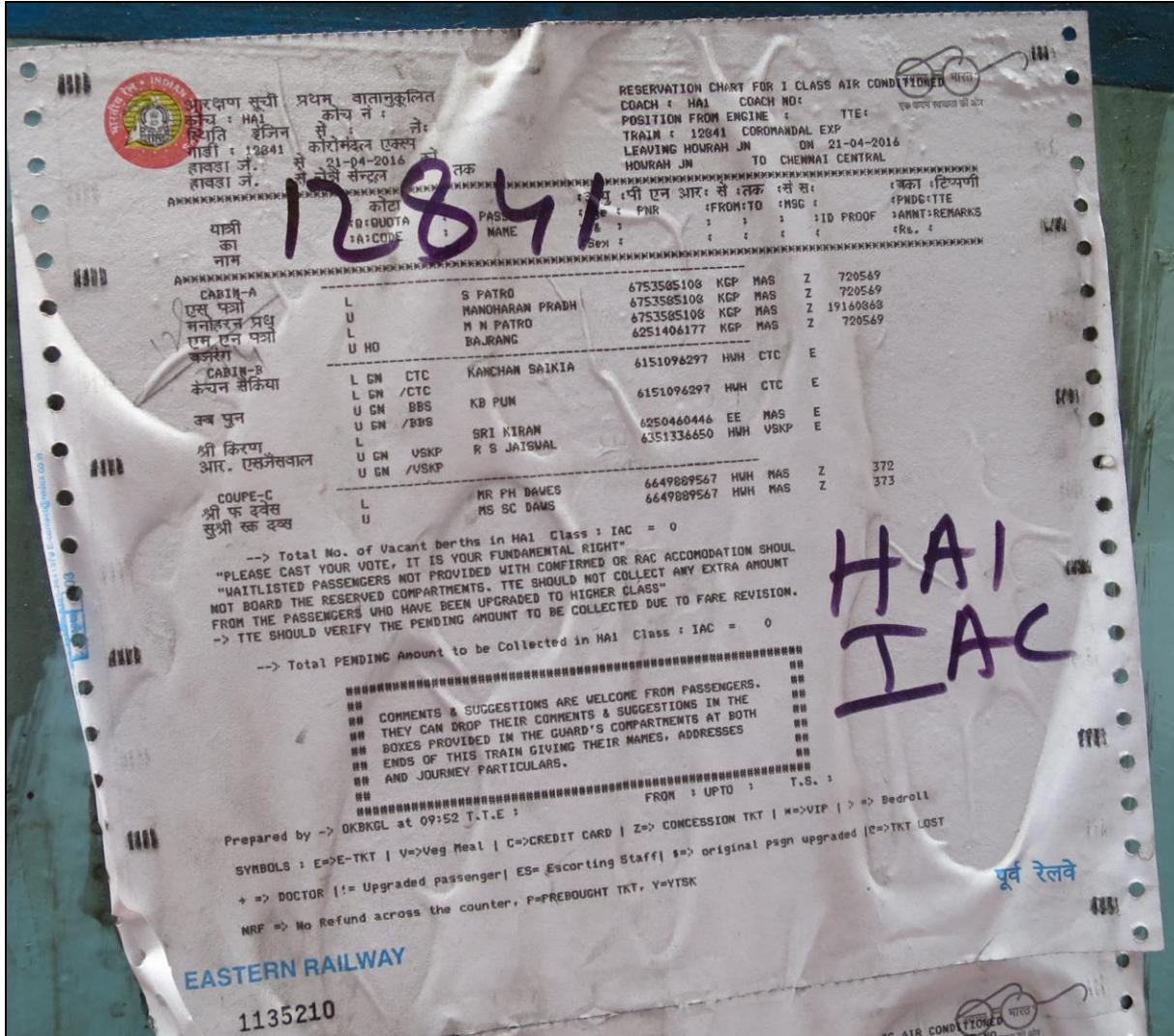


2010's-30: Indian Railways 1AC2 Sleeping car No. 078029/C, in *Coromandel Express*, boarding at Kolkata Howrah station (2016/04/21) [PETER DAWES].

21-22 APR:

IR 12841 KOLKATA HOWRAH-CHENNAI CENTRAL *Coromandel Express*

Ee	[22287]
XU	
C	[2]
T	[10]
B	
T	[2]
S	[6]
C	[2]
XU	



2010's-31: Reservation Chart for 1AC2 Sleeping car No. 078029/C, in *Coromandel Express*, Kolkata Howrah station, author and wife in "COUPE C" (2016/04/21) [PETER DAWES].

Depart 1450, arrive Central station next afternoon 25 minutes late at 1745, behind a WAP-4 Class electric, stops including Jaipur, Rajahmundry, Eluru and Vijayawada Jct.; * We occupied berths in a 2-berth "Coupé" of the lone 1AC2 car; * Directly to Hotel La Woods by taxi for one night, before heading next morning to Colombo; * 1,662 km in 26 hrs 55 mins, or 62 km/h (1,037 mls/39 mph); * No. 22287 (CLW, 19??); * Sleeping car No. 078029/C 1AC2 (*manufacturer & year?*, 1dc2qc 1st, 4dc3qc 2nd).



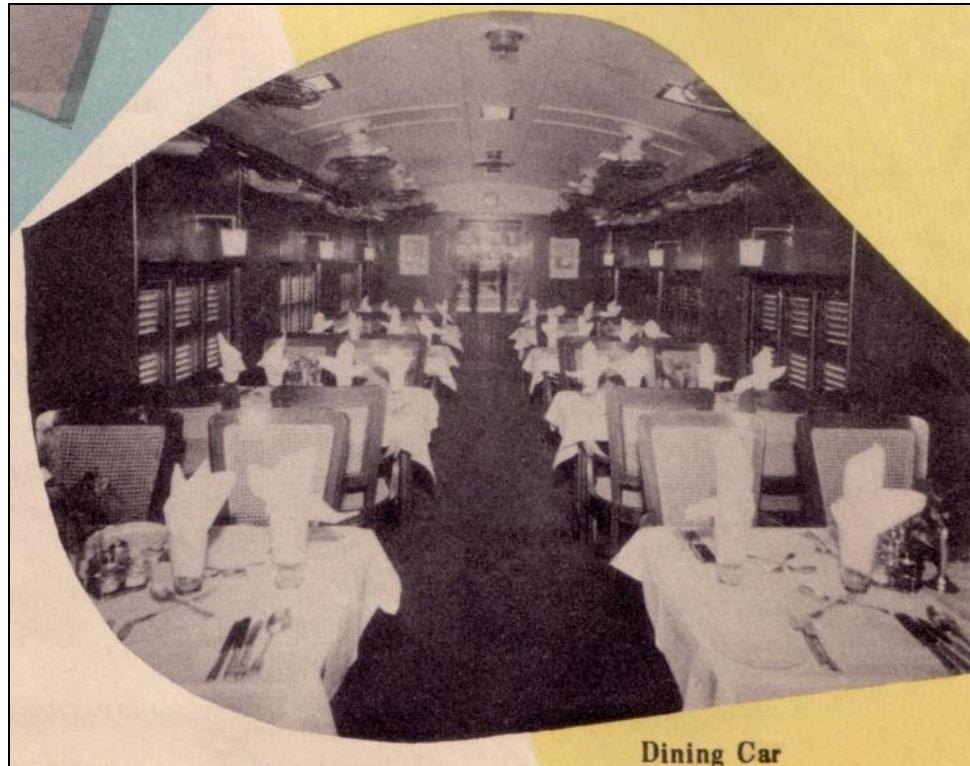
2010's-32: Passengers from non-reserved coaches of *Coromandel Express* stretch and buy food during Eluru stop (2016/04/22) [PETER DAWES].

COROMANDEL EXPRESS

... was an overnight service from Kolkata Howrah station to Chennai Central, the name referring to the Coromandel Coast, which stretched from the Bay of Bengal south to the foot of the subcontinent. Sometimes called (at least unofficially), *Chennai Mail*, this train featured six Sleeping cars: one 1AC2 (ours); two 2AC; and three 3AC. It also carried 12 "Sleeper Class" cars, and four non-reserved Coaches. This time, we could not find the "Ticket Collectors Office" in sprawling Howrah, but we were able to obtain our Sleeping car particulars from the general information office, namely Coupé C in Car HA-1. This was the only one of five overnight trips where we had a 2-berth compartment – and therefore privacy.

NOT THE CANADIAN

Although we appreciated the Coupé to ourselves on *Coromandel Express* , we did feel a bit “cooped” up, this being a 27-hour journey. Unlike our Toronto-Vancouver *Canadian*, there was no escaping to a dining car, café or lounge – and certainly nothing like a dome for better viewing. Worse, the windows of our Sleeping car were made of Lexan, and were terribly scratched, making sightseeing difficult. Not to worry: we were at the end of a hectic 2½ weeks covering a good part of India, and were looking forward to flying onward from Chennai to Colombo the following day.



[What would have been nice on Coromandel Express: Indian Railways Dining car, from tourist time table (1962)]

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

By this time, on *Coromandel Express*, we had become more confident about eating train food, and thus ordered chicken and fish curries for lunch – delivered to our compartment from what was called, on this train, the “Pantry” car. By Chennai, we would have almost 5,000 kilometres (3,200 miles) on Indian Railways behind us. One annoying thing was that some locals could be quite aggressive when trying to get information at train stations, requiring the use of elbows to maintain position in the lineup. But most people we met on the trains were great; in fact, when approaching Chennai, Sandra asked the gentleman in the next compartment about how best to order a taxi at Central station, also whether we needed to tip staff – just to confirm things. Turned out he was director of medial surgery at a private hospital in Chennai, and he said no tipping was required. He ordered us a taxi by cellphone, then walked us through the usual chaotic station scene right to the taxi stand.

GRAND TRUNK EXPRESS

... was one train I'd always wanted to ride, given the famous Grand Trunk and Grand Trunk Pacific railways of Canada. Popularly known as *G.T. Express*, it ran directly between Chennai and New Delhi, 35 hours over some 2,200 kilometres (1,400 miles).



[Trainboard photographed at an unknown station (en. [wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Trunk_Express](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Trunk_Express))]

- **23 APR:** To **COLOMBO** on a SriLankan [Sic] Airlines Airbus 330, then by taxi to the faded, but still elegant, Grand Oriental Hotel (three nights); * Over the next two days, we would explore old quarter Pettah and its vast market, take an evening bus tour around the city, and walk along the ocean to the classic and renovated Galle Face Hotel (built in 1864), where Kandyan Dancers and an elaborately decorated elephant happened to be performing for a convention.



2010's-33: Sri Lanka Railways No. 8050 pulls into Colombo Fort from Maradana station at 0645 behind Class M10A diesel 944, to board passengers for Galle and Matara (2016/04/26) [PETER DAWES].

26 APR:

SL 8050 [MARADANA] COLOMBO FORT-MATARA

Ed	[944]
C	[16052]
CX	
C	[7]
CX	

To **GOYAMBOKKA**, Southern Province, beginning with a “Semi-Express” departing 0655, arriving Matara 38 minutes late at 1120, behind an M10A Class diesel built at Varanasi, India, by Diesel Locomotive Works, stops including Kalutara, Bentota, Hikkaduwa and Galle; * We occupied seats in the only 1st class Coach; * 159 km in 4 hrs 25 mins, or 36 km/h (99 mls/23 mph); * No. 944 (DLW, 2013); * No. AFC 16052 (*details unknown*); * Onward to Goyambokka by tuk-tuk (40 km [25 mls]; one hour 15 minutes; a long way in a 3-wheeler!), where we checked into Palm Paradise Cabanas for three nights – hokey name, but located in a beautiful coconut grove right next to the Indian Ocean.

NO. 8050

... was a no-name, Sri Lanka Railways (SL) "Semi-Express" originating at Colombo Maradana station, then pausing at Fort to receive the bulk of its passengers. The oceanside scenery was beautiful, but even if on time, the train was scheduled to average only 42 kilometres (26 miles) per hour from Fort to end-of-the line at Matara. This was the only train on Sri Lanka's busiest rail route (the "Southern Line") that offered 1st class, and the only one on which one could reserve 2nd class as well. There was double track as far as Galle, where the train reversed direction for the rest of the run on single track – but the entire line was signalled. However, for a line upgraded after the 2004 tsunami, our train was surprisingly rough-riding. (The line was being extended 27 km (17 mls) beyond Matara to Beliatta, thanks to US\$283 million in Chinese loans.)

RAJADHANI EXPRESS

Coach AFC 16052 was air-conditioned and grandly lettered as "Super Luxury A/C Cabin Rajadhani Express", this being the marketing term for the private Blue Line Co., which operated the car and received part of the higher 1st class fare charged for this service. Wikipedia's SL entry said that "tea, snacks and meals" were to be provided, but the disinterested attendant served no refreshments (not even a bottle of water), let alone any form of breakfast. The Coach featured permanently dirty windows, but one reasonably good toilet (reasonable, that is, compared to some others we would encounter). After Galle, the air-conditioning either failed or was deliberately turned off, upon which the attendant directed us from the back to the front of the car, then closed (only partially) a mid-car door – and went to sleep. Not the most encouraging start to our Sri Lankan rail odyssey, and we would run into this gentleman again on a later trip.

Sri Lanka Railways

[From standard "M – TICKET"]



2010's-34: First-class "Rajadhani Express" Coach 16052, on rear of No. 8050, newly arrived at Matara from Colombo (2016/04/26) [PETER DAWES].

SRI LANKA RAILWAYS (SL)

... was a state owned enterprise operating 1,508 kilometres (941 miles) of track. At one time a mixture of 1,676 mm (5' 6") and 762 mm (2' 6") gauge, it was now all of the wider, Indian-compatible gauge. At this time, SL generated annual revenue of some 4.2 billion LKR (Sri Lanka Rupees) (C\$37.5 million), but lost 7.5 billion (C\$66.9). The system carried 300,000 passengers, ran over 300 trains per day, and employed 14,400. Major rebuilding of the Southern Line was necessary after the tsunami (2004), and of much of the Northern Line after the latest civil war (2005-9). Most of the passenger fleet looked ready for retirement, although new intercity rolling stock had been obtained from China in recent years.

GOOD MARKETING?

There was a Sri Lankan Railways (SL) tourist traveller's bureau in Colombo Fort station, but the person we dealt with spent most of his time trying to talk us out of taking trains in favour of short-cutting between places on buses. (In fairness, buses sometimes were more direct than trains, but we – OK, as in the "Royal We" here – wanted to take trains wherever possible!) As with the Colombo-Matara example mentioned above, 1st class, air-conditioned Coaches were provided by private operators on some trains and could be reserved. (Some trains did include reservable but non-air-conditioned 2nd class Coaches, and all offered non-reservable, non-air-conditioned 3rd class.) The "Search Train" feature on SL's website was hit-and-miss in saying if a train provided 1st class (for example, in the case of our No. 8050 above, it said only 2nd and 3rd class). Furthermore, obtaining information on overnight Sleeping car trains proved near impossible; indeed, the fellow in the traveller's bureau told me that there were no longer any Sleeping car services – when it turned out there were.

29 APR:

SL 8051 MATARA-GALLE [COLOMBO MARADANA]

Ed [940]

C

CX

C* [8]

CX

To **GALLE**, Southern Province, beginning with a tuk-tuk into nearby Tangalle, where we caught a Colombo-bound express bus for a scary (and loud, due to a raucous onboard sound system) ride back to Matara to catch the train; * Depart Matara 1410, arrive Galle 10 minutes late at 1530, behind another Indian-built M10A diesel, stops including Mirissa, Weligama and Midigama; * We occupied seats in a 2nd class Coach, the "Super Luxury A/C Cabin Rajadhani Express" Coach being *hors de combat* this day; * 43 km in 1 hr 20 mins, or 32 km/h (27 mls/20 mph); * We checked into Fort Inn (for two nights), and spent the rest of the day and next sampling this historical walled city with strong Portuguese and British roots, back in the late 19th century a port rivalling Colombo as a servicing point for steamships heading east and west.



2010's-35: Rest and relaxation along the Indian Ocean at Palm Paradise Cabanas, Goyambokka, the surf coming in all day and all night (2016/04/29) [SANDRA DAWES].

