



**Tour 02/19 LCGB TAIWAN TOUR 2019 with PTG including NORTH BORNEO and S. KOREA extension options.**

**Taiwan by Rail (14-26<sup>th</sup> March 2019) with North Borneo (9-14<sup>th</sup> March) South Korea extension (26-31<sup>st</sup> March)**

**Circular 1 – April 2018**

We are offering the PTG “**Hidden Taiwan by Rail**” tour to club members. As an incentive to those booking through the club you will receive a year’s free LCGB membership if booked before 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018

## Introduction

Taiwan may not be a name which immediately comes to mind when one thinks of rail travel. It is an island with a length approximately the distance between London and Harrogate and with a breadth that of Birmingham to Cambridge. It is largely mountainous and that rail which there is forms a circle around the perimeter of the island. In addition to the ring of conventional rail, the tracks on the west coast are duplicated by a parallel high speed rail line, operating at 300km/hour, and which is the length of the UK’s HS1 and future HS2 combined.

The conventional rail system is also very modern, electrified and functional, but with four fascinating non-electrified branch lines heading inland. We will travel on each of these, with visits and photos, and also, we plan to use a steam locomotive on two of these charming branches. We will also visit two former sugar mill railways now given over to tourist operation. Overall, we plan the use of 5 steam locomotives together with a period railcar. The highlight of our rail experiences will be the incredible Alishan branch with its triple spiral, the only one anywhere so far as we know, which traverses a number of climatic zones, from bamboo, through tea plantations to the fir forest, the very reason the line was originally constructed.

The bulk of our travel during the tour will be by rail, with road used predominantly for transfers, but we do break our journeys to visit some places of rail interest and also the typically Chinese terminals of each of the branches.

We also include an option for an extension in South Korea, where we take a train to the Demilitarised zone and the virtually unused exchange station with the North. We can see North Korea and take a mine train under the DMZ to see where the North once attempted to tunnel into the South.

## Itinerary

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March (D)** We hope to be able to secure direct flights to Taipei arriving late afternoon, but this will entail **departures from Europe the previous evening**. We will begin our rail travel immediately on arrival by using the airport rail link to speed us to the centre of Taipei and then our hotel, where dinner can be taken. Overnight Taipei.

**Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March (B,D)** It’s a reasonably early transfer to the Taipei Main Station. The station is now sub-surface, but outside a tank locomotive with coaches are nicely preserved. We then travel north-east by the main line to Houtong, an old mining town, and where we can cross the river to visit the mine by train. Our first branch line, the Pingxi Line commences at Houtong and we take this scenic route alighting at Shifen, where the tracks pass the old buildings along the street. We break here for photos and a Chinese experience. Lunches will generally not be provided, and the possibilities today may be something Chinese, but on other days, a snack from any of the many 7/11 convenience stores will suffice. We take an afternoon train to the end of the line, another former mining area, as the rail direction curves back to Taipei. Our return to Taipei will be completed by transfer to a gondola station, then the Gondola through the mountains to the Taipei Zoo station of the Wenhua skytrain line of the Taipei MRT, and then back to the centre by overhead rails.

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March (B,L,D)** Our first visit today will be to the Peace Memorial Park and the National Taiwan Museum. The main interest for railfans will be the two preserved locomotives, one of which is a very early Avonside. Close again is the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall and the changing of the guard at 11:00. After lunch we transfer to

the Confucius and Bao'an Temples. Then to the interest of the traditional Chinese Dihua Street after which there is some free time when another attraction such as Taipei 101, once the tallest building in the world, might be visited.

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March (B,D)** We speed away from Taipei on the HS line to Hsinchu and here change to the Liujia branch for just one station where the branch line to Neiwan can be taken. We will take a break in the old town right in the lee of the hills, before riding back to Hsinchu's conventional railway station. There will be time to walk to God's Temple, the largest Cheng Huang temple in Taiwan, before resuming our train journey down the main line to Changhua. En route we will break for the Maioli Railway Museum, with its collection of steam and diesel locomotives. Overnight Changhua.

**Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March (B,D)** Our first working steam locomotive is encountered today when 2-8-2 DT668 leaves the Changhua roundhouse to take us south down the mainline to Ershui, and then along the Jiji branch to its Checheng terminus. We hope to arrange some photo opportunities along the branch and within the railway museum at Checheng. For those who do not wish to stay with the train over lunch, we can visit the draw attraction of the Sun Moon Lake and take lunch there. Our train will return and deposit us at Ershui where there is a small locomotive park, before we continue to Chaiyi for overnight.

**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March (B,D)** We will take a morning train from Chiayi up the Alishan narrow-gauge branch through the amazing Dulishan spiral to Fenqihu, where the depot containing 2 Shay locomotives can be visited, as also the small mountain town. A landslip a decade or so ago has severed the Alishan line and the journey must be continued by road. We stay in Alishan for two nights, where a small part of the line downhill and that uphill too, operate tourist services which we may take and visit various attractions.

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March (B,D)** The day is spent in and around Alishan and is basically free-time. There will be a 'sunrise' train or two to Zhushan – the only services expected here. During the remainder of the day there will be frequent trains to both Zhaoping and Sacred Tree. It's the Cherry Blossom Festival and four of the scheduled morning trains to Zhaoping are expected to be hauled by a Shay locomotive. We can both ride and photograph these trains whilst enjoying the mountain environment.

**Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March (B,D)** If we want to take a photo of one of the expected two uphill trains on the main line making for Fenqui we will need an early departure. At Chiayi we visit the Beimen locomotive park and depot and where we are expecting the railway to make Shay no. 25 available for a charter train hopefully to Jhuci. We stay overnight in Chiayi.

**Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> March (B,D)** Our journey today is by road. First it is to Xihu Sugar Mill for a charter train with a Franco-Belge 0-6-0T and mixed stock on the Mill's 4km track. In the afternoon we move to Wushulin Mill for a similar experience with a narrow-gauge railcar. Our overnight destination is Tainan.

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March (B,D)** Tainan is a city of temples and we can visit one of these together with the Chihkan Tower and the Anping Tree House in the old Dutch colonial quarter. We also have some plinthed locomotives to view before taking a mid afternoon train to Kaohsiung, where we stay overnight.

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March (B,D)** Our morning will be spent in and around the Pier 2 cultural area, which includes the Takao Railway Museum containing a number of locomotives, and the Hamasen Railway Museum housing a model railway of the entirety of Taiwan. In the mid afternoon, we take a 2hour high-speed line train to Taipei and stay here for 2 nights.

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March (B,D)** We take a morning train along the east coast line as far as Hualien. Here we have a steam charter on a narrow gauge line before returning to Taipei for our farewell dinner. Anyone who is travelled-out can take a free day in Taipei and visit more of its attractions.

**Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March (B)** This is our departure day, either returning to Europe or, joining us on a 2.5hour flight to Seoul for further Eastern Adventures. Either way, we ensure you get to Taipei's Taoyuan International Airport in good time for your flight.

#### **In South Korea, we plan:**

**Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March (D)** Late afternoon arrival at Seoul's Incheon International Airport, then travel to Seoul Station on the fast airport rail line before transfer to our hotel in the Itaewon area of Seoul.

**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March (B,L,D)** It's not an early start, but we get directly into what for many will be the most fascinating part of any visit to Seoul and that is to visit the DMZ some 50km north. We will travel by train on Korail's excursion which, after security checks at Imjingang, we cross the fortified Imjin River, reminiscent of a one-time journey to East Berlin, and enter the DMZ security zone. Our train deposits us at the Dorosan International Station – but ours is the only train that uses it. After lunch, we visit the Dora Observatory to look across to the so-called Democratic People's Republic, and after which, we descend by rack-train under the DMZ to look at one of the attempted invasion tunnels dug by the North. On our return we alight at Imjingang to visit the Peace Park with its 2 locomotives and transfer to Seoul by road.

**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March (B,D)** Today we take another rail journey due south to Uiwang, the location of the Korean Railroad Museum and possibly the nearby railway around a lake will be operating too. Then it's a cross-country transfer to the UNESCO World Heritage Hahoe Folk Village, a living museum. We stay nearby in Andong.

**Friday 29<sup>th</sup> March (B)** We make a brisk start with a transfer to Yeongju for a slow 'sightseeing' train through the mountains to Cheoram. After a break we take a coastal train to Ganheung and visit the Unification Park, where a captured North Korean submarine can be visited. Then we transfer into the mountains at Ayraji, where the A-train will take us through these mountains to Seoul. We dine on the train and have an evening arrival in Seoul

**Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> March (B)** Our final day permits us time to view the capital city of our hosts. We should visit the Gyeongbokgung Palace and view the changing of the guard the adjacent Bukchon Village with its traditional Hanok buildings. After lunch we can tour the Changdeokgung Palace. There are also preserved locomotives and trams to see.

**Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March (B)** We will try for daytime flights to London, probably with Air China via Beijing from Gimpo International airport or,

**Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March (B)** A single day's extension in Seoul is recommended if time permits, visiting such as the Namsan Seoul Tower by cable car and lift, seeking other preserved locos in Incheon area, museums, or getting another view of the DMZ at the Cheorwon area.

### Prices per person

Full 12 night holiday including flights from London to Taipei : £4,000 Own travel to Taipei £3,350.

Options

Single room supplement in Taiwan £830

5 night extension in South Korea including flights London; Taipei; Seoul; London = £1,250 as add-on to Taiwan trip.

As standalone trip it would be £2,050

5 night extension in South Korea with own travel to region but including Taipei to Seoul flight: £1,120

Single room supplement in South Korea: £275

Additional day in Seoul on B + B basis shared: £50 pp shared and £88 single

Deposits after 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018.

Full package Taiwan: £1,500 Full package Taiwan + Korea: £1,750

Own travel to Taiwan: £700 Own travel to Taiwan + Korea £950

**As it is so far ahead we can accept £100 pp deposit initially and the balance of the deposit on 1<sup>st</sup> September.**

Highlights

Ride the NG Alishan Railway with its unique triple spiral

Steam locomotive haulage on several lines

Ride 3 rural branch lines to Chinese Villages

A traditional part of China bypassed by the 'Revolution'

South Korea extension with train to DMZ

Details of North Borneo will appear with Circular 2

Please complete an LCGB Overseas Tours Booking (note ref to sae in conditions does not apply):

[http://www.lcgb.org.uk/images/OTBF\\_2018.pdf](http://www.lcgb.org.uk/images/OTBF_2018.pdf). Conditions: <http://www.lcgb.org.uk/html/tours/TourConditions.htm>.

These are available from the contact below. Please include 3 s.a.e.'s if you do not use email.

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