

The Linesiding Club February 2020 Update

China Narrow Gauge III

As I write, the coronavirus is still spreading, some airlines have stopped flights to China and countries are beginning to refuse to admit anyone arriving from China or who has been in China within 14 days. Internally, all tourism is at a standstill and major shopping chains and factories are closing. Wuhan and Hubei province are in lockdown and some foreigners living there have been evacuated to enjoy 14 days' quarantine back home in England. Alan and Jun are back home with their trips cancelled mid-way through with groups sent home from Sandaoling and Shibaxi when the hotels and restaurants closed. Things for the next few months look very uncertain. However, my China Narrow Gauge III trip planned for September is still on but I will await confirmation that things have returned to normal before making a final decision, buy my air tickets or consider sending money for the tour to China.

How will we know when normality has resumed?

I will be looking to a time when the following has happened:

- Major European airlines resume flights to China
- Neighbouring states reopen their borders (Russia, North Korea, Hong Kong)
- Free access to Wuhan and Hubei returns including trains stopping in Wuhan
- Domestic Chinese tourism resumes
- The rate of new infections in China decreases dramatically
- Britain and other countries official travel advisories no longer warn against all but essential travel to China

I feel for all of those people affected and especially for Alan and Jun who face the prospect of no work or income for several months. I feel that it's only right that this trip should go ahead in September if it's safe to do so. Let's see where we are next month.

The current itinerary is:

Revised Itinerary 13 November 2019:

Day	Date	Activity	Overnight	Comment
Day -1		Optional: Arrive in Dalian, explore the tram system (individual or guided to be decided)	Dalian	Option to arrive one day early to explore Dalian trams
Day 1	Tues 8	Fly into Dalian for tour start, meet Dalian Airport or Dalian hotel (if	Xietun	

		arrived the day before) morning and transfer to Xietun - part day with salt railways		
Day 2	Weds 9	Salt railways (Jincheng and Wudao) diesel	Xietun	
Day 3	Thurs 10	Salt Railways	Xietun	
Day 4	Fri 11	Transfer to Linghai by road (half day) via the reed railway	Linghai	
Day 5	Sat 12	Shengtai Paper Reed Railway (diesel)	Linghai	visit Jincheng Paper Factory railway en route although access can't be promised
Day 6	Sun 13	Shengtai Paper Reed Railway (diesel)	Fuxin	flexibility to drive to Fuxin early or late
Day 7	Mon 14	Fuxin to Baishan by road	Baishan	morning to explore what is left at Fuxin, NB: depart by 11 am for Baishan - 6 hrs
Day 8	Tue 15	Banshi Iron Ore Railway (electric)	Baishan	
Day 9	Wed 16	Banshi Iron Ore Railway	Baishan	
Day 10	Thu 17	Drive from Baishan to Shenyang (4.5 hrs)	on train	overnight train from Shenyang to Beijing
Day 11	Fri 18	High speed train Beijing - Zhengzhou then minibus transfer to Yujian Railway	Dengfeng	You could leave or join the tour in Shenyang, Beijing or Zhengzhou
Day 12	Sat 19	Yujian Tourist Railway steam & diesel	Dengfeng	expected to start operating May 2020
Day 13	Sun 20	Yujian Tourist Railway steam & diesel	on train	overnight transfer Zhengzhou - Xiangyang
Day 14	Mon 21	transfer to Laohekou by road Laohekou Limestone Railway diesel	Laohekou or Xiangyang	
Day 15	Tues 22	Laohekou Limestone Railway diesel	Laohekou or Xiangyang	
Day 16	Weds 23	Laohekou, then late afternoon road transfer to	on train	