1 MAY:

SL 8059 [MATARA] GALLE-COLOMBO FORT [MARADANA] *Ruhunnu Kumari*

PCd

C [4]

DTC

PCd [903]

C* [4]

DTC

To **KANDY**, Central Province, starting with an early “Express” north to Colombo, on a train consisting of two Class S11 diesel sets; * Depart Galle 0655, arrive Fort station 0845; * 116 km in 1 hr 50 mins, or 63 km/h (72 mls/39 mph); * No. 903 (ICF, 2011).

RUHUNNU KUMARI

... (*“Princess of Southern Province”*) consisted of two diesel “Power Units” built by Integral Coach Factory of Chennai, India – each of these sets comprised of one (Driving) Power Coach (3rd class), three 3rd class Coaches, one 2nd class Coach, and one 2nd class “Driving Trailer Coach” (last-mentioned having cab controls so that the set could be driven from either end). Despite this being a named train, the equipment seemed more attuned to short-distance commuter, rather than intercity, service. Interestingly, the train boards in Galle station had been covered over for this May 1st, International Workers Day holiday (a big deal in Sri Lanka), because trains would be operating on a special schedule.

SL 1019 COLOMBO FORT-KANDY [MATALE]

Ed	[927]
C	[3]
BC	
C	[4] [16414]
Ed	[923]

Depart 1035, arrive six minutes early at 1346, on an S12 diesel “Express” powered from both ends, stops including Gampaha, Polgahawela Jct., Rambukkana and Peradeniya Jct.; * We booked into the excellent Freedom Lodge for three nights; * 121 km in 3 hrs 11 mins, or 38 km/h (76 mls/24 mph); * Nos. 923, 927, AFC 16414 (CSL, 2012); * Spent next two days enjoying Kandy Lake (except for the busy road surrounding it and vehicle exhaust), Buddhist Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic complex, Udawattakelle bird and animal sanctuary, and a performance by the famous Kandyan dancers, drummers and fire-eaters.



[Sri Lanka Railways banner, in official languages, Sinhalese (top) and Tamil (from “M – TICKET”)]



2010's-36: Sri Lanka Railways No. 1019 after arrival at Kandy from Colombo, made up Chinese-built S12 equipment (2016/05/01) [PETER DAWES].

COLOMBO TO KANDY

... was over a signalled, double tracked "Main Line" line as far as Polgahawela Jct. (where the Northern Line diverted), then single track providing spectacular scenery beyond to Peradeniya Jct. where a branch left the Main Line for Kandy and Matale, the latter 29 km (18 miles) beyond Kandy and the termination point of this train. No. 1019 consisted of an Class S12 train built by China South Locomotive & Rolling Stock Corp.: one diesel locomotive at each end; one 1st class Coach (ours); three 2nd class Coaches; one 3rd class Buffet Coach; and three 3rd class Coaches. (Only the 1st class Coach was air-conditioned.) The slow average speed reflected heavy grades ascending from Colombo up into the "Hill Country". (Over one section of 21 kilometres [13 miles], trains climbed almost 430 metres [1,400 feet].) LCD screens in the 1st class Coach showed "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix", but with no sound or headsets. There was heavy slack action and a rough ride over long stretches, given that SL roadbeds generally featured minimal ballast.



2010's-37: Buddhist Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic, Kandy (2016/05/02) [SANDRA DAWES].

4 MAY:

SL 1005 /COLOMBO FORT/KANDY-BADULLA *Podi Menike*

Ed	[922]
C [4]	[16414]
BC	
C [3]	
Ed	[927]

To **BADULLA** (capital of Uva Province), to experience Sri Lanka's most scenic rail line; *Depart five minutes late at 0853, arrive 11 minutes behind schedule at 1617, on another S12 Class "Express", stops including Peredeniya Jct., Gampola, Hatton, Nanu Oya, Haputale and Bandarawela; * We booked into the grandly named "Weligama Holiday Inn" for just the one night (turned out to be a modest, authentic place near the station, where "suits" mingled with foreign tourists at breakfast); * 183 km in 6 hrs 24 mins, or 29 km/h (114 mls/18 mph).



2010's-38: Sri Lanka Railways Class S12 No. 1005, *Podi Menike*, en-route from Kandy to Badulla (2016/05/04) [SANDRA DAWES].

PODI MENIKE NO. 1005

... (“Little Maiden”) originated in Colombo, then diverted into Kandy to load us and others for the long ride to end of the “Main Line” at Badulla. Locomotive 927 had helped power our Colombo-Kandy-Matale train three days earlier, and we occupied the same 1st class Coach. (This time on the LCD, we got “Jurassic Park” and “Ip Man”, the latter a Hong Kong-produced, martial-arts movie!) This was single track territory protected by a “Lock & Key” system, a “Tablet” being handed off to a train heading into the next stretch of track. At each station, a staff person would walk out to the start of the passing track and wave a green flag to allow the approaching train to enter. As for the scenery, it was not quite the Rockies, but our train curved, climbed and descended its way by, often high above, picturesque towns and tea estates – and we negotiated 43 tunnels.



2010's-39: Tea pickers, train side, from No. 1005 *Podi Menike*, enroute from Kandy to Badulla (notice the passenger hanging out the door, taking a selfie!) (2016/05/04) [SANDRA DAWES].

5 MAY:

SL 1008 BADULLA-NANU OYA [COLOMBO FORT]

Ed [790]

CX

C [3]

OL [8326]

To **NUWARA ELIYA**, Central Province, starting with this train to Nanu Oya; * Depart 1000, arrive Nanu Oya 10 minutes late at 1356, behind a Class M6 diesel; * We occupied the rear-end Observation Saloon car so as to enjoy the scenery again; * 85 km in 3 hrs 56 mins, or 22 km/h (53 mls/13 mph); * No. 790 (HT, 1979); * No. 8326 (*details unknown*); * Onward to Nuwara Elia [9 km [6 mls]] by taxi, then three nights at Hotel Trevene, close by Victoria Park (featuring botanical gardens and birds) and Grand Hotel (once a governor's mansion, now classic luxury hotel), also a morning excursion to Bluefield Tea Estate (but missing out on another attraction, Ramboda Falls, which were dry due to a continuing drought).



2010's-40: Observation Saloon car on rear of No. 1008, ready to depart Badulla for Colombo, consist of No. 1045 *Night Mail* from Colombo at left (2016/05/05) [PETER DAWES].

NIGHT MAIL

Sri Lanka Railways still operated overnight trains on three routes: Colombo-Badulla; Colombo-Trincomalee; and Colombo-Jaffna. The version observed at Badulla on May 5th included: two 2nd class Coaches; one 3rd "Sleeperetts"; one 2nd "Sleeperetts"; one 1st Sleeping car (six, 2-berth compartments, called, as in India, "coupés"); one Baggage car; one "Travelling Post Office" car; one Buffet car; three 3rd Coaches; and one Baggage/3rd Coach. (The "Sleeperetts" featured reclining, airline-style seats.) *Night Mail* had started out from Colombo Fort at 2000 the evening before, and had arrived earlier this morning at 0710; returning, it would leave Badulla at 1750, arrive Colombo next morning at an early 0517. A peek inside the sleeping car at Badulla suggested a rather basic level of amenities and questionable state of repair.



2010's-41: Two-berth "Coupé" in 1st class Sleeping car, resting at Badulla after forming part of No. 1045 *Night Mail* from Colombo (2016/05/05) [PETER DAWES].

NO. 1008

... was a mid-morning Badulla via Kandy to Colombo train, formed of older equipment, including full Observation car OFV 8326 on the rear. The second-from-front car was marked for "Expo Rail", another private company operating 1st class Coaches on main line trains – although it did not look to be in much better condition than the "Rajadhani Express" Coach we had occupied from Colombo to Matara. (Interestingly, "Expo Rail" bore the same name as the Canadian Railroad Historical Association's museum near Montréal.) Sri Lanka Railways was renowned for its eclectic locomotive fleet, and did not disappoint this day, what with an almost 4-decades-old diesel built by the German company, Henschel Thyssen.



[Markings on side of Travelling Post Office, Badulla (2016/05/05)] [PETER DAWES].



2010's-42: No. 1008 crosses Nine Arch Viaduct near Ella, on its way to Nanu Oya and Colombo, Expo Rail's colourful 1st class car second back from smoking-up-a-storm Class M6 790 – pedestrians waiting to cross or walk along the line (2016/05/05) [SANDRA DAWES].

7 MAY:

SL 1126 [COLOMBO FORT] NANU OYA-HAPUTALE [BADULLA]

Ed [772]

F [4]

CX

C*

OLX [8377]

Day excursion back west along the “Main Line” to **HAPUTALE**, Uva Province (partly due to a lack of things to do in Nuwara Eliya), starting with a tuk-tuk back down the hills; * Depart Nanu Oya 50 minutes late at 1020, arrive 1 hour 45 minutes behind schedule at 1330, behind a Class M5B diesel, stopping at places such as Ambewela, Pattipola, Ohiya and Idalgashinna; * 39 km in 3 hrs 10 mins, or 12 km/h (24 mls/8 mph); * No. 772 (SLR, 1972); * No. 8377 (*details unknown*).



2010's-43: "Lock & Key" desk, Haputale station, a "Tablet" in place (and one sitting on the chair) – the system designed to allow only one train on a segment of track at one time (2016/05/07) [SANDRA DAWES].

TRAIN NO. 1126

... was styled a "Long Distance" service, and hauled freight as well as passenger cars – a diesel-hydraulic locomotive, built by the railway itself back in 1972, leading the way. There were two tank and two boxcars up front, but one of the latter was detached at Ohiya. We waited for 25 minutes at Pattipola (highest point on the Sri Lankan system, indeed on any broad-gauge railway in the world, at 1,900 metres [*6,234 feet*]), for eastbound, Badulla-Colombo No. 1006 to pass, then 45 minutes at Ohiya for following No. 1008 to go by – these meets and the freight-switching making us even later. A 1st class Observation Saloon Baggage car brought up the rear, but was sold out, meaning that, in the absence of 2nd class, we made our first trip in 3rd. Our car was extremely crowded, but the trip turned out to be an unforgettable experience, due mainly to the friendly Sri Lankans (who took the delays in good humour) and all the old-time railroading going on. (Tried not to think about the wisdom of having tank cars filled with gasoline up front, should we have derailed or collided with another train!)

7 MAY:

SL 1596 [BADULLA] HAPUTALE-NANU OYA [COLOMBO FORT]

Ed [797]

F [7]

CX

C

OLX [16038]

Returning, depart 20 minutes late at 1445, arrive 15 minutes behind schedule at 1640, behind an M6 diesel, occupying an Observation Saloon Baggage car; * 39 km in 1 hr 55 mins, or 20 km/h (24 mls/13 mph); * No. 797 (HT, 1979); * No. OFV 16038 (*details unknown*); * Back up the hills to Nuwara Eliya by tuk-tuk.

NO. 1596

... was called a "Mixed Train" (as No. 1126 above should have been but wasn't), pulling five tank cars into Haputale and adding another one there, plus a box car. Just west of Ohiya, we paused long enough to pick up a work gang of two dozen men. Sitting in the best (rear) seats of the Observation Saloon Baggage car, we watched in amazement as the workers muscled two "hand-trolleys" (what we would call "put-puts", except neither had a motor) onto the track behind our train, then attached these to our Observation car by means of ropes. We then pulled these fellows up the line and through a tunnel (one of the workers activating a large flashlight in the darkness) into Ohiya station, where they undid the ropes and man-handled their trolleys into a siding.

ACCESSIBILITY

No. 1596 pulled into Haputale on the second track away from the lone platform, meaning that passengers had to step down, cross the first track, then climb up into their car, using steps which, as with much of the equipment we encountered in Sri Lanka, had recessed steps built right into the car – making them difficult to climb, for anyone. Generally speaking, the railway was not big on accessibility. Although most stations had high platforms (and passengers could walk right on), car doors were too narrow to permit those using mobility devices to wheel in. Bottom line: the mobility challenged would have had to be carried on board.



2010's-44: Work gang “hand-trolleys” being towed by Badulla-Colombo No. 1596 up grade towards Ohiya station (2016/05/07) [PETER DAWES].

NIGHT MAIL FOLLIES

Upon arriving back at Nanu Oya, I decided to make one final attempt to ride a Sri Lanka Railways overnight train in a Sleeping car, asking the agent if there were two berths available on the following night's Badulla-Colombo *Night Mail*, scheduled to depart Nanu Oya at 2208 and arrive Fort station at 0517. He initially said yes, there were, and took payment; then came back and apologized, saying that only one berth was actually free – which put an end to my quest. Combined with the denial by staff at Colombo Fort that Sleeping car services were still running, you had to wonder whether this was akin to the rundown of passenger-train service in the United States, when some railroads were accused of instructing agents to deny the existence of trains, let alone onboard amenities such as berths.



[Markings on side of Observation Saloon Baggage car, Haputale (2016/05/07)] [PETER DAWES].



2010's-45: Mixed No. 1596 wends its way towards Nanu Oya, six tank cars and one box right behind Class M6 797 (2016/05/07) [SANDRA DAWES].

8 MAY:

SL 1006 [BADULLA] NANU OYA-COLOMBO FORT *Podi Menike*

Ed [932]

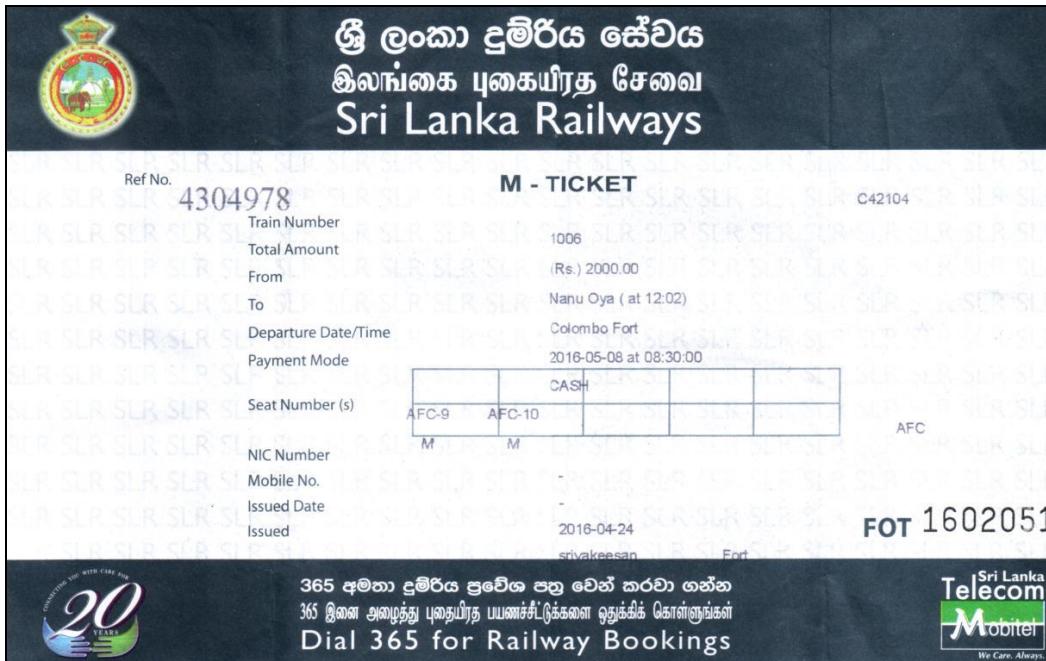
C [3]

BC

C* [4] [16409]

Ed [937]

To **COLOMBO**, starting with a tuk-tuk from Nuwara Eliya down the hill to Nanu Oya; * Depart there at 1202, arrive 15 minutes late at 1912, occupying the 1st class Coach in an S12 "Express"; * By tuk-tuk over to the Grand Oriental (one night); * 219 km in 7 hrs 10 mins, or 31 km/h (137 mls/19 mph).



[Sri Lanka Railways reserved 1st class ticket, Nanu Oya to Colombo, on No. 1006 (2016/05/08)]

PODI MENIKE NO. 1006

We were the only foreigners in a 1st class Coach fully booked – along with the adjacent reserved 2nd class car – by an extended family returning from a family reunion back down the line at Bandarawela. This proved quite the experience, as the aisle would be crowded with family members visiting back-and-forth between the two cars. When some musicians appeared, Sandra asked them to do “Malu, Malu, Malu” (“Fish, Fish, Fish”), a traditional folk song that she remembered from her Canada World Youth exchange – which they did, everyone from grandparents to small children singing along in beautiful voice. Alas, she promptly fainted right there in her seat, having unknowingly eaten something containing saffron the previous evening – to which she is seriously allergic. A lady threw water in her face, which revived her immediately – but she would spend the next two hours throwing up, fortunately in by far the best train washroom we encountered in either Sri Lanka or India – this being a modern 1st class Coach put in service as recently as 2012.



