

## The journal travel page - A Journey to Nowhere

*Life is a journey to nowhere, but this journey was to be a different, ending up from where I started.*



As if and I had both reached 60, both retired and both of us enjoy railways and those people who travel on them. Being 60 meant that we could use our Railcards and so we bought an All Line Railrover Ticket, First Class. Being a Yorkshireman, I realised that a saving could be made by buying a ticket for two weeks instead of one. For £520 I could travel on any train, at any time, for two weeks. It took us 8 weeks to plan a timetable and a further 7 weeks to verify it on the Internet. We decided to alternate nights on sleeper trains with nights in B&Bs, travelling on interesting trains and long routes.



Monday saw us on the first train out of Lincoln down to London to catch the Virgin Pendolino to Glasgow. The train is more like a plane than a train, especially with the tilt, but the service is like a plane, too, with free food and alcohol - French or Chilean wine - smoked salmon and scrambled eggs etc. The train was on time, and we were soon rushing back down to London on the same service. That evening we caught the sleeper from Euston to Edinburgh. Sleeper trains are to be withdrawn starting next year, so this may have been our last opportunity to travel on a British Sleeper Train. They carry 1/3 as many passengers with twice as many staff, and are deemed to be too expensive to run.

We had a cabin each, and there was a cafe and a lounge for insomniacs. The train divides at Preston, 1/2 going to Glasgow, 1/2 to Edinburgh. The trains are run by Scotrail. We chose Edinburgh so that we could enjoy the station before catching a GNER to Glasgow. From there we caught a Scotrail train to Inverness and onwards to Kyle of Lochalsh. This train was a bit old, but almost empty, allowing us to enjoy the views without interruption. At Kyle we elected to sleep in quietness and arranged to be collected and taken to a B&B 3 miles out in the country, enjoying excellent food and a wide selection of malt whiskies.

The next morning we walked back down to the station and basked in the sunshine before catching the local train to Edinburgh. Night time saw us on the sleeper back down to Euston before catching the Great Western to Penzance. An old, but tastefully refurbished, Intercity 125, decorated in navy blue, and walnut tables- in first class at least!

After B&B in Penzance this was the journey that I was looking forward to - Penzance to Edinburgh on one train, a journey of 10 hours.

Alas, waiting at the station was a Virgin Voyager, a notoriously noisy piece of kit, full of noisy pensioners returning from their holidays. The train was full and hot, with no free food or alcohol.



It was also 1 minute late arriving in Edinburgh, the only train that was late throughout the whole week! It was then Edinburgh back to London on the sleeper, where I bade farewell to my travelling companion, who had found some paid work to do.

I nipped up to Edinburgh and back on the Flying Scotsman, GNER's premier train- my favourite, decorated in white and navy blue. From Euston I caught the sleeper to Aviemore returning on The Highland Chieftain to London, then home to Lincoln.



The remaining few days I travelled on the Settle to Carlisle line, visited The Railway Museum, and journeyed from Scarborough to Liverpool, returning via Nottingham. The last day Prue, my wife, accompanied me to the Crab Festival in Bridlington, though not on the part on the East Coast Line. (Alas, she could only bear to buy a second class ticket at £38!) A first class return ticket from London to Glasgow is £305, so £520 for 2 weeks of pleasure wasn't too bad a deal. Next year Prue hopes to join me on another "Journey To Nowhere", probably to the same places!

*Stephen Chadderton.*

### **The Settle Carlisle Railway**



The 72 mile route from Settle to Carlisle takes you on a journey through the magnificent Yorkshire Dales, over the 24 arches of the Ribbleshead Viaduct before plunging in to the

longest tunnel on the line at Blea Moor. Emerging onto the side of Dentdale, the line leaves the Dales at Garsdale and makes its way through the gentle, lush rolling hills of the Eden Valley, with rural villages and market towns before arriving at the great border city of Carlisle



Construction began in 1869 and lasted for seven long years with about 6,000 men working on the line - the last main line railway in England constructed almost entirely by hand. The line opened on the 1st of May

1876 and since then has stood the test of time. In the 72 miles between Settle and Carlisle there are 14 tunnels and over 20 viaducts.