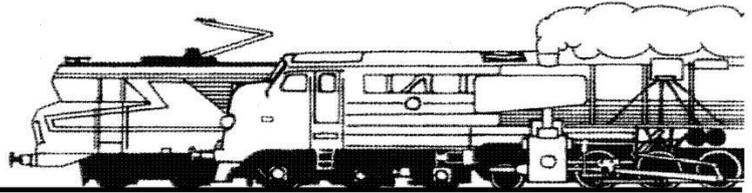


LCGB

THE LOCOMOTIVE CLUB
OF GREAT BRITAIN
OVERSEAS STUDY TOURS



Tour 01/19 LCGB INDIA TOUR 2019

Circular 1 – July 2018

Some of you know Amit Chopra (of TravelPals based in Delhi) was in the UK recently and it gave the opportunity to discuss the tour in more detail. He and I are putting this tour together. This is written as both an update to those who have already expressed an interest and as an introduction to others.

Since most of those showing interest so far want to continue to Mumbai our 2019 tour will be based on travelling from Kolkata (Calcutta) to Mumbai (Bombay), mainly via the east coast area with the option to leave at Trivandrum. The fare for this complete journey is £2,160 with £500 single supplement. This is subject to currency fluctuations and a minimum number of 20 (19 currently) and it could be extra for steam trains at Madras and Matheran. The £2,160 is the same price as charged for the trip last year which had four less nights. Until we firm up the prices we will not be asking for deposits. The itinerary has been altered slightly to include an overnight stay in the city with the most southerly railway station in India, Kanyakumari. The main tour will start with two nights in Kolkata. This gives longer to adjust to the time difference. It will still be possible to leave the tour at Trivandrum. Enough members have shown interest to ensure the tour will operate and the itineraries will be as below. Amit and I will look at the various options for flights to/from India and he is willing to provide tickets.

The format will follow the successful tours in 2016 and 2017 when early starts were avoided where possible and daily journeys kept to a reasonable length. In addition we will stay in several places for two nights. All the towns/cities we visit have tourist attractions. Hotels will be four star. Breakfasts will be provided and many dinners as shown later on. Subject to availability we will be using 2AC on the relevant trains that will increase the comfort of travelling. It is designed so that those who do not want to be on trains every day can have four days being “normal” tourists. Because an option to start the tour in Bangladesh would involve visa charges of some £240 and some risk to the train journey this is not being offered now. Indian visas are about £70. However, we will try to arrange a visit to Dhaka for two that still wish to do it. Instead we are now looking at an add-on to The Sunderbans from Kolkata. The Sunderbans is a national park whose official name is the Sunderban Tiger Reserve but if we see a tiger it will be a bonus. We are now looking at this in detail and will inform those showing interest in the main tour as we progress.

There is better news for steam trains in India. The steam locomotive at Chennai has just completed three return special trips. Also a trial of the B Class locomotive to Matheran has been successful and charges for a charter have been published. Amit is following up both of these but will take some time to get approval or otherwise. We will also have the opportunity to see plinthed locomotives mainly at Kolkata and Chennai. There may be others. The works at Tiruchirappalli is responsible for the steam locos of southern India.

Add-on to The Sunderbans

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

Saturday 26th January. Transport to the Sunderbans. 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.

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 perhaps with steam train ride. 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.

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 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.

Tour prices will not include:

Meals not included in the program.

Items of a personal nature.

Flights to/from India.

Flights.

Participants on the previous India tours arranged their own flights to suit their personal preferences and this worked well. 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