2010's-46: Colombo Fort Railway station
(2016/04/24) [PETER DAWES].

9 MAY:

SL 6011 COLOMBO FORT-HABARANA [BATTICALOA] Udaya Devi

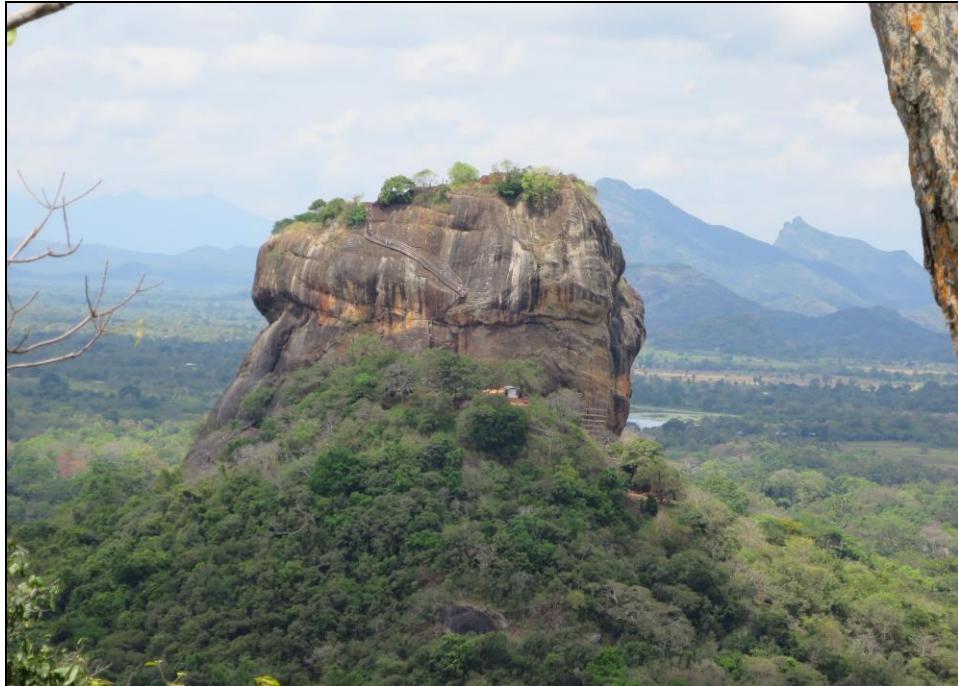
Ed [755]

CX

C* [6]

CX

To **SIGIRIYA**, Central Province, starting with this “Express” train to Habarana; * Depart 0605, arrive 70 minutes late at 1225, powered by an M4 Class diesel locomotive, including stops at Gampaha, Polgahawela Jct. (where the Main Line diverted for Kandy/Matale and Badulla), Kurunegala, Ganewatta, Maho Jct. (where the Batticaloa Line diverted from the Northern Line), Kalawewa, Kekirawa and Palugaswewa; * We occupied the reserved, 2nd class Coach, with its dirty floors and sub-standard washrooms; * 210 km in 6 hrs 20 mins, or 33 km/h (131 mls/21 mph); * No. 755 (ALCO-BBD, 1975); * Onward 14 kilometres (9 miles) by tuk-tuk to Sigiriya (one night at Flower Inn), carrying on immediately by local bus to **Dambulla** to visit the Royal Rock Temple caves, before returning for supper and bed; **[continued two pages ahead]**



2010's-47: Ancient Buddhist monastery or king's palace? Sigiriya Rock, photographed from neighbouring Pidurangala Rock (2016/05/10) [SANDRA DAWES].

UDAYA DEVI

... (“Princess [or Queen] of the Rising East”) was, in reality, a slow local plodding its way the 350 kilometres (218 miles) to Batticaloa on the east coast, having departed Fort station at the ungodly hour of 0605. The Class M4 locomotive (built at Montréal Locomotive Works) pulled the consist into Fort, then ran around and hooked onto what had been the rear, leaving passengers in darkness for perhaps 10 minutes – which apparently was prime time for pickpockets. At Maho Jct., the locomotive trundled off to be turned around, before hauling us in the reverse direction to points east. (Until the 1950's, this line was narrow-gauge, specifically 662 mm [2' 6"].) Not for the first time in Sri Lanka, I watched as one guy did the actual recoupling of the locomotive – supervised by four or five. For much of the way, this train was swarming with vendors selling everything from bottled water to mangoes and peanuts, this being quite common in Sri Lanka. These vendors would jump off one train at a station, and head back in the opposite direction on another.



2010's-48: No. 6012 *Udaya Devi* ready to depart Maho Jct. for Colombo, Class M4 749 having been turned around and placed at the south-facing end of its train (2016/05/11) [PETER DAWES].

* **10 MAY:** Climbed Pidurangala Rock and got a great view of more famous Sigiriya Rock and surrounding countryside, then checked out of Flower Inn (substandard room; deafening, croaking frogs in ponds outside; amorous cats shrieking – in the next room!) and went back to **Habarana** by tuk-tuk, to a beautiful “eco-hotel” called The Other Corner (one night).

11 MAY:

SL 6012 [BATTICALOA] PALUGASWEWA-COLOMBO FORT *Udaya Devi*

Ed	[749]
C*	[5]
CX	



2010's-49: Port of Colombo from Grand Oriental Hotel dining room, container ships prevailing where Peninsular & Oriental passenger liners once called (2016/05/12) [SANDRA DAWES].

Return to **COLOMBO**, on our way back to Goyambokka , having decided to forego more ancient temples at Anuradhapura in favour of spending our last days by the Indian Ocean – starting with a tuk-tuk transfer to catch this “Express”; * Depart Palugaswewa 1 hour 56 minutes late at 1142, arrive 2 hours behind at 1715, powered by another M4, again occupying the reserved, 2nd class Coach; * Eastbound No. 6011 – which we had taken two days earlier – pulled in just about on time, backed up, and entered the passing track just before our westbound No. 6012 arrived; * One night at the Grand Oriental; * 205 km (est.) in 5 hrs 33 mins, or 37 km/h (128 mls/23 mph).

12 MAY:

SL 8086 [MARADANA] COLOMBO FORT-MATARA *Rajarata Rajini*

Ed

[751]

CX

LA GRANDE ALLURE: 2016

C* [8]

CX

To **GOYAMBOKKA**, again, departing 13 minutes late at 1043, arriving Matara 25 minutes behind at 1412, behind another ALCO-Bombardier M4; * There being no 1st class Coach, we settled for unreserved 2nd this time; * 159 km in 3 hrs 29 mins, or 46 km/h (99 mls/29 mph); * Onward to Goyambokka by tuk-tuk, where we again checked into Palm Paradise Cabanas (three nights), the early onslaught of monsoons crimping our beach style only marginally!

RAJARATA RAJINI

... ("Queen of the Land of Kings") was delayed leaving Colombo by another train occupying its platform at Fort station. *Rajarata Rajini* was categorized as a "Colombo Commuter", despite not operating at commuter hours. The canned announcements were in Chinese as well as English and Sinhalese – appropriate given the hordes of tourists from that country, seen especially at Galle and southern oceanside resorts. On this train, the usual onboard vendors included something new to us: a guy selling balloons! We got caught in a sudden, heavy rainstorm, which resulted in water coming in open windows and doors, then running down the aisle of our Coach. Beyond this, our venerable 2nd class Coach was dirty; the western-style washroom disgusting.

15 MAY:

SL 8051 MATARA-COLOMBO FORT [MARADANA]

Ed [878]

C [16052]

CX

C [8]

CX

Back to **COLOMBO** one last time, on another "Colombo Commuter", beginning with a taxi ride to catch the train; * Depart Matara 1410, arrive 50 minutes late at 1855, behind an Indian-built, Diesel Locomotive Works M8A; * 159 km in 4 hrs 45 mins, or 33 km/h (99 mls/21 mph); * No. 878 (DLW, 2001); * We checked into the Grand Oriental Hotel for our final night before heading home next morning.



2010's-50: Monsoon arrives early at Palm Paradise Cabanas, Goyambokka (2016/05/13) [SANDRA DAWES].

NO. 8051

... ran late through the monsoon, and we occupied the same “Super Luxury A/C Cabin Rajadhani Express” 1st class Coach as on our first Sri Lankan train in the opposite direction (No. 8050, back on 26 APR). The same unfriendly attendant was on duty, insisting that we and another couple (his only customers out of Matara) sit at the *rear* of the car, instead of the *front* where our assigned seats were located – the front and rear sections being divided by the mid-car toilet on one side and what appeared to be a table and cupboards for preparing refreshments on the other (although, as on our previous trip, there was no hint of any food or drink). Also, as on our earlier trip, his excuse was that the air-conditioning was not working at that end. He then closed the door between the front and rear sections of the Coach, having welcomed another young gentleman into his company. **[continued on next page]**



2010's-51: Class M2 diesel 592 waiting to depart Matara with No. 8039 for Galle, Colombo and Kandy, the name plate reading, "NOVA SCOTIA": COLOMBO PLAN AID – FROM CANADA" (2016/05/15) [PETER DAWES].

NO. 8051 *[continued]*

Around 10 minutes before reaching Galle, he opened the door, restarted the air-conditioning, and directed the other couple and ourselves to take our originally assigned seats in the front of the car. Strange behavior, but the lack of professionalism of this attendant was disappointing, to say the least.

Super Luxury A/C Cabin

[From side of "Rajadhani Express" 1st class car (2016/04/26) [PETER DAWES].

COLOMBO PLAN LOCOS

While waiting at Matara for our No. 8051 to board, we watched the earlier No. 8039 pull out at 1335, behind Class M2 diesel No. 592, NOVA SCOTIA, headed for Galle, Colombo and Kandy. Yes, it was lettered for a Canadian province! Twelve of this class were built by General Motors in London ON between 1954 and '66 under an aid program called the Colombo Plan, 10 named after Canadian provinces (others being 569 ONTARIO, 570 ALBERTA, 571 SASKATCHEWAN, 572 BRITISH COLUMBIA, 573 QUEBEC, 591 MANITOBA, 593 NEW BRUNSWICK, 594 PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, and 595 NEWFOUNDLAND), plus two after cities (626 MONTREAL and 627 VANCOUVER). Back on 9 MAY, just before arriving at Maho Jct. on No. 6011, we had passed a dedicated southbound freight (one of the few we saw anywhere in the country) powered by VANCOUVER.



[Sri Lankan 50 Rupee bill, featuring old steel railway and new highway bridges at Manampitiya, on Batticaloa Line, also train on an old rail viaduct]

- **16-17 MAY:** Back to **EDMONTON**, beginning with a SriLankan Airlines Airbus 321 to Delhi (the cabin fumigated with billowing clouds of chemicals from the time we boarded to take-off, a procedure we'd seen only once before, when we approached Sydney, Australia, in 1990, on now-defunct Canadian Airlines International), then an Air Canada Boeing 787 "Dreamliner" to Toronto and Airbus 320 home, the SriLankan counter staff having printed our boarding passes and checked our backpacks right through to Edmonton.

2019

JAPAN & HONG KONG



[Main portion of author's Japan Rail Pass (2019)]

SYNOPSIS

This was my sixteenth overseas holiday (11th with Sandra), featuring five days in Hong Kong, three weeks and a bit in Japan, and a 17-day ocean voyage back to Canada. Our primary home bases were Lan Kwai Fong Hotel in Hong Kong and Hotel Monterey in Yokohama, and the Pacific crossing was on Cunard's QUEEN ELIZABETH. The Japan Rail Pass took us around this fascinating country, in "Green" (standing for 1st) class luxury.

Trips taken: We took 55, covering 5,409 kilometres (3,376 *miles*), 53 in Japan and 2 in Hong Kong. All trips were in my "Coaches, Pullmans & Lounges" category (alas, none in "Sleeping & Couchette Cars"). Forty-nine were on self-propelled trains, compared to 6 behind locomotives. Two trips were behind steam (both in Japan).

Equipment units: 525, made up of 6 Locomotives & Related Units and 519 cars.

JAPAN

Places visited: Akita; Aomori; Bijodaira*; Diakanbō*; Enoshima; Fugisawa; Fuji; Hakata; Hiroshima; Kakegawa; Kamakura; Kanaya; Kanazawa; Kawane Koyama; Keyakidiara; Kita Kamakura; Kurobe; Kurobecko"; Kurobedaira*; Kyōto; Morioka; Murodō*; Muroran; Nagano; Nagasaki; Nara; Nikkō; Ōfuna; Ōgizawa*; Ōmiya; Ōsaka; Sapporo; Senzu; Tateyama; Tōkyō; Toyama; Unazuki; Unazukionsen; Utsunomiya; and Yokohama. (**Note:** * indicates by non-rail means.)

Noteworthy rail trips: **JR Central Nozomi (No. 305)**, Shin-Yokohama to Shin-Ōsaka; **Daitetsu No. 101**, Shin-Kanaya to Senzu (*Ōigawa Steam Railway*); **JR Kyūshū Kamome (No. 35)**, Hakata to Nagasaki; **JR West Sakura (No. 548)**, Hakata to Shin-Ōsaka; **Kurobe Gorge Railway**, Unazuki to Keyakidiara; **JR East Yamabiko (No. 141)**, Tōkyō to Utsunomiya; **JR East**, Nikkō to Utsunomiya; **JR East Komachi (No. 9)**, Morioka to Akita; **JR East Rizōto (Resort) Shirakami No. 5**, Akita to Aomori.

Fastest average speed: **JR West Sakura (No. 548)**, Hakata to Shin-Ōsaka: 243 km/h (151 *mph*).

Slowest: **Daitetsu No. 207**, Senzu to Kawane Koyama (*Southern Alps ABT Railway*): 15 km/h (9

mph).

Memorable non-rail trips: • by Alpine Route motor bus from Bijodaira to Murodō; • by Alpine Route tunnel trolley bus from Kurobe Dam to Ōgizawa; • by QUEEN ELIZABETH from Yokohama to Vancouver.

HONG KONG

Places visited: Hong Kong Island; Kowloon; Lo Wu; Mui Wo* and Ngong Ping*. (**Note:** * indicates by non-rail means.)

Noteworthy rail trips: **Mass Transit Railway (MTR) 1015**, Kowloon Hung Hom to Lo Wu.

Fastest average speed: **1015**, Kowloon Hung Hom to Lo Wu & **1115** return: 45 km/h (28 mph).

Slowest: [same].

Memorable non-rail trips: • by Star Ferry, Hong Kong Island to Kowloon; • by First Ferry, Hong Kong Island to Mui Wo (Lantau Island).

HIGHLIGHTS!

In **Japan**, standing on the outer, eastbound, “slow” platform at Kakegawa and watching N700A Shinkansens blasting through on the inner express tracks on their way between Tōkyō and Ōsaka (in Sandra’s words, “They thunder through, like Jurassic Park giant eels striking prey”); then taking a multi-stop – but still fast between stations – *Kodama* Shinkansen back to Yokohama. In **Hong Kong**, riding an MTR train up to Lo Wu on the Chinese border, just a lowly regional service but the best one could ride without crossing into China proper.



[Hong Kong Mass Transit Railways logo
(en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MTR)]

MILESTONES

For **Japan**, the 2016 opening of the Hokkaidō Shinkansen, connecting Tōkyō on Honshu Island with Hakodate on Hokkaidō Island, by means of a 54-kilometre (34-mile) tunnel, some 23 km (14 mls) of which was under Tsugara Strait (this line to be extended to Sapporo by 2030). For **Hong Kong**, introduction in 2018 of *Vibrant Express* high-speed service between Kowloon and Guangzhou in China proper, cutting travel times by some 40%, to less than 50 minutes.



