

Railway Blog 1 - Kyoto

Prior to this visit, I received tips about what to see and do from three members of the [jtrains yahoo group](#). Thanks are due to Rick Coles, Robert Tomasko and 'menetrendes'! Trains were a bit peripheral to this visit but getting to the start of various hikes did allow for a bit of personal research as well. I had one personal day for the railway museum and the Randen railway.

I will put [an album of railway pics](#) on Flickr and there will be a YouTube video of the Randen Railway (details to follow but it's a matter of finding time to edit and fast enough internet to upload it).

Traditional Railways

Of course, these days everything with one exception is single or multiple electric units with loco-hauled freight only on the JR lines.

Sagano Romantic Train

The Cape Gauge 'trokko' (literally 'truck') line at Arashiyama is the only diesel-hauled train and was very busy with autumn leaf viewing. The Arashiyama area including the train were too crowded to be fun so I skipped that with just one indifferent photo of the D10 loco on the head of the train at Trokko Saga station.



Street Running

Street running appeals as it reminds me of the Kyoto Trams that I missed because the Japan Times was into telling you what had just happened (The last day of trams in Kyoto) rather than letting you know in advance so you could go and see it. This would have been in 1978.

I found 2 examples of street running - on the Randen Arashiyama line and on the Keihan line at Hamaotsu. I recorded both on video from the front of the train and the roadside and this will be on the YouTube footage. I also filmed the full run of the Randen Kitano line from the front with just the front window of the train to film through (no window between the carriage and the driver's cab).



Kyoto Umekoji Railway Museum

The new Kyoto Railway Museum has been updated to include preserved diesels and electrics and also has a steam repair shop and good views over the JR lines west of Kyoto station (although looking south east to south west into the sun most of the time). C61 2 was the loco in use on the shuttle train. It has a wonderful whistle but is totally unsuited as a modern long-distance passenger racehorse for the little shuttle it has to do.



Trams in Umekoji Park

These only operate on Saturdays, Sundays and National Holidays on a short section of track. They provide a tram ride close to the Umekoji Railway Museum. One old Kyoto tram is plinthed near here and another one near the Hei-an Shrine.



Lake Biwa Canal Incline

One of the most interesting discoveries was a 8ft gauge incline originally cable worked which moved boats from the Biwa Canal down to the level of the Hei-an Shrine. The incline was built around 1860 and once had two cradle cars

which went into the water both ends and boats carrying goods to Kyoto would be floated onto them and moved down the hill. The twin track incline still exists along with two replica cradle cars and the Waterworks Museum at the bottom has maps and photos of the canal systems. The power generated by water flowing downhill towards Kyoto from additional canals was used for the first Kyoto trams (street cars). The location is close to Keage subway station.



Funicular/cable car

Also old but now updated is the funicular (US. cable car) up Mt Hie from Yase. We rode this to get an advantage on one of our later hikes. The funicular is at

the end of the short branch of the Eizan Railway from Demachi Yanagi. The two cars cross in the middle and are guided by a double flange on one side. The other side has a wide flangeless roller. (At least, I think that is true based on the pw vehicle which has this arrangement. The cabins have pick ups for overhead wiring but they are moved by balancing cables attached to the winding house at the top. Once on top, you can also catch a cable car (US. ropeway) across to another peak.



The next Railway Blog will be from New Zealand.

John