		Xiangyang for overnight train to Chenzhou		
Day 17	Thurs 24	Arrive Chenzhou early morning, part day at Matian Coal Railway diesel	Matian	several overnight trains all arrive before 9 am (railway operates Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri, Sat only - not Wed or Sun)
Day 18	Fri 25	Matian	Matian	
Day 19	Sat 26	Matian part day, overnight train to Chongqing (dep 19:16 or 20:10)	on train	if we have sufficient coverage of Matian, option to visit Huangshaping
Day 20	Sun 27	arrive Chongqing lunchtime (12:47 or 13:50), transfer to Yongchuan	Yongchuan	option to return home evening or remain in Chongqing
Day 21	Mon 28	explore the Yongchuan Coal Railway at Honglu	Yongchuan	
Day 22	Tue 29	explore the Yongchuan Coal Railway at Honglu before afternoon transfer to Chengdu by expressway (3hr 10 min)	Chengdu Airport	fly out same evening or overnight in an airport hotel with those continuing to Shibaxi
Day 23	Wed 30	transfer to Shibanxi for the post tour extension - or fly home from Chengdu - end of main tour	Sanjin or Bagou	Shibanxi has steam passenger and tourist trains but steam-outline diesel also in use
	Mon 5 October	proposed end of the Shibanxi extension		depart Chengdu for home

There are no places left for day 11 - 20 only of the tour. However, days 11 - 20 may be available to anyone signing up for more of the tour.

Romania Narrow Gauge II

I have been in contact with Carpathian Travel Center about a two-three car self-drive option which I think is how this tour will operate. Currently there are 4 people including myself ready to do this (with 2 cars) and 3 more considering the idea. With a maximum of 4 people in a car, we could take 12 people maximum but each car needs a driver and navigator (who can share the driving between them) and any additional passengers in the car will be at the driver and navigator's discretion.

Delia at CTC has responded to this idea and has promised some prices next week. If you are interested, I suggest you contact me now. The final decision

will not be made until all of the railways give their dates and timetables for 2020 (in April). A decision about numbers and numbers of cars will be made then but only in consultation with those who have expressed an interest in advance. There is the option of extra time pre- and post-tour and cars can be retained if the driver and navigator request this. Pick up and drop off can be at any major Romanian city (according to CTC) which makes Bucharest the most sensible pick up point but Sibiu may work well as the drop off point.

In one other note: the Covasna - Comandau operation has now moved into local government ownership which could be good for its future as a tourist operation but it does mean that the 2020 operation is more uncertain than it might have been under the former ownership. I wait to see if the first weekend of the month is still the one for steam operations at Comandau.

The current itinerary is:

Self-drive car based version of Romania Narrow Gauge II

see: <https://goo.gl/maps/1Dm35uPRXVWsCWQB7> for route

Pre-tour Option to visit 3 diesel ng industrial lines south west of Sibiu (Monday 27 July - Friday 31 July 2020) (one of these currently closed whether on a temporary or permanent basis not yet known)

Thursday 30 July 2020

Fly to Sibiu or Bucharest, overnight or transfer to Brasov

Friday 31 July 2020

Start tour in Brasov (via Bucharest), collect rental cars if not already collected, overnight Brasov

Saturday 1 August 2020

Drive to **Covasna 1hr/Comandau** for steam tourist train (first weekend of the month at Comandau but this could change in 2020), overnight Brasov

Sunday 2 August 2020

Drive to **Sovata 2hr 37min, Sovata** steam tourist train, overnight Sovata

Monday 3 August 2020

Drive to **Moldovita 5 hr 19min**, steam tourist train afternoon trains, overnight Moldovita

Tuesday 4 August 2020

Moldovita steam tourist trains, after early afternoon train, drive to **Viseu de Sus 2hr 59min**, overnight near the railway Viseu de Sus

Wednesday 5 August 2020

Viseu de Sus steam tourist train (train ride), overnight Viseu de Sus

Thursday 6 August 2020

Viseu de Sus steam tourist train (train ride or linesiding) and diesel log train arriving back in the afternoon, overnight Viseu de Sus

Friday 7 August 2020

Lineside diesel logging train empties and steam tourist trains, prior to driving to Cluj 2hr 53min or Turda (3hrs 40min)

Saturday 8 August 2020

Drive to **Criscior** 3hr from Cluj (works visit requested), **Criscior - Brad** afternoon steam tourist trains (ride and lineside), overnight Brad

Sunday 9 August 2020

Morning visit to Abrud prior to returning to Criscior for 2 afternoon trains to Brad, overnight Brad

Monday 10 August 2020

Drive to **Sibiu** 1hr 48min, return cars, end of tour, Wizz Air flies to the UK from Sibiu also Austrian via Vienna and Lufthansa via Munich. Wizz Air currently departs 19:40 for London Luton.