[Green Class ticket for Nozomi Shinkansen No. 305 from Shin-Yokohama to Shin-Osaka, punched by Conductor in upper-left corner (2019/04/22)]



[Sketch of JR East's Rizōto (Resort) Shirakami KUMAGARA train set (from 2019 brochure)]

TRIPS AND TRAIN COMPOSITION

• **11-12 APR:** To **HONG KONG** (now a “Special Administrative Region” of China) on Air Canada, beginning with an Airbus 319 to Vancouver, then Boeing 787 “Dreamliner” non-stop (some 13 hours in the air, flying over Ketchikan in Alaska, Kodiak in the Aleutian Islands, and Kamchatka Peninsula in Russia – Hong Kong International Airport later becoming the scene of mass, pro-democracy protests); by Mass Transit Railway (MTR) Airport Line into Hong Kong station, then taxi to the comfortable Lan Kwai Fong Hotel, right in the centre of things on Hong Kong Island (five nights there); * Over the next three days, we enjoyed breakfast every morning at the Lin Hueng Tea House (the only Caucasians in the place), then variously: • took the Peak Tram funicular up the mountain (alas, encased in fog at the top, precluding any views), • visited Kowloon across the famous harbour by Star Ferry, • sailed to Mui Wo on Lantau Island by First Ferry, then by bus to the Tian Tan “Great Buddha” statue located up in the hills at Ngong Ping (returning the same way, because a lightning storm had shut down the funicular which normally ran down to Tung Chung, where one could get an MTR train directly back to the city); and • rode the signature double decker Hong Kong “ding-ding” trams along Des Voeux Road (out to Kennedy Town, back to Happy Valley horse-racing track, and home).

16 APR:

MTR 1015 KOWLOON HUNG HOM-LO WU & RETURN

Cme [12]

To **LO WU** on the border with mainland China, accessing the station by Tsuen Wan and West MTR lines; * Depart Hung Hom station at 1015, arrive 1100, stops including Tai Wo and Sheung Shui; * 34 km in 45 mins, or 45 km/h (21 mls/28 mph); * Returning, depart 1125, arrive 1210 (back to hotel by same lines).



[Tram logo (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong_Kong_Tramways)]



2010's-52: Hong Kong Mass Transit Railway East Line Electric Multiple Unit train arriving at Lo Wu, soon to depart back to Kowloon (2019/04/16) [PETER DAWES].

WHY TAKE THIS TRAIN?

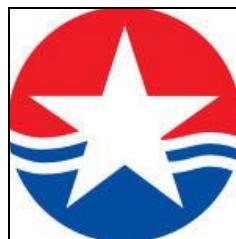
My original intention was that we would make a side trip between Hong Kong and Guangzhou, China, but relations between Canada and China had plummeted, thanks to an American request for the extradition of a top Huawei Technologies executive in Vancouver – and the subsequent incarceration of two Canadians living in China when our government rebuffed Chinese demands to end the process. I settled for these Mass Transit Railway trains operating between Kowloon and Lo Wu on the border of China proper – despite not usually giving such trains the full treatment in these volumes.



2010's-53: Ferry TWINKLING STAR berthed at Hong Kong's Pier 7, preparing to return across the harbour to Kowloon (2019/04/15) [PETER DAWES].

MASS TRANSIT RAILWAYS

... operated 11 lines in Hong Kong carrying over five million passengers on a weekday. It was a component of MTR Corp., a joint government-private sector entity which also provided light rail and bus services, but not the trams. MTR Corp. boasted that its transit railways were profitable, based on a positive fare-box recovery and the exploitation of valuable real-estate assets. This would be a rarity for rail-focussed transit systems worldwide, or indeed transit systems in general.



[Hong Kong Star Ferry logo
(en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Star_Ferry)]



2010's-54: Famous “ding-dong” trams on Des Voeux Road, Hong Kong (2019/04/15) [SANDRA DAWES].

EAST LINE

... was the longest in the MTR system at 34 kilometres (28 miles), running between Hung Hom and Lo Wu stations, the latter a border entry point to adjacent Shenzhen, China (11 stops in all). Dating from 1910 as the Hong Kong-Canton Railway, the line also accommodated intercity day trains running from Hung Hom station to Guangzhou, China, and overnight Sleeping car trains to Shanghai and Beijing, not to mention cross-border freights. Built by the English Metropolitan Cammell Co. between 1982 and 1992, the 12-car “MLR” Electric Multiple Unit (EMU) trains included a single 1st class car – the only MTR line to provide this amenity. The line itself was already being extended from Hung Hom under the harbour to Admiralty station on Hong Kong Island, located on MTR’s Island and Tsen Wan lines.



2010's-55: Hong Kong market scene in the vicinity of our Lan Kwai Fong hotel (2019/04/15) [SANDRA DAWES].

VIBRANT EXPRESS

Late in 2018, MTR's *Vibrant Express* high-speed service began operating between a new station in West Kowloon to Shenzhen and Guangzhou in China proper, trains taking only 48 minutes to travel 143 kilometres (89 miles) (average speed: 179 km/h [112 mph]). The Communist Chinese government owned and controlled the West Kowloon station, including security, causing much controversy among Hong Kongers. Apparently, the long-standing service between Hung Hom station and Guangzhou continued, in fact on the return trip into Kowloon, we passed a train outbound for China. Later, we saw people boarding another one in the station, departing for Guangzhou around 1445. These trains took approximately 1 hour 55 minutes to cover 174 km (109 m/s), an average of only 99 km/h (61 mph).

17 APR:

JRE 36 NARITA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TERMINAL 1-YOKOHAMA [ŌFUNA] N'EX

Cme [6]

Cme [6] NARITA-TŌKYŌ [ŌMIYA]

To **YOKOHAMA**, in Kanagawa prefecture, beginning with a taxi to MTR's Hong Kong station for a quick ride out to the airport (baggage check-in conveniently available at the station), then a Hong Kong Airlines Airbus 330 to Narita International Airport (cared for by a superb young cabin staff); * Depart Narita Terminal 1 at 1619, arrive Yokohama five minutes late at 1756, after stopping at Terminal 2/3 station, Tōkyō, Shinagawa and Musashi-Kosugi (onward to our hotel by taxi); * 90 km (est.) in 1 hr 37 mins, or 56 km/h (56 mls/35 mph);

* **18 APR:** Spent the day getting accustomed to Yokohama, taking the Minatomirai Line subway from our local Nihon-ōdōri station to Yokohama station to make further reservations (very crowded and confusing in this vast, sprawling, main JR East terminal), then inspecting beautiful Yamashita Park, across from our hotel (the Monterey proving to be a superb establishment, especially its Japanese/Western buffet breakfasts), followed by a visit to the adjacent, preserved ocean liner, HIKAWA MARU.



[Wall art in Nihon-ōdōri station, Minatomirai subway line, Yokohama, showing what looks like Cunard's old QE2 (top) and two other vessels (2019)] [SANDRA DAWES].

NARITA EXPRESS (N'EX)

... operated on an all-reserved basis from Tōkyō's main airport (Haneda being the other) to the city's main station, where it split into Yokohama/Ōfuna and Ōmiya portions. The lines used by these trains were of 1,067 milimetre (*3 ft 6 in*) gauge, unlike the high-speed Shinkansen, which were world standard 1,435 mm (*4 ft 8½ in*). There were no onboard refreshments, these having been withdrawn the year before. While not normally giving a full entry to airport services in these volumes, I've made an exception here, due to the long distance of Narita from Tōkyō (approximately 60 km [*37 mls*]), let alone Yokohama (perhaps 90 km [*56 mls*]), and the inter-city nature of the E259 Electric Multiple Unit train sets built by Kinki Sharyo and Tōkyo Car Corp. (2009-10). As it turned out, this was the *only* train we took in Japan that was even one minute late, and in this case, the delay occurred just short of Yokohama station due to, the information ticker said, "an incident at a crossing".

JEIĀRU GURŪPU

... (*JR Group*) consisted of seven private "operating companies" formed out of the old Japanese National Railways: • Tōkai-Nihon Ryokaku Tetsudō (Central Japan Passenger Railway) (*JR Central* – *JRC*); • Higashi-Nihon Ryokaku Tetsudō (East Japan Passenger Railway) (*JR East* – *JRE*); • Hokkaidō Ryokaku Tetsudō (Hokkaidō Passenger Railway) (*JR Hokkaidō* – *JRH*); • Kyūshū Ryokaku Tetsudō (Kyūshū Passenger Railway) (*JR Kyūshū* – *JRK*); • Shikoku Ryokaku Tetsudō (Shikoku Passenger Railway) (*JR Shikoku*); • Nishi-Nihon Ryokaku Tetsudō (West Japan Passenger Railway) (*JR West* – *JRW*); and • Nippon Kamotsu Tetsudō (Japan Freight Railway) (*JR Freight* – *JRF*). Shares of the largest companies – Central, East and West – were privately held; those of the others remained with the government. Unlike Europe, the passenger railways themselves took care of their track, and made it available to the freight company as needed. There also was a high degree of cooperation, coordination and honoring of through tickets. In addition to the operating companies, there were many private railways which ran their own trains over their own tracks. This entire approach depended upon the realization of value from extensive land holdings, and provided great stability.



2010's-56: Preserved motor vessel HIKAWA MARU, formerly of NYK Line, Yamashita Park, Yokohama (2019/04/18) [SANDRA DAWES].

MV HIKAWA MARU

... was a passenger-cargo motor vessel once operated by NYK Line (*Nippon Yūsen Kabushiki Kaisha – Japan Mail Shipping Line*) and now preserved at Yokohoma. Named after a Shinto shrine, her Gross Registered Tonnage was a modest 11,622 and cruising speed 18.5 knots. Accommodating 331 in 1st, Tourist and 3rd classes, she served on NYK's Yokohama-Vancouver-Seattle route during the 1930's, functioned as hospital ship during World War II, and finally returned to her pre-war route in 1953, until being retired in 1960. (She was one of only two Japanese passenger liners to survive the war, thanks entirely to their role as hospital, not troop, ships.) Noted for her art-deco interiors and food; her guests included Charlie Chaplin and the founder of Judo, Kanō Jigorō, who died during a crossing. She had been beautifully restored, thanks to NYK, which continued to be a force in freight shipping and, to a limited extent, cruising – in addition to sponsoring a wonderful company museum close to the harbour.



2010's-57: JR Central N700A Shinkansen entering Shin-Yokohama station, on its way from Tōkyō to Ōsaka (2019/04/19) [SANDRA DAWES].

19 APR:

JRC 641 [TŌKYŌ] SHIN YOKOHAMA-KAKEGAWA [SHIN-ŌSAKA] Kodama

Cme [16]

To **KAWANE KOYAMA**, in Shizuoka prefecture, on a day outing via Kanaya and Senzu, beginning with a taxi to Shin-Yohohama station, located on the western fringes of the city and operated by JR Central, JR East and the city of Yokohama; * Depart there at 0916, arrive Kakegama at 1039, with stops at Odawara, Atami, Mishima, Shin-Fuji and Shizuoka, occupying a Green car on an N700A Shinkansen *Kodama* service (Sandra's subsequent attempts to take photos of nearby Mount Fuji were thwarted by overcast conditions); * 201 km in 1 hr 23 mins, or 146 km/h (129 mls/91 mph).

FIRST BIG OUTING

The goal on this first, full train-riding day was to sample the Ōigawa steam train, reached by taking: • a JR Central (JRC)'s Electric Multiple Unit (EMU) Shinkansen from Shin-Yokohama station southwest to Kakegawa; • a JRC EMU train train back east to Kanaya over the original narrow-gauge Tōkaidō Main Line, • a Daitetsu ("Big Iron" – DTS) EMU to Shin-Kanaya, and • DTS's Ōigawa steam train to Senzu. We then proceeded on a DTS Southern Alps "Abt" rack train up the hills as far as Kawane Koyama station, before heading back down.

TŌKAIÐ ŠINKANSEN

The Shin Yokohama-Kakegawa trip was over the original Tōkyō-Ōsaka Tōkaidō “Bullet” train route, which opened back in 1964. “Shinkansen” means “new trunkline”, and utilized a mainly elevated right-of-way, except where tunnels were necessary. Some stations were built new, others retrofitted with the Shinkansen tracks located on a higher level, sometimes to the side of the original tracks. JR Central operated the Tōkyō-Ōsaka Shinkansen, although the eastern end was in JR East territory, the western end in JR West’s. Shinkansen lines adhered to the world standard of 1,435 mm (4 ft 8½ in) gauge, in contrast to 1,067 millimetre (3 ft 6 in) for most other lines in Japan. There were three types of Skinkansen on the Tōkaidō, in descending order of travel time: • *Nozomi* (meaning “Wish”); • *Hikari* (“Light”); and • *Kodama* (“Echo”). Deemed ineligible for travel on *Nozomi* trains, Japan Rail Pass holders had to take the slower, but still plenty fast, *Hikari*’s or multi-stop *Kodama*’s, or pay more.

N700A SHINKANSENS

... were built by three separate manufacturers – Hitachi, Kawasaki Heavy Industries and Nippon Sharyo – and placed in service between 2007 and 2015 on these Shinkansen lines: • Tōkaidō (JR Central and JR West); • San’yō (JR West); and • Kyūshū (JR Kyūshū). (The “A” stood for “Advanced”, a standard to which all earlier trainsets had been retrofitted by 2015.) On the Tōkaidō, 16-car trains sets were used: • Cars 1-7 (“Ordinary” class); • Cars 8-10 (“Green”, meaning 1st class); and • Cars 11-16 (Ordinary). This gave a capacity of 200 Green and 1,123 Ordinary, for a total of 1,323 passengers. (Green class had to be reserved; some Ordinary cars did; others did not.) Maximum speed, on the Tōkaidō, was 285 kilometres per hour (175 miles per hour), achieved in part through tilting technology, which enabled faster operation through curves. Electric current was accessed through overhead wires and pantographs. In the absence of a Café, meal or refreshment car, trolley service was provided, giving the trains an airplane vibe, except with way more leg room, even in Ordinary class. Interestingly, smoking was allowed, but only in sealed compartments located in four of the cars.

OBTAINING RESERVATIONS

Our visit to Japan was predicated on QUEEN ELIZABETH's May 5th sailing from Yokohama to Vancouver. Cherry Blossom time had ended by the time we arrived from Hong Kong on Apr. 17th, but Golden Week – one of Japan's two big holiday periods – loomed during the first week of May. Problem was, only JR East would allow JR Pass holders to make reservations from abroad. The other big companies – JR Central and JR West – required holders to wait until they reached Japan. As a result, we made most of our JR East reservations from home, leaving the rest to be made at JR East at either Narita or Yokohama stations, for that company and the others as well.

JRC [TOYOHASHI?] KAKEGAWA-KANAYA [ATAMI?]

Cme [6]

Depart 1053, arrive 1106, with a stop at Kikugawa, occupying an EMU; * 16 km in 13 mins, or 73 km/h (10 mls/45 mph); * Series 211 (HIT, KHI, KS, NS or TCC; 2007-15).

TŌKайдō MAIN LINE

.. was the original 1,067 milimetre (3 ft 6 in) gauge route now operated by JR East between Tōkyō to Atami, JR Central on via Kanaya to Maibara, and JR West beyond there to Kōbe, using Class 211 EMU's produced by various manufacturers. Although trains no longer operated through over the entire the line, ours might have been travelling the length of JR Central's share.

DTS 807 KANAYA-SHIN KANAYA

Cme [2] [7305, 7204]

Depart 1126, arrive 1129, non-stop, on a Daitetsu EMU train designed to transfer intending steam-train passengers to Shin-Kanaya; * 2 km in 3 mins, or 40 km/h (1 ml/25 mph); * Nos. 7305, 7204 (ex-TER).



[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ōigawa_Railway_Ōigawa_Main_Line]

DAITETSU

... was the popular name of a private railway operating main two, 1,067 millimetre (3 ft 6 in) gauge segments: Ōigawa Main Line (Kanaya-Senzu); and Ikawa Line (Senzu-Ikawa). These segments were also called Ōigawa Steam Railway and Southern Alps Abt Railway, respectively. The original purpose of the former was to assist in the building of a dam, the latter a power plant; by now, both were run exclusively for tourism purposes (Japan Rail passes not honoured). (*Tip: the guide book, Japan by Rail, was indispensable in providing excellent advice on accessing this train and on all other aspects of rail travel in Japan [check **BIBLIOGRAPHY** below for details.]*)

DTS 101 KANAYA-SENZU

Es [C 10 8]

C [5]

Depart 1152, arrive 1309, on an Ōigawa steam train, with stops at Ieyama and Shimoizumi; * 37 km in 1 hr 17 mins, or 29 km/h (23 mls/18 mph); * No. C 10 8 (KHI, 1930).

