

## Linesiding with John July 2019 Update

### Romania Narrow Gauge Tour



This tour runs 9 - 20 August 2019 and will visit 7 Romanian narrow gauge lines that now offer a summer tourist service. It will also include the preserved tram line in Sibiu. The tour is officially closed to additional participants but I found a way to include one more person who will rent a car to follow the group and otherwise fully participate in the tour. There may be an additional space available in his car or another car could be hired. Can our local agents still find extra hotel rooms, I won't know until I ask. So, if anyone really wants to go, something should be possible. We are just over 1 month before the tour starts. so I recommend you contact me immediately with a view to have everything firmed up by 6-10 July.

If anyone is interested in a document including maps and timetables for the lines we will visit (where available), [let me know](#) and I will send you the pdf file.

### China Tours

There are three items to note:

A fellow tour operator who has participated in my China, Java and Bosnian tours is looking for a few more participants for his September China Tour to ensure that it will run. To encourage anyone interested, a special discount is on offer (please ask about this). The tour will visit Jingpeng, Sandaoling and Shibaxi all of which have steam interest (although sadly the Jingpeng pass is all diesel these days). Please contact Ron McElrath [ronaldmcelrath@yahoo.com](mailto:ronaldmcelrath@yahoo.com) for tour details if you are interest.

## Sandaoling



I have so far had limited interest in a tour in November or December 2019. This winter may be the very last chance to see Sandaoling with conditions that guarantee good steam effects. The proposed dates are:

17 - 25 November

9 - 17 December

One person has said he is interested in 9 - 17 December.

You can see some of my December 2018 photos here:

<http://rabylee.uk/linesidingindex.html#china>

Let me know if you are interested. Alternatively, I can put you in touch with Jun (Liu Xue Jun) who can make all your arrangements for a solo or small group visit and you can choose your own dates.

**China NG III**



I propose another China narrow gauge tour as there are still new lines to visit, lines to revisit where there was no action last time and lines that are well-worth a second visit. Just to give you an idea of what these lines are, here is a summary of the lines visited in Parts I and II and list of lines so far not visited.

China NG I started in **Shibanxi** which despite the increasing focus on tourist trains and the presence of one steam-outline diesel is still worth a visit to relax with steam, good scenery, friendly people and good food. We then visited a narrow gauge coal line on the Nanpiao system, the paper factory at Jincheng, the lines linked to the new **Shengtai** paper factory, two salt railway systems and the limestone railway serving the cement works at Mengxi near Hailar. We were lucky to gain access to the depot at Jincheng but found the Shengtai factory closed for maintenance and other a permanent way train in operation. This line is a prime target for a return visit. There are some fascinating aspects of what is probably the only reed railway in the world. We also had a very successful visit to the salt railways **Wudao and Fuzhouwan** gaining access to the sheds and works on both systems. Despite good coverage, I'd like to go back for more. Salt railways are also rare these days. The ones on Taiwan are (I believe) closed and one small-scale in Croatia may operate occasionally. These could be the last two operating regularly anywhere. The cement railway at **Mengxi** was also of great interest although it may not last much longer. We were able to walk the whole line and observe two trains and one pw train in action. We also paid a visit to the sg SY at Wujiu when the cement factory furnace was out of action. We were unable to visit the depot and should that

be possible, would increase the interest in a repeat visit.

China NG II visited more lines but some of those are definitely one-time only. In Sichuan and Chongqing, we went back to Rongshan to find nothing much had moved since 2014 although the C2 steam locos had been reshuffled on shed and one (the one in best condition?) had disappeared. We visited around 5 small coal mine railways in the same area with varying degrees of success as well as a rather unfriendly line near Dazhou. The visit to **Yongchuan Honglu** however was most satisfactory and we walked all of the track away from the roads. This is a possible for a return trip. We moved on the Hunan province to visit the excellent **Matian** coal railway near Chenzhou which appears on its last legs. I'd love to get back for a repeat visit if it survives. We moved on to Henan to see the **Yujian** tourist railway still not open to the general public. If this steam and diesel line starts a regular tourist passenger service, it would be good to go back. We then flew to Heilongjiang to see sg electrics at Hegang (with an ng line included) and the cement railway at **Haolianghe**. Although preparations had started to resume work, the railway was not in operation. A return might be needed to see this in action but if I had to choose between this and Mengxi, I might choose the Mongolian grassland diesel line over the Heilongjiang forest electrified line. Because the railway at Haolianghe was closed, we also paid a visit to see sg electrics at Jixi prior to sampling the **Huanan** steam tourist train over around 2km with one train per day Saturday and Sunday. This is not worth a repeat visit until they open a longer line to a tourist destination. How long will that take? I doubt it will be ready for 2020.

I have highlighted the lines above that would be considered for a return visit. In addition, we have the following lines to consider for a first visit.

#### Cement/Limestone

Laohekou+

Kongshan (Nanjing)+

Cishan (Nanjing)+

#### Iron Ore

Hungjiang+

Shaoxing Lizhu+

You can read reports of China NG I and II here:

<http://rabylee.uk/chinangtour2018.html>

<http://rabylee.uk/malaychina2019.html>

If China NG III proposed for September (and early October?) 2020 is of interest, please let me know.

**LCLR DVD**



I rarely do DVDs these days but for a good cause, I can still be persuaded. I prepare an annual DVD for the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway (as I used to do for Statfold Barn Railway). The 2018 LCLR DVD is now available from <https://www.facebook.com/LCLRA/> or contact me (for example if you live outside the UK to buy a copy using PayPal). The price is £5 plus postage and all proceeds go to support the LCLR Heritage Vehicles Trust <http://www.lclr.co.uk>

**Last Words**

My Bortie Bay Light Railway now has narrow gauge and dual gauge track.



**John Raby**  
**July 2019**