

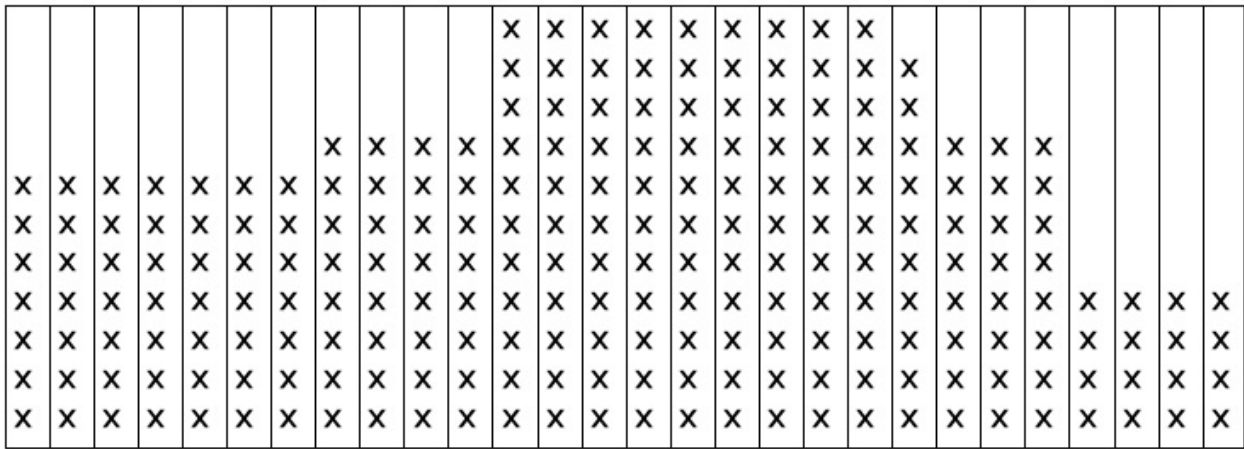


January 2020 Update

Best wishes for the New Year 2020!

China Narrow Gauge III Tour
 8 September - 5 October (including Shibanzi extension)

This tour is booking really well with 11 people signed up. The graph below shows how people signed up from Day 1 - 28. What is clear is that more people would be most welcome for days 1-10 and days 20-28. If anyone wants to sign up for those beginning and end tour days, I can squeeze you onto the middle part of the tour from day 11 as well but I'm not accepting any more booking for the middle part from day 11-20 only unless anyone drops out.



This is the tour itinerary:

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	Xietun	

		Dalian hotel (if 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	11/12/19	Transfer to Linghai by road (half day) via the reed railway	Linghai	
Day 5	12/12/19	Shengtai Paper Reed Railway (diesel)	Linghai	visit Jincheng Paper Factory railway en route although access can't be promised
Day 6	13/12/19	Shengtai Paper Reed Railway (diesel)	Fuxin	flexibility to drive to Fuxin early or late
Day 7	14/12/19	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	15/12/19	Banshi Iron Ore Railway (electric)	Baishan	
Day 9	16/12/19	Banshi Iron Ore Railway	Baishan	
Day 10	17/12/19	Drive from Baishan to Shenyang (4.5 hrs)	on train	overnight train from Shenyang to Beijing
Day 11	18/12/19	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 &	on train	overnight transfer

		diesel		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 Xiangyang for overnight train to Chenzhou	on train	
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	Sanjin or	Shibanxi has

		Shibanxi for the post tour extension - or fly home from Chengdu - end of main tour	Bagou	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



Jincheng Salt Railway 2018 - heading out with empty wooden salt wagons.



Jincheng Salt Railway 2018 - loco coupling up prior to heading back to the

factory or salt store with the salt

Romania

Compared with China NG III, there has been only limited interest in this tour so far. However, I like this idea and I now see the tour as evolving organically over the next few months as a self-drive tour. It should work if just one other person is willing to share the driving and navigating. I believe I can negotiate a price with Carpathian Travel Centre for rental cars and accommodation and meals (where booking these in advance makes good sense). CTC should also help with information about the tourist railways and purchasing tickets in advance if necessary. Train timetables don't get published until around Orthodox Easter (19 April in 2020) so that will be a time to fix the itinerary and book flights. The tour numbers can grow organically from 2-4 in one car and 5-8 in two cars. With 8 people, the option to have a driver and minibus will be available but the additional price compared with 8 people self-driving might mean that participants opt for self driving. The itinerary would likely have to be Sibiu - Sibiu (Wizz Air fly there from the UK) and the pre-tour diesel industrial line exploration would be on (1 car only?) if there is enough interest. I am happy to commit to this idea and ask CTC for prices with just one other person signed up. The revised itinerary would be:

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 is not yet known)

Friday 31 July 2020

Start tour in **Sibiu** (Wizz Air flies from the UK to Sibiu), drive to **Covasna** 3hr 16min

Saturday 1 August 2020

Comandau steam tourist train (first weekend of the month), drive to **Sovata** 3 hr 14 min

Sunday 2 August 2020

Sovata steam tourist train (weekends only), drive to **Moldovita** (or part way to **Bistrita**) 5 hr 19min

Monday 3 August 2020

Moldovita steam tourist train

Tuesday 4 August 2020

Moldovita steam tourist train, drive to **Viseu de Sus** 2hr 59min

Wednesday 5 August 2020

Viseu de Sus steam tourist train (train ride)

Thursday 6 August 2020

Viseu de Sus steam tourist train (linesiding or train ride)

Friday 7 August 2020

Viseu de Sus steam tourist train (linesiding), drive to Cluj 2hr 53min (or possibly Turda for easier on site parking)

Saturday 8 August 2020

Drive to **Criscior** (workshop visit requested) 3hr 1min, **Criscior - Brad** steam tourist train (ride and lineside)

Sunday 9 August 2020

Abrud - Campeni steam tourist train (ride or lineside), **Criscior - Brad** steam tourist train (linesiding)

Monday 10 August 2020

Drive to **Sibiu** 1hr 48min, return cars, end of tour, Wizz Air flies to the UK from Sibiu

Let me know if you are interested. Price not yet know but last year we paid £1400 each for an escorted 12 day tour with a minibus and a driver/guide. The self-drive option should be cheaper for 2020.



Viseu de Sus, Romania 2019 - the second of four steam-hauled tourist trains waiting to return after lunch at Paltin

Steam Railway Sound File

I was inspired by Paul Stapleton (and friends') new Chinese layout and the sound that is used

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e_El57wy8_c

I did a quick hunt on the net for free steam railway sound files for my own layout and found nothing so I created my own out of footage from Lincolnshire

Coast Light Railway, Moldovita Romania, Shibanki and Sandaoling footage which I can play on my tablet linked to speakers with the layout. With the first 3 railways, I just lifted the whole track, with Sandaoling, I grabbed action clips only. Using Garage Band on my MacBook, I edited it to 30 minutes with 8 tracks of sound. This cacophony of steam railway sounds now serves as background for my own model railway. I'm sure I could produce a more refined version given time. Anyway, if you would like some busy steam railway sounds for your model railway, you are welcome to use this sound file.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1EdVgHIPy3sp8MZkWh6JqNdwCMfF26DK8>

This is a 55MB mp3 file. It plays in iTunes, VLC and QuickTime on my Mac but also through the Google Drive Music Player online. Please let me know if you have success playing it. If there is any interest in more like this, I have hundreds of hours of steam video to sample for the next one and I could stay a bit truer to one prototype line or country with the next one.

North East Rover

On Wednesday 2 January I'm off on a one week trip around the North East of England into the domain of Northern Rail and Trans Pennine Express both operators much criticised for late running and cancellations with calls to strip them both of their franchises! If you would like to receive an email blog of my explorations using a North East Rover including a return trip on the Settle and Carlisle Line, Middlesborough - Whitby, Hull - Bridlington - Scarborough - York, possible sightings of some of the last Pacers* in use (based on a Leyland Bus) and a visit to Locomotion at Shildon, please email me. Writing up the trip will give something to do in the evenings from my Premier Inn rooms in Leeds, Harrogate, Middlesborough and York!

*For information about Pacers see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacer_\(train\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacer_(train))

That's 2019 done. I hope 2020 will be a steamy narrow gauge one for all of you.

John Raby 28 December 2019

ps: I seem to have got something right with China Narrow Gauge III with 11 people booked on the tour 8 months before it's due to run. Does that mean there should be a China NG IV in 2021? If anyone can offer clues as to why China NG III should be popular and suggest what I should do next which would have similar appeal, please email me to let me know.

pps: I'm not aware of any other single country with as much remaining major industrial narrow gauge variety with diesel and electric trains operating on relatively long lines through public areas as China (apart from the Australian sugar cane lines and the 6 remaining sugar mills with field work on Java perhaps) but if I am missing anything that remains and which might appeal, please let me know.