ŌIGAWA STEAM TRAIN

... was hauled this day by a Class C 10, 2-6-4T tank engine built by Kawasaki Heavy Industries back in 1930. No. C 10 8 pulled five well-filled cars out of Kanaya, most of the passengers being a tour group which detrained at one of the two intermediate stops (failed to record which one). The trip was on a gentle upgrade and not terribly scenic, but was enlivened by an entertaining conductor and two sales ladies, who had Asahi beer to sell. On the way back, there would be an Electric locomotive on the rear, the purpose of which was unclear, given that the run was downgrade.

DTS 207/204 SENZU-KAWANE KOYAMA [IKAWA] & RETURN

C [5]

Ed [Sumata/Ikawa]

Depart 1335, arrive 1359 upbound, no stops recorded; * 6 km in 24 mins, or 15 km/h (4 mls/9 mph); * Sumata, Ikawa (no details found); * Returning to ultimate destination **Yokohama**, depart 1359, arrive Senzu 1421, locomotive leading; * 6 km in 22 mins, or 17 km/h (4 mls/10 mph).



2010's-58: Ōigawa Steam Railway train ready to depart Senzu on its return to Shin-Kanaya, behind 2-6-4T tank engine No. C 10 8 (2019/04/19) [SANDRA DAWES].

SOUTHERN ALPS

Despite earlier information that the Southern Alps Abt Railway would not be operating yet after its winter hiatus, there, at Senzu, was a train waiting to head up the line to Ikawa. We quickly procured tickets and headed out, intending to go as far as we could before switching to a return train that would get us back in time for the departure of the steam train back to Shin-Kanaya. This meant changing during a meet of upward and downward trains at Kawane Koyama station. (The line was single track, with passing tracks at stations.) Small diesel engines powered the trains, but were assisted by an Electric rack locomotive attached farther up at Abt Ichishiro station, to tackle the steepest railway in Japan to Ikawa.

DTS 102 SENZU-SHIN KANAYA

Es [C 10 8]

C [5]

Ee [E34]

Depart 1453, arrive 1609, with stops shown for Kawaneonsen Sasamado and Ieyama, but none recorded; *

No. E34 (no information found; possibly Class E 10).



2010's-59: Upbound Southern Alps No. 207, engine on rear (foreground) waits for down-bound No. 204 to pass Kawane Koyama station (2019/04/19) [PETER DAWES].

DTS 86 SHIN KANAYA-KANAYA

Cme [2] [\[21002, 21001\]](#)

Depart 1619, arrive 1624, non-stop, on two old "Zoom Car" EMU's; * 2 km in 5 mins, or 25 km/h (1 mi/16 mph); * Nos. 21002, 21001 (*Builder?*; 1958; ex-NK).

JRC [ATAMI?] KANAYA-KAKEGAWA [TOYOHASHI?]

Cme [6]

Depart 1636, arrive 1649 – watching in awe as Shinkansens rushed through Kakegawa on the inside express tracks, every five minutes or so in each direction.

JRC 668 [SHIN-OSAKA] KAKEGAWA-SHIN YOKOHAMA [TOKYO] Kodama

Cme [16]

Depart 1734, arrive 1858, again occupying a Green car in an N700A Shinkansen; * Onward by JR East Yokohama Line local train to Higashi-Kanagawa station, Negishi Line to Yokohama station, and Minatomirai subway to our neighbourhood Nihon-ōdōri station; * **20 APR:** Another day in and around Yokohama, visiting the impressive NYK Maritime Museum, then beautiful Sankei-en (Three Creeks Garden) by transit bus.

21 APR:

JRE [TŌKYŌ] YOKOHAMA-KITA KAMAKURA [ZUSHI]

Cme [15]

To **FUJISAWA**, in Kanagawa prefecture, via Kita Kamakura and Kamakura proper, beginning with a Negishi Line local from Kannai to Yohohama station – our main purpose being to visit temples and shrines in the Kamukura area, and to ride the Enoden Line along the coast; * Depart Yokohama station 1016, arrive Kita Kamakura 1038, on a Yokosuka Line EMU, including stops Hodogaya, Totsuka and Ōfuna; * 20 km in 22 mins, or 56 km/h (12 mls/35 mph).

DAY OUTING TO KAMAKURA AND ENOSHIMA

Kannai station, on the Negishi Line, was a 15-minute walk south from our hotel, close by the ballpark used by DeNA Baystars of the Japanese Central baseball league. Although we could have taken a Negishi Line train the other way directly to Ōfuna, we went into Yokohama station and caught an Ōfuna/Kamakura-bound train there – a very crowded, 15-car, Sunday morning service consisting of 11-car and 4-car EMU sets hooked together, the former sporting two double-decker Green (1st class) cars. (This is my best effort at identifying these JR East trains, considering that operations in the Tōkyō/Yokohama area were very complicated, with various origins and destinations, locals and expresses, often running on two or more lines.) Our decision to jump off at Kita (North) Kamakura paid off as the Zen Buddhist Engaku-ji temple proved interesting and, best of all, not crowded by Japanese standards. In contrast, Kamakura itself was extremely busy, to the point where we decided to escape on the Enoden Line for the rest of the day.

JRE [TŌKYŌ] KITA KAMAKURA-KAMAKURA [ZUSHI]

Cme [15]

[2535Y front]

Depart 1240, arrive 1243, non-stop; * 2 km in 3 mins, or 40 km/h (1 ml/25 mph); * No. 2535Y (no info. found).



[Enoden Line logo [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enoshima_Electric_Railway]]



2010's-60: Enoden Line Electric Multiple Unit trains at Enoshima station (2019/04/21) [PETER DAWES].

END KAMAKURA-FUJISAWA

Cme [4] *[50 Enoden rear]*

Depart 1418, arrive 1456, including stops at Inamuragasaki, Enoshima and Kugenuma; * 10 km in 38 mins, or 16 km/h (6 mls/10 mph); * No. 50 Enoden (TCC, 1997).

ENOSHIMA DENTETSU

... (*Enoshima Electric Railway – END*) operated a 10-kilometre (6 mile), single track, 1,067 millimetre (3 ft 6 in) line. Widely known as the Enoden Line, the privately owned railway operated 2-car Electric Multiple Unit trains, two of them sometimes hooked together. Passing tracks were available at five of the 13 intermediate stations. (We purchased day passes, considering our JR passes were not honoured.) The main attraction along the way was Enoshima Island, on Sagami Bay, known for its Buddhist shrine, beaches and restaurants, a 15-minute walk from Enoshima station.

END FUJISAWA-ENOSHIMA [KAMAKURA]

Cme [2]

Returning, depart 1600, arrive Enoshima 1612, making four stops, followed by a walk over to the island and a wonderful seafood dinner in a small restaurant; * 3 km in 12 mins, or 15 km/h (2 mls/9 mph).

SM ENOSHIMA-ŌFUNA

Cme [3]

[5612, 5611; 56??]

Depart 1825, arrive 1840 on the Shōnan Monorail, including stops at Kataseyama, Nishi-Kamakura and Shōnan-Machiya; * 7 km in 15 mins, or 28 km/h (4 mls/17 mph); * Nos. 5612, 5611 (MHI, 2004).

SHŌNAN MONORERU

... (*Shōnan Monorail – SM*) ran from Enoshima to Ōfuna, making six stops. This was a “suspended monorail”, originally built by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries in 1971. It connected with Yokosuka, Negishi and other JR East lines at Ōfuna. The cars used here dated back to 2004. (SM would not accept our JR Pass or Endoden day pass.)

JRE [ATAMI?] ŌFUNA-YOKOHAMA [UTSUNOMIYA]

Cme [15]

Depart 1851, arrive 1904, on a Tōkaidō Main Line train, possibly with one stop only, at Totsuka; * 18 km in 13 mins, or 82 km/h (12 mls/51 mph); * Back to our hotel by Minatomirai subway, via Nihon-ōdōri station.



[Enoden Line 1-day pass]



2010's-61: Three-car “suspended monorail” operated by Shōnan Monorail between Enoshima and Ōfuna (orange stripes having been replaced by black stripes by 2019) (2008/08/10) [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shonan_Monorail].

22 APR:

JRC 305 [TŌKYŌ] SHIN YOKOHAMA-SHIN ŌSAKA *Nozomi*

Cme [16]

To **HIROSHIMA**, in the prefecture of the same name, the main purpose being to visit the atomic-bomb sites, our day beginning with a taxi ride to Shin-Yokohama station; * Depart 0832, arrive 1046, with stops at Nagoya and Kyōto, occupying a Green car in an N700A Shinkansen *Nozomi*; * 528 km in 2 hrs 14 mins, or 237 km/h (330 mls/148 mph).



[*Shōnan Monorail logo & banner (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shonan_Monorail)*]



2010's-62: Platform guard at Shin-Yokohama station, going through his routine prior to departure of a Shinkansen headed for Ōsaka (2019/04/22) [SANDRA DAWES].

NOZOMI EXPERIENCE

As mentioned earlier, our Japan Rail passes were not valid for travel on *Nozomi* Shinkansens, giving me the idea that we should pay extra to take just one, on our way to Hiroshima. Thus, we rode JR Central No. 305, Green class in a standard N700A train, as far as Shin-Ōsaka station, where we transferred to a JR West *Sakura* Shinkansen onward to Hiroshima. The *Nozomi* was similar to our earlier trip on the *Kodama* from Shin-Yokohama to Kakegawa, except that we ran non-stop all the way to Nagoya, then paused only once more, at Kyōto. (The Shin Yokohama-Nagoya segment was covered in slightly faster time: 244 km/h [157 mph].) These trains were exceedingly stable and quiet, and there was no discomfort when entering, then traversing, the occasional tunnel. The cart lady passed through Car 8 frequently, and was exceedingly polite – in fact, she, the conductor, and any other staff bowed as they entered and left the car!



2010's-63: Interior of Green Car 8, *Nozomi* No. 305, Tōkyō to Shin-Ōsaka, demonstrating spacious 2+ 2 seating (2019/04/22) [SANDRA DAWES].

GREEN SECTION

Cars 8-10 were “Green” class in N700A Shinkansens. The Conductor’s room was at the end of our Car 8, along with an “Automated External Defibrillator”; in Car 9, there were toilets and a telephone; in Car 10, a tiny, sealed smoking compartment, in which smokers puffed away, mostly while working their phones. Because neither JR Central nor JR West allowed pass holders to book from abroad, we used Japanese company Voyagin to book this one trip – for a fee, of course. (The tickets were waiting for us at our hotel when we arrived from Hong Kong.)



[JR “Shinkansen series N700 Advanced” logo (2019/04/19)] [SANDRA DAWES]



2010's-64: JR West *Sakura* No. 553, waiting to depart Shin-Ōsaka station for Hiroshima and Kagoshima-Chūō (2019/04/22) [PETER DAWES].

DEPARTURE ROUTINE

The platform guard would go through an elaborate routine before signalling approval of a train's departure [*photo 2010's-62 above*]. He would press a button on a train-side console, then point back along the train, then forward, as if to remind himself of each step in clearing a train for departure. Then he appeared to press another button, presumably giving the go-ahead to the conductor onboard that everything was clear to go.



[Joint logos on JR West and JR Kyūshū N700 *Sakura* trains (2019/04/22)]
[SANDRA DAWES]

JRW 553 SHIN ŌSAKA-HIROSHIMA [KAGOSHIMA-CHŪŌ] *Sakura*Cme [8] [S18]

Depart 1120, arrive 1246, including stops at Shin-Kōbe, Okayama and Mihara, occupying the Green saloon in an N700 Shinkansen; * Two nights at the Sheraton Grand, a modern, western-style hotel located right next to the station and the city's excellent streetcars; * 306 km in 1 hr 26 mins, or 214 km/h (191 mls/134 mph); * No. S18 (*KHI, 2012*); * **23-24 APR:** Highlights were: • took No. 2 tram to the Atomic Bomb Dome and Peace Memorial, Museum and Park, remembering the Aug. 6, 1945 dropping of the bomb (incredibly moving, especially re-enacted reminiscences of victims; sobering to realize that this destruction was only a tiny fraction of the damage modern nuclear and hydrogen bombs would wreak); • walked 10 minutes from our hotel to Mazda "Zoom-Zoom" Stadium (the Japanese love to use English names for things) to watch a Central League baseball game in which the Hiroshima Carp walked off the Chunichi Dragons from Nagoya 3-2 on a rainy night, with lots of orchestrated cheers and songs composed and sung for star players; the 30,000-plus crowd depositing their trash with ushers outside the stadium post-game; overall, quite the cultural experience – topped off by Shinkansens passing beyond the stadium on their way to and from the main station; and • rode another No. 2 tram (this one sporting a motorperson plus conductor and branded as the "Green People Mover"), this time to end-of-line at Hiroden-miyajima-guchi, then by ferry operated by JR West to a Miyajima Island shrouded in rain and mist, past the partially submerged-during-tides Great Torii Gate to the shrines and temples, all told, a UNESCO World Heritage Site (return by JR West San'yō Main line "Red Wing" train from Miyajimaguchi to Hiroshima station).

SAN'YŌ SHINKANSEN

... was a JR West high-speed line operating between Shin-Ōsaka station and Hakata station, Fukuoka. Maximum speed was 300 km/h (187 mph). Some *Nozomi* Shinkansens operated through from Tōkyō to Hiroshima and/or Hakata but, as mentioned before, could not be used by JR Pass holders. In addition to trains coming through from Tōkyō, there were two other Shinkansen types on this line: • *Mizuhu* (meaning "Abundant Rice" or "Harvest") (fastest); and • *Sakura* ("Cherry Blossom"). JR passes were good on all but *Mizuhu*'s and *Nozomi*'s. As in our case, some trains operated farther west beyond Hakata to Kagoshima Chūō, over the Kyūshū Shinkansen, operated by JR Kyūshū. Between 1959 and 2005, the *Sakura* name had been attached to a Tōkyō-Nagasaki/Sasebo Sleeping-car train.



2010's-65: Atomic Bomb Dome, close by Peace Memorial/Museum/Park – symbol of Hiroshima's destruction and survival (2019/04/23) [PETER DAWES].

ROLLING STOCK

Eight-car N700 trains were used on this Shinkansen, built variously by Hitachi, Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Kinki Sharyo and Nippon Sharyo: • Cars 1-5 ("Ordinary" class); • Car 6 (Ordinary, but including a 24-seat "Green" saloon); and • Cars 7-8 (Ordinary). Overall capacity was 546, but note the small number of 1st class seats. Smoking compartments were available two of the cars. Nineteen train sets were owned by JR West and 11 by JR Kyūshū, all with identical markings. (Our S18 set was owned by JR West.)



[westjr.co.jp/global/en/]



2010's-66: N700A Shinkansen from Tōkyō entering Hiroshima station (2019/04/22) [SANDRA DAWES].

24 APR:

JRW 561 [SHIN-OSAKA] HIROSHIMA-HAKATA [KAGOSHIMA-CHŪŌ] Sakura

Cme [8]

Onward to **NAGASAKI**, in the prefecture of the same name, mainly to visit that city's atomic-bomb sites, which were not as well known as Hiroshima's; * Depart 1635, arrive 1741, stopping at Shin-Yamaguchi and Kokura, occupying Green seats in another N700 Shinkansen; * Some panic in Hakata station, due to a confusing layout and staff who spoke very limited English; but we made it to the correct platform with five minutes to spare; * 248 km in 1 hr 6 mins, or 225 km/h (155 mls/141 mph).



[From Hiroshima 1-Day Streetcar Pass (2019)]



2010's-67: Statue in Nagasaki Peace Park, right arm pointing to the sky from whence the bomb came, left arm horizontally pointing to peace – a school choir singing in front (2019/04/25) [SANDRA DAWES].

JRK 35 HAKATA-NAGASAKI *Kamome*

Cme [6] [SM-??]