Option to retain the rental car(s) for a further period.



Diesel log train Viseu de Sus, August 2019

Romania - Serbia - Bosnia 2021 option?

It may be possible to offer a 14-15 day tour in 2021 which would combine the 6 Romanian steam tourist lines, a steam charter Visegrad - Mokra Gora (and possibly up the Sargan 8) in Serbia and in Bosnia charters at Banovici (narrow/standard gauge) and augmented real steam at Dubrave and Sikulje (standard gauge). It would involve a minibuss in Romania with a transfer through Serbia and handover to a Bosnian minibuss in Mokra Gora. Both Carpathian Travel Centre and Dario and Majda would have to be involved for this combined tour to work. Dates would need to be in the May - September period for Romania, Bosnia would work best as May-June or September. If this idea is attractive, let me know along with a rough idea of when you would like to do this.

Scunthorpe's steel works

As a member of the Sutton on Sea Railway Club, I was invited on a Appleby Frodingham Railway Preservation Society (AFRPS) steam-hauled brake van tour of Scunthorpe Steel Works - currently British Steel but possibly to be sold to Chinese or Turkish interests. This steelworks is best known for its continuous rail production which makes it important for British and European railways. I've prepared a short slide show with 2 video clips of this visit. You can view that here:

<https://youtu.be/3mrhMvAZAD0>

North East Rover

In early January, I explored the North East of England with a 7-day North East Railway Rover. The trip included rides from Settle to Carlisle, on the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway, Leeds - Hull - Scarborough - York - Harrogate, Middlesborough - Whitby and York - Hull, Barton on Humber - Grimsby. I have a great 7 days and will be looking at other Rail Rovers for future winter trips. You can view the daily reports here:

[NE Rover Preamble.pdf](#)

[NE Rover Settle-Carlisle.pdf](#)

[NE Rover KWVR.pdf](#)

[NE Rover Harrogate.pdf](#)

[NE Rover Middlesborough.pdf](#)

[NE Rover York.pdf](#)

[NE Rover Back Home.pdf](#)

Cibatu - Garut - Cikajang (Java, Indonesia)



This route is one of several defunct branches in the Bandung area which are being revived:

<https://setkab.go.id/en/cibatu-garut-route-reactivation-to-be-completed-by-end-of-2019/>

To see how it used to be in tender and tank mallet days do a google search for 'cibatu garut railway' and view images.



Both photos are grabs from VHS video I shot of a CC50 mallet at Cibatu. My thanks to Wilson Lythgoe for spotting this revival.

Statfold Barn March Open Day

I've bought my ticket online for the March 21 Enthusiasts' Day. This promises to be a back to basics day for enthusiasts not families with children.

<https://statfoldbarnrailway.digitickets.co.uk/tickets>

I plan to arrive in the area the night before and may continue to the Great Central Railway 'Goods Galore' Gala Weekend on the Sunday.

<http://www.gcrailway.co.uk/special-events/goods-galore/>

The latest news from Statfold Barn is that the original Beyer Garratt K1 now at Statfold Barn will be returned to steam in 2020

<https://www.railadvent.co.uk/2020/01/steam-locomotive-k1-to-return-to-steam-in-2020.html>



Hudswell Clark loco once converted to diesel at Lautoka Sugar Mill, Fiji and repatriated and restored to steam at Statfold Barn

Late winter Harz visit

I plan to be in Wernigerode 18 - 25 February on a private trip for my 69th birthday this year. If anyone else is likely to be there at the same time, get in touch and we can arrange to meet for a steam train ride or a beer.



Wernigerode HSB station in the snow (12 December 2010)

May Irish Peat Bord na Mona visit

A group of 4 of us plan a short private visit in May. For 2 of us, it's the 10 year anniversary of our last (and my first) visit. We hope to see diesel hauled narrow gauge (3ft) peat trains serving power stations, a briquette factory and horticultural peat factories. Some of these operations are likely to end in 2020 based on present information



Track repair near Shannonbridge, Ireland

I hope you are planning lots of interesting trips for 2020. Do it while you can!
None of us are getting any younger...

John Raby
1 February 2020