



Tour 01/19 LCGB INDIA TOUR 2019

Circular 2 – October 2018

The basic itinerary remains the same but there may be changes in the detail because we may be able to see four working steam locomotives. A list of all steam locomotives active and not working was produced in 2008 and contained 417 locomotives. Obviously since then many have been scrapped but it gives an indication of where many are now, scattered around India. There will be the opportunity to see those on our route, perhaps fourteen, maybe more. Adrian Palmer will lead those wishing to see the maximum plinthed locomotives possible as well as the add-on to Bangladesh.

For the main tour Amit is talking to the Director of Heritage of Indian Railways. As always in India things are moving very slowly despite the Director's backing. A Garratt that has been out of action was tested recently out of Kharagpur Junction. This was built by Beyer-Peacock in 1926, a N class 4-8-0 + 0-8-4 number 38111 (though another reference is 38811) and broad gauge. Our journey passes through here and we are trying to use this locomotive. This may mean we only spend one night in Bhubaneswar. If anyone new is considering joining this tour and would like to see a video of this locomotive please let me know. The Chennai Railway Museum has invited us to visit and will arrange for us to have a newly restored locomotive in steam, due to have completed its overhaul at the Perambur Works in Chennai. This is a Class V number 700, a 4-4-0 named Narbada (a river in India) and was built in the early 1900s at the North British Locomotive Works in Glasgow.

The oldest operating steam locomotive in the world, EIR21 Empress of India, older than the Fairy Queen, a 2-2-2, was built by Kitson, Hewitson and Thomson in Leeds in 1855. This locomotive will not be in Chennai when we are there but it will be in Tiruchirappalli (Trichy) or Madurai so we will be hauled by this. Lastly the Heritage Director has said we will have steam at Matheran and Amit is to arrange this locally. The locomotive is a Himalayan B class number 794, a 0-4-0 built in 1917 by Baldwin in Philadelphia, USA.

With the possibility of the above locomotives it is difficult to determine absolutely the price at present but is expected to be a little higher than the original price of £2,160. As those familiar with India know we have to patient while negotiations and arrangements are going on.

Add-on to Bangladesh

This is restored as an option and there is a group of five currently, led by Adrian Palmer. It I hoped to see three plinthed locomotives.

Wednesday 23rd. Arrive Dhaka.

Thursday 24th January. Train Dhaka to Chittagong.

Friday 25th January. Train back to Dhaka. Dinner provided.

Saturday 26th January. Local tour including plinthed locomotive outside works.

Sunday 27th January. Train to Kolkata departing 08.15 arriving at 16.00.

Add-on to The Sundarbans

Friday 25th January. Arrive Kolkata. Overnight in the Lalit Great Eastern Hotel.

Saturday 26th January. Transport to the Sundarbans. Overnight in cottages. All meals provided.

Sunday 27th January. Return to Kolkata.

Main Tour

Sunday 27th January. Meet in Kolkata and overnight in the Lalit Great Eastern Hotel. Dinner provided.

Monday 28th January. Meet 10.00 for tour of Kolkata including the railway offices with plinthed locomotives, and ride on a charter tram. Overnight in the Lalit Great Eastern Hotel.

Tuesday 29th January. Train Kolkata to Bhubaneshwar departing 10.55 arriving 16.50. Overnight at Swosti Grand Hotel. Dinner provided.

Wednesday 30th January.

Option 1 - travel by train to Puri leaving 09.10 arriving 10.55. Return departing 16.15 arriving 17.55.

Option 2 - stay in Bhubaneshwar.

Overnight at Swosti Grand Hotel.

Could be superseded by a trip with the Garratt.

Thursday 31st January. Train Bhubaneshwar to Visakhapatnam departing 08.30 arriving 16.10. Overnight at Novotel Varun Beach Hotel.

Friday 1st February. Train Visakhapatnam to Vijayawada departing 09.55 arriving 15.30. Overnight Minerva Grand Hotel. Dinner provided.

Saturday 2nd February. Train Vijayawada to Chennai (Madras) departing 10.20 arriving 17.00. Overnight Residency Towers Hotel. Dinner provided.

Sunday 3rd February. Guided tour with visit to railway museum. Overnight Residency Towers Hotel.

Monday 4th February. Train Chennai to Trichy (Tiruchirappalli) departing 08.15 arriving 13.30. Guided tour including the temple. Overnight Grand Gardinia Hotel. Dinner provided.

Tuesday 5th February. Works Visit at 09.30. Train Trichy to Madurai departing 13.35 arriving 16.05. Overnight GRT Regency Madurai. Dinner provided.

Wednesday 6th February.

Option 3 - travel to Rameswaram departing Madurai 08.15 arriving 11.00. (Train operates Wednesday only.) This route passes over the 2 km long Pamban Bridge. Rameswaram was a ferry port for Sri Lanka and may well be again in the future. Return trains being investigated but possibly depart 15.45 arriving Manamadurai Junction 17.45. Bus or cars to Madurai 50 kms. There may be an earlier return train.

Option 4 - stay in Madurai. Tour with local guide.

Overnight GRT Regency Madurai.

Should be superseded by a trip with EIR21.

Thursday 7th February. Train Madurai departing 09.20 to Nagercoil Town arrive 13.50. Coach to Kanyakumari (24 kms). Tour with local guide. Stay overnight Sparsa Hotel. Dinner provided.

Friday 8th February. Train departing Kanyakumari 13.52 arriving Trivandrum 15.25. City tour. Option to leave tour here. Stay overnight Hilton Garden Inn. Dinner provided.

Saturday 9th February. Flight departure 10.45 to Mumbai arriving 13.00. Overnight Residency Fort Hotel.

Sunday 10th February. Travel to Neral Junction for Matheran and return to Mumbai possibly with a steam locomotive. Tour finishes.

Tour prices will include:

Train fares for journeys as above.

Hotels with breakfasts.

Dinners specifically mentioned above.

Transfer from stations to/from hotels where necessary i.e. unreasonable distances to walk.

Local tours where stated.

Flights.

Participants on the previous India tours arranged their own flights to suit their personal preferences and this worked well. Many have already booked flights for this trip. Amit and I are willing to assist with suggestions if required. Several airlines operate flights direct to India and/or involving one change. In addition, Amit is willing to obtain tickets if requested. The flight from Trivandrum to Mumbai is included in the price.

Expressions of Interest, if not previously given, should be sent to Chris Lewis, 15, Nursery Close, Widnes, Cheshire WA8 3HB. Email chrislewiscl@aol.com Telephone: 01514231302 Mobile: 07720755829. I will keep all those people interested up-to-date as we progress. The final date for booking will be mid-November. Those going have already paid £1,200.

Chris Lewis July 13th, 2018