Depart 1755, arrive 1952, including stops at Tosa, Saga and Isahaya (two nights at APA Hotel Nagasaki-akimae, right across from the station and tram stop, featuring small but ingeniously functional rooms (especially the bathroom); * 154 km in 1 hr 57 mins, or 79 km/h (96 mls/49 mph); * SM-?? (HIT, 2000-1); *

24-25 APR: Highlights: • by No. 1 tram to the Atomic Bomb Museum, Hypocentre and Park (talked with a male survivor of the bombing who was manning a display; listened to a school group praying in front of the Peace Statue, then singing a beautiful song); • by No. 1 tram again, past the station to Dejima, a reconstructed Dutch trading post on a small island in Nagasaki Bay, and, from mid 17th to mid-19th centuries, the only foreign entry point allowed by the Japanese (superbly reconstructed buildings, ranging from factor's residence to warehouses for various goods being traded); and • by Nos. 1 & 3 trams to access Mount Inasa ropeway (spectacular views of the city and harbour by means of this unmanned cable lift).

JR KYUSHU RAILWAY COMPANY

jrkyushu.co.jp/english/



2010's-68: Multi-coloured trams conveniently lined up in front of Nagasaki station, pedestrians forced to use walkways built over a multi-lane roadway to reach the trams and the other side, where our hotel was located (2019/04/25) [PETER DAWES].

KAMOME

... (meaning "Seagull") were Electric Multiple Unit, "Limited Express" trains, in the case of JR Kyūshū's No. 35, a white painted, "885 Series" built by Hitachi. They ran on the Kagoshima (Hakata-Tosu) and Nagasaki (Tosu-Nagasaki) "Main Lines". (Their top speed was 130 kilometres (80 miles) per hour.) Hakata station served the major city of Fukuoka. *Kamome*'s shared the route with regional trains on various segments, running over some single track segments, where trains passed each other at stations. This was the first time a conductor checked our reservation tickets. A friendly gentleman on the train pointed to construction work underway adjacent to the right-of-way, this being a Shinkansen extension to Nagasaki (target completion date of 2023).



2010's-69: JR Kyūshū Series 787 *Kamome* No. 10 to the left, waiting to depart Nagasaki, a regional train in the middle, and the faster and earlier (but yet to depart) Series 885 *Kamome* No. 8 to the right (2019/04/26) [PETER DAWES].

26 APR:

JRK 10 NAGASAKI-HAKATA *Kamome*

Cme [7] [BM-10]

To **KYŌTO** in the prefecture of the same name, via Hakata and Shin-Ōsaka, for the purpose of visiting what was known as the “cultural capital of Japan”; * Depart 0846, arrive Hakata 1053; * BM-10 (HIT/KS, 1992-2002).

ANOTHER KAMOME

No. 10 was made up of a JR Kyūshū Electric Multiple Unit Series 787 train type, used, like the 885 series, on “Limited Express” trains. Their top speed was the same: 130 kilometres (80 miles) per hour. Sporting an English “787 Around the Kyushu” banner, our No. 10 *Kamome* was a 7-car train, but there were also 4- and 6-car versions, all built jointly by Hitachi and Kinki Sharyo. This *Kamome* closely followed 885-Series No. 8, which had departed Nagasaki at 0828 and arrived Hakata at 1021 – taking 14 fewer minutes over the 154 km (96 mls) route.



2010's-70: JR Central/JR West's incredible Kyōto station, full of shops, restaurants, theatres and stores, was even more spectacular behind the photographer, reaching up 11 storeys (2019/04/27) [SANDRA DAWES].

JRW 548 [KAGOSHIMA-CHŪŌ] HAKATA-SHIN ŌSAKA *Sakura*

Cme [8] [787-7514]

Depart 1115, arrive 1348, including stops at Kokura, Hiroshima and Shin-Kōbe, occupying the Green car (three nights at the convenient Ibis Styles Hotel, located across from the station and run by French group Accor, which had owned the famous Wagons-Lits Co. from 1991 to 2011; * 619 km in 2 hrs 33 mins, or 243 km/h (386 mls/151 mph); * No. 787-7514 (Car 5) (HIT, KHI, KS or NS, 2011).

ON TO KYŌTO

From Hakata, we took another *Sakura* to Shin-Ōsaka, enjoying lots of interesting scenery, despite the blinding average speed of 243 kilometres (151 miles) per hour, lengthy walls on either side of elevated structures, and considerable tunnelling. Once underway, the attendant rushed to park her cart in the nearest alcove so I could pass, while greeting me with a smile and a bow – typical of service on JR companies. At 619 km (386 mls), this was our longest, and fastest, trip in Japan – or anywhere, by train. Beyond Shin-Ōsaka, our *Hikari* ("Light") train ran onward to Kyōto over the Tōkaidō "Bullet" train route, slower than *Nozomi*'s but faster than *Kodama*'s.



2010's-71: Kinkaku-ji Zen Buddhist "Temple of the Golden Pavillion", Kyōto's most famous symbol (2019/04/27) [SANDRA DAWES].

JRC 524 SHIN ŌSAKA-KYŌTO [TŌKYŌ] Hikari

Cme [16] **[775-2018]**

Depart 1416, arrive 1431, non-stop, travelling Green class in a 16-car N700A; * 39 km in 15 mins, or 156 km/h (24 mls/97 mph); * No. 775-2018 (HIT, KHI, KS or NS, 2011); * By taxi to the Kyōto Railway Museum (very well-presented; short ride behind 2-6-0 Mogul steam locomotive No. C56160, built for Japanese Government Railways in the 1930's; return to Kyōto station from adjacent Umekōji-Kyōtonishi station on a JR West's Sanjo Line train, taking around 10 minutes; * **27 APR:** * "Temple Day" in Kyōto, starting out by JR West Sagano Line to Hanazono station to visit Hokongo-in "Lotus" Temple and Myōshin-ji Temple, then by bus uphill to the Kinkaku-ji "Golden Temple" – the crowds tolerable, just before the onslaught of Golden Week (first week of May), then to Ryōan-ji Temple; * Return by walking to Ryōanji station on the Randen Line, then tram to Satsueisyo-mae station, and JR West Sagano Line train from nearby Uzumasa station back to Kyōto station – followed by our best (and most expensive) meal in Japan, at Tenichi Tempura in Kyōto station (many courses featuring fish-based dishes, cooked right in front of the diners).



2010's-72: Randen Line car barns, located on the Arashiyama-Shijō-Ōmiya Line (2019/04/29) [SANDRA DAWES].

RANDEN LINE

... was an interurban-like tram service operated by Keifuku Denki Tetsudō (*Keifuku Electric Railroad*) – the last remaining such line in the city. It consisted of two routes: • Arashiyama via Katabira-notsuji to Shijō Ōmiya; and • Katabira-notsuji to Kitano-Hakubaichō. These lines did not serve Kyōto main station, but did connect directly with JR West and city subway and bus lines at various points. (JR passes were not accepted.)

28 APR:

JRW KYŌTO-NARA

Cme [6] [NC 221-62]

Day trip to **NARA** in Nara prefecture, to visit more temples, shrines and ruins, collectively forming another World Heritage Site in another ancient capital of Japan; * Depart 1100, arrive 1145, including stops at Ugi, Jōyō and Kizu; * 42 km in 45 mins, or 56 km/h (26 mls/35 mph); * NC 221-62 (JRW, HIT, KHI or KS; 1989-92).



2010's-73: Nan'endō octagonal hall, part of Kōfuku-ji Buddhist temple complex, Nara (2019/04/28) [SANDRA DAWES].

MIYAKOJI RAPID SERVICE

... was the branding given by JR West to its Kyōto-Nara trains, which were extremely crowded this Sunday morning. In fact, we were at the platform 10 minutes before the 1030 express, but the car doors already were packed with people who looked determined not to make way for even a single additional passenger (we waited for the next express at 1100). Series 221 Electric Multiple Unit trains were built by various manufacturers, circa 1990. We occupied what was labelled as a "Mildly Air-conditioned Car" – the Japanese always thinking about the details!



[From JR West webpage for this service jprail.com/travel-information/how-to-get-nara-from-kyoto-miyakoji-rapid-service] (2019)]

JRW NARA-SHIN ŌSAKA

Cme [8]

Return via Ōsaka, departing 1624 on a “D. Rapid” service, arriving Shin-Ōsaka at 1715, including stops at Ōji, Kyūhōgi and Nanaten, following the Yamatogi and Ōsaka-Higashi lines; * 51 km in 51 mins, or 60 km/h (32 mls/37 mph).

JRC 478 SHIN ŌSAKA-KYŌTO [TŌKYŌ] *Hikari*

Cme [16] **[775-1317]**

Depart 1743, arrive 1755, non-stop, on an N700A Shinkansen, occupying unreserved Ordinary car 5, given that all Green car space had to be reserved – although it’s unlikely there would have been a problem on such a short trip; * 39 km in 12 mins, or 195 km/h (24 mls/122 mph); * No. 775-1317 (HIT, KHI, KS or NS; 2007-15).

QUICK TRIP

This *Hikari* gave me the fastest 12-minute train ride I’d ever had, at almost 200 kilometres (125 miles) per hour, which included acceleration, then deceleration time. Our earlier short trip between the same places (26 APR above), and later quick ones between Toyama and Unazukionsen (30 APR below), were almost as fast.

29 APR:

JRW 89 [OSAKA] KYŌTO-KANAZAWA *Thunderbird*

Cme [6] **[681-7]**

To **TOYAMA** in the prefecture of the same name, via Kanazawa, to explore the Japanese Alps (after spending the morning taking JR West’s Sagano Line to Uzumasa station in order to take the Randen “tram” to Shijō Ōmiya, returning same way); * Depart Kyōto 1340, arrive Kanazawa 1556, including stops at Tsuruga, Fukui and Komatsu, occupying the Green car; * 225 km in 2 hrs 16 mins, or 99 km/h (140 mls/62 mph); * No. 681-7 (HIT, KHI or KS?; 1992-7).



[Signboard for JR West’s Thunderbird [osakastation.com/the-limited-express-thunderbird-for-fukui-kanazawa-wakura-onsen/]

THUNDERBIRD

... (“*Sandābādo*”) was a “Limited Express” service operating over the old Tōkaidō and Hokuriku main lines between Ōsaka, Kyōto and Kanazawa – beyond to Toyama until 2015 when the Kanazawa-Tōkyō (via Toyama) Hokuriku Shinkansen was opened. Our version had six cars, while others apparently had three or as many as nine. Builders of these Series 681 EMU's were possibly Hitachi, Kawasaki Heavy Industries or Kinki Sharyo. Top speed was 160 kilometres (*100 miles*) per hour.

JRW/JRE 570 KANAZAWA-TOYAMA [*TŌKYŌ*] *Hakutaka*

Cme [12]

Depart 1609, arrive 1632, with one stop at Takaoka, occupying the Green car (three nights at the excellent Daiwa Roynet Hotel, accessed in less than 10 minutes by No. 1 tram from Toyama station to Aramachi stop – handy but rough-riding, much of the track and structure needing replacement); * 59 km in 23 mins, or 155 km/h (*37 mls/97 mph*).

HOKURIKU SHINKANSEN

... was opened in 2015 between Kanazawa and Nagano, the latter city having been connected to Tōkyō by Shinkansen back in 1997. It was jointly operated by JR West and JR East, the dividing station being Jōetsu-myōkō, pretty much halfway between Kanazawa and Tōkyō. There were four train types: • *Kagayaki* (meaning “Glitter” or “Luster”), limited stops; • *Hakutaku* (“White Hawk”), all stops; • *Tsurugi* (named after Mount Tsurugi), stopped at most stations, Kanazawa-Toyama; and • *Asama* (named after the volcano), stopped at most stations, Nagano-Tōkyō. Japan Rail Passes were valid on all trains.

NAUGHTY IN ENGLISH

As observed on trains and elsewhere, Japanese women tended to dress modestly, certainly in comparison to the Chinese in Hong Kong. Younger Japanese women compensated with tight jeans and suggestive English slogans on blouses and t-shirts (e.g., “Naughty” on one side of the blouse, “Nice” on the other). Perhaps using another language made this otherwise unacceptable behaviour tolerable in Japanese society.



2010's-74: *Hakutaka* (possibly No. 567) arriving at Nagano on its way from Tōkyō to Toyama and Kanazawa, comprised of a 12-car, W7 or E7 Series set – Sandra also taking a photo or two (2019/05/01) [PETER DAWES].

EQUIPMENT

Twelve-car Series E7 (JR East) and W7 (JR West) trains sets were used on the Hokuriku Shinkansen. Hitachi and Kawasaki Heavy Industries built some of each series, Kinki Sharyo some of the W7's, and J-TREC some E7's. Top speed on the Hokuriku was 260 kilometres (*160 miles*) per hour. Configuration: • Cars 1-10 (Ordinary class); • Car 11 (Green); and • Car 12 ("Gran" class). Overall capacity was 934, including 63 in Green and 18 in Gran. Smoking compartments were *not* provided. Nineteen train sets were owned by JR East (which employed them on the Jōetsu Shinkansen as well) and 11 by JR West. (Owning railway was indicated on the side of each Car 12.) "Gran" Class featured 2+1 seating, complimentary lunch and refreshments, all provided by a host or hostess – but the service was provided only on selected trains. Pass holders had to pay to upgrade to Gran.



2010's-75: No. 1 tram waiting to depart Toyama JR station, author about to board with a bag of "Ekibens" (station lunches) (2019/05/01) [SANDRA DAWES].

30 APR:

JRW/JRE 556 [KANAZAWA] TOYAMA-KUROBE UNAZUKIONSEN [TŌKYŌ] Hakutaka

Cme [12]

Day outing to **KEYAKIDAIRA** on the Kurobe Gorge Railway, via Kurobe and Unazukionsen (accessing Toyama station by No. 1 tram); * Depart 0847 on a Tōkyō-bound Shinkansen, arrive Kurobe-Unazukionsen station 0859, non-stop; * 38 km in 12 mins, or 190 km/h (24 mls/119 mph).

TCT [DENTETSU-TOYAMA] SHIN KUROBE-UNAZUKIONSEN

Cme [2] **[14722, 172]**

Depart 0917 from adjacent Shin-Kurobe station, arrive 0932, non-stop; * 13 km (est.) in 15 mins, or 52 km/h (8 mls/32 mph); * Nos. 14722, 172 (*details unknown*); * The Kurobe stations had confusing names: the Shinkansen station, which one might have expected to be called "Shin", was "Kurobe-Unazukionsen", after the nearby resort town; the regional station across the street was "Shin", and not "Unazukionsen"!



2010's-76: Kurobe Gorge 1310 service, ex-Keyakidaira, on its way back down to Unazuki, seven closed and six open cars led by two electric locomotives (2019/04/30) [SANDRA DAWES].

TOYAMA CHIHŌ TETSUDŌ

... (*Toyama Chihō Regional Railway – TCT*) was a private company operating a modest network of lines out of Toyama, as well as the city trams. (Japan Rail passes were not accepted.) Consisting of a powered car and trailer, our train really rocked and rolled down the 1,067 millimetre (3 ft 6 in) line, non-stop, having originated on TCT's own line out of Toyama. It actually departed, by my watch, two minutes early. To depart early in Japan? Perhaps OK. Late? Unacceptable!

KKT UNAZUKI-KEYAKIDAIRA

Ee [2] [24,26]

C [13]

Depart 1003 (after a 3-minute walk from Unazukionsen station), arrive 1121, including stops at Kuronagi, Sassadaira and Kanetsuri; * 20 km in 1 hr 18 mins, or 15 km/h (12 mls/10 mph); * Nos. 24, 26 (*details unknown*).



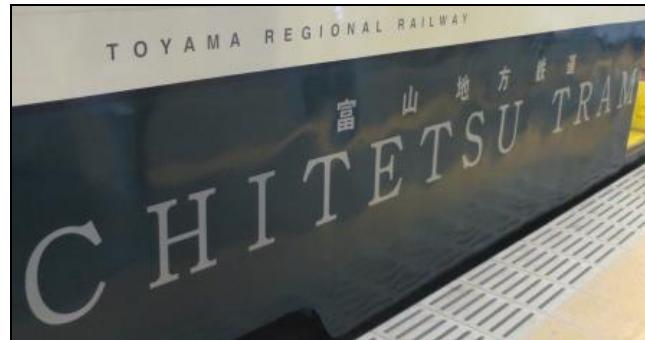
2010's-77: Unazukionsen station of Toyama Chihō Regional Railway, our return train to Kurobe waiting to depart (2019/04/30) [SANDRA DAWES].

KKT KEYAKIDAIRA-UNAZUKI

Ee [2] [17,18]

C [13]

Returning, depart 1310, arrive 1428, followed by a quick walk back to Unazukionsen (and afternoon dessert at the excellent “Mozart Coffee House”, then some dipping of toes in the hot-springs fountain next to TCT’s station).



[Banner on side of Toyama tram (2019/05/01)] [SANDRA DAWES].

KUROBE KYŌKOKU TETSUDŌ

... (*Kurobe Gorge Railway – KKT*) was owned by Kansai Electric Power Co. and operated a 762 millimetre (*2 ft 6 in*) line built to assist in the building of Kurobe Dam. Also known as “Kurotetsu”, the railway did not accept Japan Rail passes. Until a few days before, the trains were operating only as far as Sassadaira, the area still recovering from winter. Our train consisted of two EDR-class electric locomotives, pulling 13 cars, the first six open to the elements, the last seven enclosed and heated – and sold-out. Lots of bridges and tunnels, and heavily loaded downward trains passing ours. Stretches of track were picked up and stored in tunnels for the winter, then reinstalled in the spring. (The line actually continued farther up the gorge, but not for passengers.) At Keyakidaira, there were nice sights in Sarutobe Gorge, including bridge and rock overhangs, plus interesting displays in the visitor centre, where Sandra ended up talking with an elderly Japanese lady who once had visited Edmonton for a couple of months.

TCT UNAZUKIONSEN-SHIN KUROBE [DENTETSU-TOYAMA]

Cme [2] **[1601, 16012]**

Depart 1600, arrive 1621, including stops at Uchiyama, Urayama and Wakaguri; * 13 km (est.) in 21 mins, or 37 km/h (8 mls/23 mph); * Nos. 1601, 16012 (*details unknown*).



[Toyama Chihō round-trip discount ticket (2019)]

JRW/JRE 567 [TŌKYŌ] KUROBE UNAZUKIONSEN-TOYAMA [KANAZAWA] Hakutaka

Cme [12]

Depart 1645, arrive 1657, non-stop (followed by a No.1 tram back to our hotel).

1 MAY:

TCT DENTETSU TOYAMA-TATEYAMA

Cme [2] [14774, 14773]

Another day outing, this time to **NAGANO**, following the Tateyama-Kurobe Alpine Route (accessing the TCT station, adjacent to JR's, by our usual No. 1 tram); * Depart 0802, arrive Tateyama 0909, including stops at Terada (exchanging passengers from Unazukionsen direction), Gohyakkoku and Iwakuraji; * 34 km in 1 hr 7 mins, or 31 km/h (21 mls/19 mph); * Nos . 14773, 14774 (*details unknown*).

TATEYAMA KUROBE ALPINE ROUTE

... was an extraordinary transportation system extending from Toyama through to Ōgizawa, cutting through Mount Tateyama in the Japanese Alps, with onward connections to several places, in our case Nagano, where we would catch a Shinkansen back to Toyama. It worked like this (*our timings on this day*): • Toyama Chihō Regional Railway, **Toyama** to **Tateyama** (67 mins); • Tateyama Kurobe Kankō (TKK) “cable car” (funicular) up to **Bijodaira** (7 mins); • Tateyama Highland Bus to **Murodō** (50 mins); • TKK trolley bus to **Diakanbō** (10 mins); • TKK “ropeway” (aerial tramway) down to **Kurobedaira** (7 mins); • TKK “cable car” (funicular) farther down to **Kurobeko** (5 mins); • by foot across **Kurobe Dam** (15 mins); • Kansai Electric Power Co. Kanden Tunnel trolley bus to **Ōgizawa** (16 mins); • Alpico Transport Co. motor bus to **Nagano** (110 mins); and • joint JR East/JR West **Hakutaka** Shinkansen back to **Toyama** (59 mins). Distance from Tateyama to Ōgizawa: 39 km (24 mls). Overall, Toyama back to Toyama: 301 km (188 mls).



[alpen-route.com/en (2019)]



[From [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tateyama_Kurobe_Alpine_Route \(2019\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tateyama_Kurobe_Alpine_Route)]

ALPINE ROUTE INS AND OUTS

We purchased “Option Tickets” at Dentetsu-Toyama station the morning before (as required), allowing us to avoid having to buy tickets for each segment. Included were separate chits for the Bijodaira funicular – the only segment which, in theory, could be reserved in advance, and which supposedly had been sold out for weeks for this day. We could not get on the full-up 0740 express train from Toyama to Tateyama, but the following local at 0802 was lightly loaded, partly because most tour groups went directly to Tateyama by motor bus. This being Golden Week, all onward segments were very crowded, with the bus tour groups being particularly aggressive when following their flag-carrying leader. Highest point was Murodō at 2,450 metres (*8,040 feet*), compared to just 7 m (23 ft) at Toyama – and the worst crowding was there as well. The standing room-only, tunnel trolley buses were especially trying, careening ahead in dim lighting and stale air, in the case of the Kanden, for six kilometres (*four miles*). That aside, and despite the ubiquitous crowds, heavy rains and socked-in vistas during most of the day, this was a very interesting and worthwhile experience.



2010's-78: Tourists inspecting the “Ice Wall” at Murodō, Tateyama Kurobe Alpine Route (2019/05/01) [SANDRA DAWES].

JRW/JRE 567 [TŌKYŌ] NAGANO-TOYAMA [KANAZAWA] *Hakutaka*

Cme [12]

Depart 1558, arrive 1657, in Green class, stopping at Jōetsumkōkō, Itoigawa and Kurobe-Unazukionsen – this being the same train we'd taken the day before, but from Kurobe-Unazukionsen to Toyama (then, for a change, by No. 3 tram from the station, changing to a “Loop Line” tram which took us back to the hotel);

* 170 km in 59 mins, or 173 km/h (106 mls/108 mph).

ULTIMATE RESPECT

While waiting for our *Hakutaka* in Nagano station, we noticed four uniformed cleaning staff (two women and two men) on the platform opposite, positioned where the front of an expected Tōkyō-Nagano Shinkansen would pull in. When it did so at 1558 hours, the cleaning staff bowed deeply, presumably in deference to the arriving train – something you would not see in most cultures!



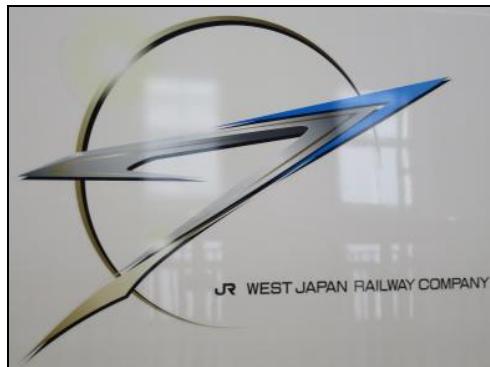
2010's-79: Kanden trolley tunnel bus, loading in Kurobe Dam terminal, about to begin its 6 kilometre (4 mile) descent to Ōgizawa on the Tateyama Kurobe Alpine Route (2019/05/01) [SANDRA DAWES].

2 MAY:

JRE/JRW 506 [KANAZAWA] TOYAMA-TŌKYŌ *Kagayaki*

Cme [12]

Back to **YOKOHAMA**, via Tōkyō (one last time accessing Toyama station by No. 1 tram); * Depart 0907, arrive 1120, in Green class on a *Kagayaki* express which stopped only at Nagano, Ōmiya and Ueno; * 392 km in 2 hrs 13 mins, or 177 km/h (245 mls/110 mph).



[Stylized No. "7" on the side of a JR West Series W7 Shinkansen (2019/05/02)] [SANDRA DAWES].



2010's-80: Rice paddies with the Japanese Alps in background, taken from *Hakutaka* No. 567 between Kurobe and Toyama (2019/05/01) [SANDRA DAWES].

JRE [UTSUNOMIJA?] TŌKYŌ-YOKOHAMA [ATAMI]

Cme [15]

Depart 1137, arrive 1159, on a “Rapid Service Acty” train, stopping at Shimbashi, Shinagawa and Kawasaki; * By Miniatomirai subway to Nihon-ōdōri station and walk to hotel (later evening trip on same subway back to Bashamichi station for dinner & return); * 29 km in 22 mins, or 81 km/h (18 mls/50 mph); * **3 MAY:** Rest of the day in Yokohama, this being Constitution Memorial Day, watching a parade right in front of our hotel, 1045 to 1330 hrs (large crowds; some 45 entries; several floats but mainly U.S.-style high-school and university marching bands, also dance groups; no litter; highly organized, each entry perfectly timed; probably overpoliced, but this was Japan); followed by a visit to Yokohama Silk Museum, documenting the silk trade (excellent displays of the manufacturing process and costumes, but nothing on how the silk was transported by ship to markets in North America, including Canadian Pacific ocean liners to Vancouver and special trains running across the country, then on to New York).



2010's-81: Marching ban participating in Yokohama Constitution Memorial Day parade, right in front of our hotel – one of 45 entries (2019/05/03) [SANDRA DAWES].

SUNRISE OVERNIGHTS

My original intention, at the start of planning this trip, was to take the last overnight trains in Japan: *Sanraizu Izumo* from Tōkyō to Izumoshi (Shimane prefecture); returning on *Sanraizu Seto* from Takamatsu (Kagawa prefecture) – “Sanraizu” meaning “Sunrise”. Operated by JR Central and JR West, the two, 7-car, Series 285 Electric Multiple Unit sets ran combined between Tōkyō and Okayama. They offered single and twin-berth rooms, plus “Nobinobi” floor spaces, which allowed passengers to lie down on the floor, instead of sitting in normal seats. Unfortunately, both trains were sold-out by the time we got to Japan, on the dates that would have worked for us. I did catch a glimpse of what I believe was this consist, on side tracks near or at Shinagawa station, Tōkyō, from the window of JRC *Kodama* No. 646.



[jprail.com/trains/sort-by-type/limited-express/
limited-express-thunderbird-raicho](http://jprail.com/trains/sort-by-type/limited-express/limited-express-thunderbird-raicho)



2010's-82: "Nobinobi" spaces on JR Central/West's *Sunrise Izumo/Seto* Series 285 Sleeping-car service – these unisex arrangements probably only feasible in low-crime Japan (2013) [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunrise_Izumo].

4 MAY:

JRC 649 [TŌKYŌ] SHIN YOKOHAMA-SHIN FUJI [SHIN-ŌSAKA] Kodama

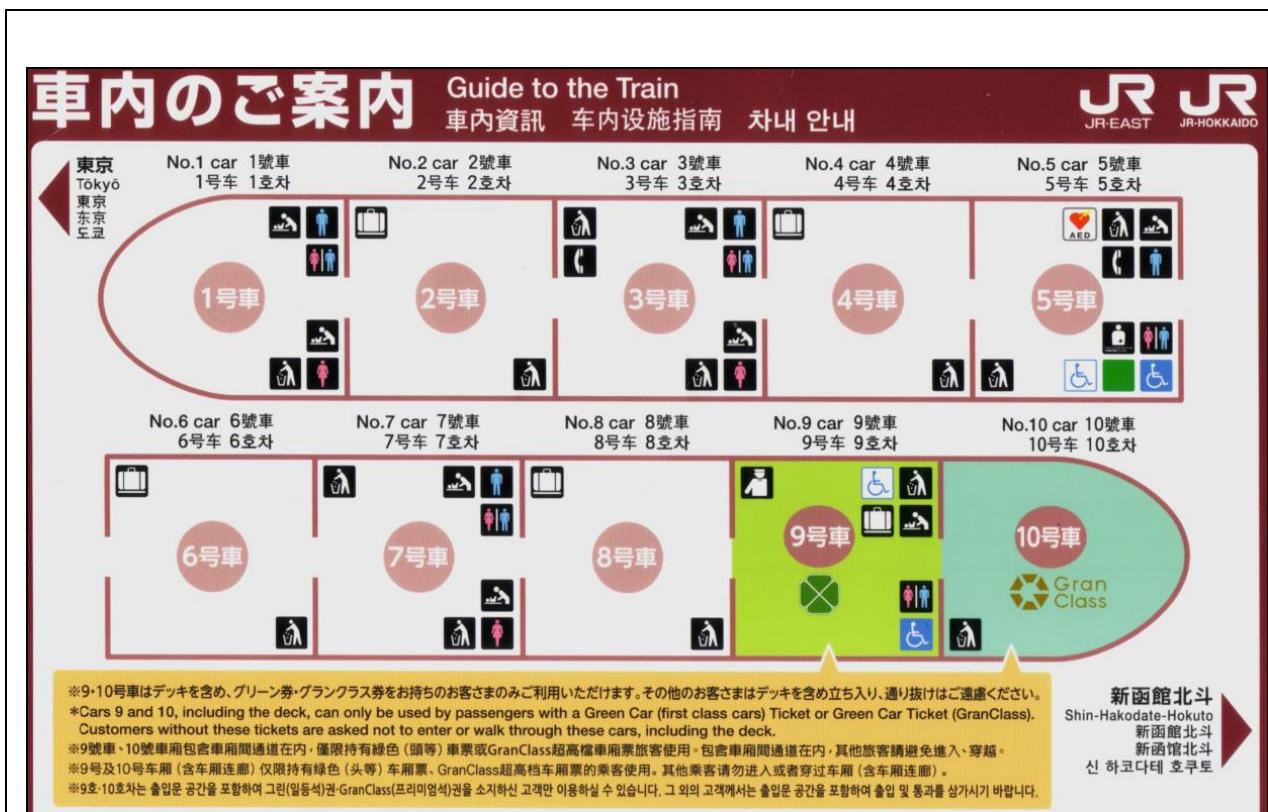
Cme [16]

To **NIKKŌ** in Tochigi prefecture, on a final train-riding fling prior to boarding QUEEN ELIZABETH the following afternoon, via Fuji, Tōkyō and Utsunomiya – no advance reservations, thus Ordinary class for the most part; * Depart Shin-Yokohama at 1116 (accessed by Blue Line subway from Kannai station), arrive Shin-Fuji (Shizuoka prefecture) 1206, stopping at Odawara, Atami and Michima, the purpose being to get some decent photos of Mount Fuji – but, alas, it was overcast; * 117 km in 50 mins, or 141 km/h (73 mls/88 mph).

JRC 646 [SHIN-ŌSAKA] SHIN FUJI-TŌKYŌ Kodama

Cme [16]

Depart 1236, arrive 1345, same stops, plus Shin-Yokohama and Shinagawa; * 146 km in 1 hr 9 mins, or 127 km/h (91 mls/79 mph).



[From JR East/JR Hokkaidō guide to E5 Shinkansens (2019)]

JRE 141 TŌKYŌ-UTSUNOMIYA [SENDAI] Yamabiko

Cme [7] TŌKYŌ-FUKUSHIMA [SHINJŌ] [Z-4]

Cme [10]

Depart 1400, arrive 1450, stopping at Ueno and Ōmiya, on a JR East Tōhoku Shinkansen: 7-car, E-6 set *Tsubasa* to Shinjō on the Yamagata “Mini-Shinkansen” leading (detached at Fukushima); and a 10-car E-5 set following, destination Sendai; * 131 km in 50 mins, or 158 km/h (68 mls/99 mph); * Set Z4 (HIT, 2012).



[From sides of "JR East Japan Railway Company" Shinkansens (2019)] [SANDRA DAWES].

TŌHOKU SHINKANSEN

... had been opened from Tōkyō to Morioka back in 1982, to Shin-Aomori in 2010, and on to Shin-Hakodate on Hokkaidō Island in 2016. Operated by JR East, it included a 54-kilometre (34-mile) tunnel, some 23 km (14 mls) of which was under the sea. There were two related “mini-Shinkansens”: • *Akita*, leaving at Morioka (through service from 1997); and • *Yamagata*, leaving at Fukushima (through service to Shinjō beginning in 1999). There were five types of Skinkansen of concern here: • *Hayabusa* (meaning “Peregrine Falcon”) (limited stop); • *Yamabiko* (named after a mythical Japanese spirit) (limited stop north to Sendai, all stops to Morioka); • *Nasuno* (derived from Nasu highlands and onsen) (all stations to Kōriyama); • *Tsubasa* (“Wind”) (on Yamagata mini-Shinkansen); and • *Komachi* (named after a famous poet) (on Akita mini-Shinkansen). Japan Rail Passes were valid on all trains.

EQUIPMENT

Ten-car Series E5's and 7-car E6's were the primary train sets used on the Tōhoku Shinkansen, built by Hitachi and Kawasaki Heavy Industries. Top speed on the Tōhoku itself was 320 kilometres (200 miles) per hour. **Series E5:** • Cars 1-8 (Ordinary class); • Car 9 (Green); and • Car 10 (Gran). Overall capacity was 731, including 55 in Green and 18 in Gran. There were 37 JR East sets, plus four similar owned by JR Hokkaidō and pooled with JR East. **Series E6:** (numbered 11-17, for combined operation with E5's): • Car 11 (Green); and • Cars 12-17 (Ordinary). Overall capacity was 338, including 23 in Green (there was no Gran class). There 24 sets placed in service between 2011 and 2014, all owned by JRE. Both series were totally non-smoking.

JRE UTSUNOMIYA-NIKKŌ

Cme [4]

Depart 1526, arrive 1608, including stops at Kanuma, Shimotsuke-Ōsawa and Imaichi; * 41 km in 42 mins, or 59 km/h (26 mls/37 mph).



2010's-83: JR East's wooden Nikkō station, designed by famed American architect Frank Lloyd Wright and opened in 1890, the Upper "White Room" formerly reserved for 1st class passengers (2019/05/04) [SANDRA DAWES].

NIKKŌ

The Japanese apparently have a saying: "don't say *kekko* [*magnificent*] until you have seen Nikko" [*Japan by Rail*, 324]. We did not do this beautiful city justice, with its famous Tōshōgū Shinto shrine complex – but this was a train-riding day, and we'd seen plenty of shrines and temples! An option for returning to Tōkyō was on the Tōbu Tetsudō, a private railway with an extensive network around Tōkyō and beyond; in fact, their Nikkō line was only 94 km (57 mls) long, compared to our JR East routing of 172 km (107 mls). Our JR Rail Passes were good on the latter but not on the former.

JRE NIKKŌ-UTSUNOMIYA

Cme [4] **[204-603 front] [Y-3 *Iroha*]**

Returning to **Yokohama**, depart 1718, arrive Utsunomiya 1758, where we purchased the last-available Ekibens (station lunches); * This train was made up of Electric Multiple Unit Set Y3, bearing the name, IROHA; * 41 km in 40 mins, or 61 km/h (26 mls/38 mph); * No. 204-603 (*HIT, KHI, KS, NS or TCC, 1985; refurbished 2013*).



2010's-84: JR East Nasuno No. 280 newly arrived at Ōmiya (Saitama) station, a 10-car E5 at left and 7-car E6 attached at right (2019/05/04) [SANDRA DAWES].

JRE 280 [KŌRIYAMA] UTSUNOMIYA-ŌMIYA [TŌKYŌ] Nasuno

Cme [10]

Cme [7]

Depart 1818, arrive 1847, stopping only at Oyama, on a Nasuno made up of combined E5 and E6 Shinkansens, occupying the latter set; * 78 km in 29 mins, or 163 km/h (48 mls/101 mph).

JRE ŌMIYA-UENO [ISOGO]

Cme [10]

Depart 1903, arrive 1945, including stops at Urawa, Akabane and Ōji; * 27 km in 42 mins, or 39 km/h (17 mls/24 mph).

JRE/JWW 572 [KANAZAWA] UENO-TŌKYŌ Hakutaka

Cme [12]

Depart 1954, arrive 1957, non-stop; * 4 km in 3 mins, or 80 km/h (2 mls/50 mph).

QUICK SWITCH

The concept seemed good: disembark from our *Nasuno* at Ōmiya and catch a Keihin-Tōhoku/Negishi Line train bound for Tōkyō, Yokohama station, Kannai and Isogo – Kannai station being close to our hotel. Forty-five minutes later, after 16 stops, we had only reached Ueno, and there were another 18 to be made! Cue a quick switch to a *Hakutaka* for Tōkyō, a *Nozomi* to Shin-Yokohama, and Blue Line subway to our target station of Kannai. Technically, we were not supposed to use a *Nozomi* on our rail passes, but it had been a long day, the next *Kodama* was not for an hour or so, the trip would take only 14 minutes, and our passes had been checked only once on board all previous Shinkansens. As it turned out, Golden Week was still on, and this *Nozomi* was packed, but we were able to find seats, if not together. One custom was confirmed on this train: the Japanese moved to the vestibule areas at car-ends to talk on their phones, out of consideration for their fellow passengers.

EKIBENS

... was the word for boxed meals offered at many Japanese stations. The word derived from “Eki” (meaning station) and “Ben” (from “Bento”, for boxed meals). They were popular due to the lack of café or even counter service on most Japanese trains – this due partly due to cost and partly because the fast Shinkansens meant that even long journeys were relatively short. Typical components included fish or chicken and condiments, placed in small compartments sitting on a bed of rice. This was not VIA Rail or, worse, Amtrak: being Japan, and given that food was involved, these *ekibens* were of high quality, sometimes featuring regional ingredients.



[“Ekiben” boxed lunches on sale at Toyama station (2019/05/01)] [SANDRA DAWES].



2010's-85: Aft view of Cunard Line's QUEEN ELIZABETH, in port for the day at Aomori (2019/05/07) [PETER DAWES].

JRC 421 TŌKYŌ-SHIN YOKOHAMA [SHIN-ŌSAKA] *Nozomi*

Cme [16]

Depart 2013, arrive 2027, stopping only at Shinagawa (followed by Blue Line subway to Kannai and walk to our hotel); * 26 km in 14 mins, or 113 km/h (2 m/s/71 mph); • **5-7 MAY:** To *Aomori* on QUEEN ELIZABETH, sailing at 1800 at the start of our long voyage home, beginning with a taxi across Yokohama Bay Bridge to Daikoku Pier cruise terminal (a disappointing location, in that we'd seen other cruise ships docked nearby our hotel at convenient Osanbashi terminal, but required due to tight clearances under the bridge).

QUEEN ELIZABETH

... had been built by Fincantieri in Italy and placed in service in 2010, Gross Registered Tonnage of 90,901 and service speed of 24 knots. Her captain was Inger Klein Thorhauge, a native of the Faroe Islands, she also having been in charge of our 2011 Panama Canal cruise on QUEEN ELIZABETH's sister, QUEEN VICTORIA. Our ship would make two calls in Japan, at Aomori and Muroran, each time welcomed by what appeared to be a large, high-school marching band and local dignitaries, this being her first calls at these ports, which were competing for cruise ship calls.



2010's-86: Gran Class attendant and author at door of Car 10 of a *Hayabusa* Shinkansen, Moriata, waiting for a *Komachi* from Akita to be attached for the combined run southwest to Tōkyō (2019/05/07) [SANDRA DAWES].

7 MAY:

JRE 14 SHIN AOMORI-MORIOKA [TŌKYŌ] *Hayabusa*

Cme [10]

Day outing to **AKITA**, Akita Prefecture, via Morioka (QUEEN ELIZABETH having docked at Aomori at 0700), the purpose being to ride JR East's "Joyful" train, *Rizōto (Resort) Shirakami*, from Akita back to Aomori; * Depart Shin-Aomori 0952 (after walking to Aomori station proper, then taking a local, 5-minute train out to Shin-Amori), arrive Morioka 1044, stopping only at Hachinohe and blasting through several tunnels on the Tōhoku Shinkansen; * We travelled in Green class on this Series E5 Shinkansen heading Tōkyō way – this being the last day of validity for our Japan Rail Passes; * 205 km in 52 mins, or 236 km/h (111 mls/147 mph).



[\[jreast.co.jp/e/\]](http://jreast.co.jp/e/)

JRE 9 [TŌKYŌ] MORIOKA-AKITA *Komachi*

Cme [7]

Depart 1123, arrive 1302, including stops Shizukuishi, Tazawako, Kakunodate and Ōmagari, on a Series E6 Shinkansen; * 127 km in 1 hr 39 mins, or 77 km/h (79 mls/48 mph).

KOMACHI

... was the brand name for Shinkansens running between Tōkyō and Akita over the Akita “mini-Shinkansen”, a 7-car Series E6 set combined with a 10-car Series E5 between Tōkyō and Morioka (in our case, the E5 was destined for Shin-Aomori). Our train ran over the single track Tazawako Line between Morioka and Ōmigari (re-gauged to standard gauge), then Ōu Main Line to Akita (one standard-gauge track along with two narrow). Our No. 9 met two *Komachi*'s running in the opposite direction, utilizing the passing tracks at Shizukuishi and Senboku (Akita), respectively. (We also reversed direction at Ōmigari.) Speed-wise, this was more like North American passenger-train operations than Japanese.

JRE AKITA-AOMORI *Rizōto (Resort) Shirakami No. 5*

Cmd [4]

[48-704, 48-1503, 48-1521, 48-703] [Kumagara]

Depart 1352, arrive 1940, on a slow “Rapid” service, stops including Higashi-Noshiro (train reversed), Iwadate, Jūniko, Fukaura, Senjōjiki, Goshogawara, Itayanagi, Hirosaki (reversed again), Kawabe and Shin-Aomori; * Taxi back to ship; * 235 km in 5 hrs 48 mins, or 41 km/h (147 mls/25 mph); * KUMAGARA (FHI, NT, 1977-82; refurbished 2006); * Overnight to *Muroran* on QUEEN ELIZABETH, sailing at 2200 from Aomori (Honshu Island) across Tsugaru Strait to Muroran (Hokkaidō Island).



[From World Club card,
Cunard (2019)]



2010's-87: JR East's *Rizōto (Resort) Shirakami* No. 5, waiting at Akita to make its scenic run to Aomori (2019/05/07) [PETER DAWES].

RIZOTO (RESORT) SHIRAKAMI

... was one of JR East's "Joyful" trains, operating primarily over the Ōu Main Line to Higashi-Noshiro, Gonō Line to Kawabe, and Ōu Main Line again to Aomori. These were trains designed to be ridden just for the fun of it, while also providing basic transportation over this sparsely populated (for Japan) route. The main attraction was the seaside and mountain scenery of Shirakami-Sanchi, a world heritage site. There were three Diesel Multiple Unit sets providing up to two round trips a day at peak times: • AOIKE (meaning "Blue Pond"); • BUNA (after the Japanese beech tree); and • KUMAGARA ("Black Woodpecker"). These had been refurbished out of older equipment, the various cars now featuring basic 2+2 seating and semi-open compartments, also panoramic windows and small lounges. Music, story-telling and refreshments apparently were provided on weekends, but not on this Tuesday (fortunately, we had loaded up on Ekibens in Akita station). We did meet BUNA during a 20-minute stop at Fukaura, developing an acute thirst after seeing her passengers refreshing themselves at a bar, which on KUMAGARA was not in service. There were perhaps half-a-dozen passengers starting out at Akita, and two dozen over the most heavily travelled stretch – not many, but Golden Week was over and traffic should have been better at the weekend. As for us, the seaside views made the long trip well worthwhile.



2010's-88: Oceanside view from *Rizōto (Resort) Shirakami* (2019/05/07) [SANDRA DAWES].

NOT MUCH FREIGHT

Aomori and Akita boasted large freight yards, but little freight activity. (There were half-a-dozen freight cars evident at Jūniko.) Another JR company, the heavily subsidized JR Freight (JRF), handled what cargo still moved by rail, almost all of it over track owned or operated by the passenger companies. (All the track used by JRF was 1,067 milimetre [*3 ft 6 in*] gauge.) By the late 2010's, the company was carrying only 5% of intercity tonnage, although the government was attempting to boost traffic as a means of reducing carbon imprint and easing congestion on roads.

8 MAY:

JRH 5 HIGASHI MURORAN-SAPPORO Suzeran

Cme [5]

Day outing to **SAPPORO**, Hokkaidō Prefecture, to work in some final trains, but also to take a look at the city which hosted the 1972 Olympic Winter Games, especially its excellent Hokkaidō University Botanical Gardens (which included a Canadian section); * Depart 0923 (after docking at 0700, and a 20-minute taxi ride to the station); arrive 1101, including stops at Noborietsu and Numanohata on the Muroran Main Line, then Chitose on the Chitose Line; * 129 km in 1 hr 38 mins, or 79 km/h (81 mls/49 mph).



2010's-89: JR Hokkaidō's *Suzeran* No. 5, ready to depart Higashi-Muroran station for Sapporo, made up of a Series 780-1000 EMU (2019/05/08) [PETER DAWES].

SUZERANS

... were “limited expresses” operated by JR Hokkaidō, our morning service being a 5-car, Series 780-1000, Electric Multiple Unit train built by Fuji Heavy Industries and featuring just Ordinary class. (Our passes had run out the day before.) Only Car 3 was reservable, which we did, along with a few other passengers. Top speed was 130 kilometres (81 miles) per hour. The Muroran Main Line segment between Higashi-Muroran and Numanohata was single track; the Chitose all double. (Passenger service between Higashi Muroran and Muroran town itself had been abandoned in recent years.) There was much evidence of de-industrialization along the Chitose segment (abandoned works; empty rail yards); in contrast, we did see a 30-car train loaded with international containers.



[From JR Hokkaido magazine (2019/05/05)]



2010's-90: Ōdōri-kōen park, 13 blocks long in the heart of Sapporo, a 10-minute walk south of the station (2019/05/08) [SANDRA DAWES].

JRH 16 SAPPORO-HIGASHI MURORAN [HAKADOTE] *Sūpā Hokutu*

Cmd [8]

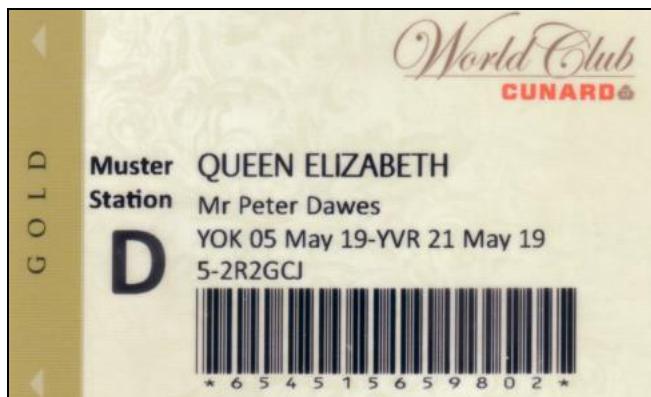
Returning, depart 1445, arrive 1609; * 129 km in 1 hr 24 mins, or 92 km/h (81 mls/58 mph); * **8-21 MAY:** Sail from Muroran on QUEEN ELIZABETH at 2200, arrive Vancouver on the 21st, 0700 hours (side trip to Chilliwack by rental car to see Sandra's Uncle Roy; one night at Sylvia Hotel); * **22 MAY:** Air Canada Airbus 319 back to Edmonton.

SŪPĀ HOKUTUS

... (*Super Hokutus*) were “limited expresses” running between Sapporo, Higashi-Muroran and Hakodate, consisting of Series 281 Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) trains, also built by Fuji Heavy Industries and branded “Furico” on the control cars. The train had eight cars, and the journey was 14 minutes faster than the morning trip, due to a “tilting” feature not present on EMU Series 780’s. Car 3 was “Green”, but we again chose Ordinary class, with reservations.

ACROSS THE NORTH PACIFIC

The voyage would involve calls at Kodiak on the 15th, Anchorage on the 16th, and Juneau on the 18th, with arrival at Vancouver on the 21st. We enjoyed two May 12th's, due to crossing the International Date Line. The near sell-out of 1,913 passengers broke down this way: British, 685; Australian, 391; Canadian, 247; American, 206; German, 158; Japanese, 67; New Zealanders, 40; others, 119. Her owners, the American Carnival Corp., continued to do a good job of retaining the Cunard flavour, from occasional formal-dress evenings to paintings of the old MAURETANIA, QUEEN ELIZABETH, QUEEN MARY, QUEEN ELIZABETH 2, and other not-so-famous Cunarders. Seas were favourable for the most part, and what appeared to be a long crossing turned out to be most interesting and entertaining, due to lectures, concerts, music, and friends we made (especially Kiwi, German and Swiss couples).



*[Access card issued to author,
QUEEN ELIZABETH (2019)]*

NOW FOR THE 2020's!

This ends my **2010's** volume. A subsequent **2020's** volume will chronicle any travels made during the coming decade!

GENERAL INDEX

Please note: (i) named trains, locomotives and vessels have their own entry; (ii) stations and other landmarks are indexed under the city or town concerned; and (iii) places are indexed only where they were start or end points of specific trips, or where they were of special interest]

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CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS VERSION

Revised throughout to take into account our 2019 holiday in Japan and Hong Kong, plus minor corrections and style changes.