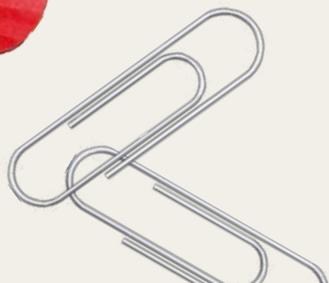


100W
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AN INTRODUCTION

For the past three years, Community Rail Lancashire has delivered an annual project which demonstrates the rail industry as a viable employment option to young women and in addition, encourages confident travel. When the Covid-19 virus struck in early 2020, it was clear that there would have to be a different approach to the annual women's project. Community Rail Lancashire's education team jointly came up with an idea to expand the project internationally and at a safe distance. As well as promoting an industry to women which is still heavily male dominated, 100 women – 100 journeys seek to inspire passengers back onto the railway when it is safe to do so after a year's hiatus. The project has an extra purpose and that is to promote Women's Aid's Rail to Refuge scheme which has supported many vulnerable people throughout the pandemic. If you enjoy reading through these stories, please do consider donating to the charity using the link on their page. Special thanks must go to all the storytellers for sharing your funny, thought-provoking and, on occasion, sad memories of train travel and to Daisy Chapman-Chamberlain who led the way.

#100Women100Journeys

downtheline.org.uk/100-women-100-journeys

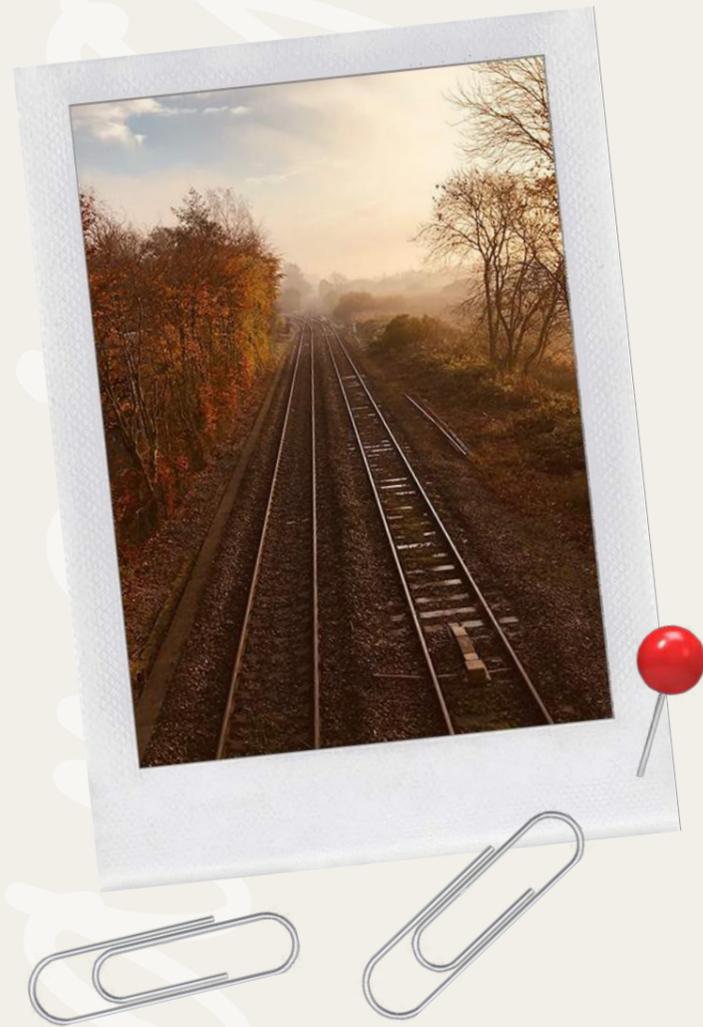


WOMEN WHO WANDER - DAISY CHAPMAN-CHAMBERLAIN

In 2017, I was still new to the rail and community rail industries. Reading the gender report from Women in Rail shocked me; I had observed that a majority of those I interacted with through work were men, but I had no idea that the rail industry (in 2017 at least) was made up of just 16% female staff members. It was from this statistical surprise that Women Who Wander sprang; initially engaging just a handful of schools and growing to Women in STEM 2020, which engaged hundreds of women and girls, alongside my wonderful CRL colleagues. One of my very first Women Who Wander journeys was with a small group of young women from Manchester; it was a long trip out to Liverpool on a chilly day, but the conversations we had and the writing that they produced absolutely reinforced that safe spaces for experiences and discussions are vital to building confidence, engagement, and future inclusion within rail.

FINDING FREEDOM ONE JOURNEY AT A TIME - LUCY WRIGHT

Five years ago, I quit my life. I left the relationship I was in, resigned from my job and sold my house all within six months. Terrified, alone and with nothing to lose, I embarked on a new career, and as part of this, I enrolled on a course in London. My weekends were spent dealing with heartbreak, packing boxes and going through reams of paperwork, but the course was a welcome distraction and gave me something new to focus on. I spent the four-hour round trip on trains to and from London getting lost in books, planning for the future and finally feeling hopeful again. Those train journeys were a pivotal part in rebuilding my life; they provided a few hours where I didn't worry about things, I could just be in my own company, zooming through the Suffolk countryside. Half a decade later, my old life couldn't be further from my reality. I have a new career, a new home and I am sharing life with a new person. But not everything has changed – I still regularly travel on the same railway line. It's never too late to start over again and create the life you want to live.



ONE WAY TICKET TO BRADFORD - NOREEN KHAN

In a nutshell, on 6th July 2011, five and a half months pregnant I was thrown out of my in-laws home and dumped at Surbiton Train station with a one way ticket back to Bradford. Almost 10 years on, I have a beautiful son and an organisation I set up in 2016 specialising in emotional and economical aide for single mothers called NEESIE, in Bradford supporting over 4200 women as well as footprints in Oldham, Liverpool, Birmingham and London too. We have satellite presence within 14 countries across the globe too... Some train journeys truly are



PERSEVERANCE - LOUISE CHEESEMAN

Born into a family of three brothers and being the only girl, I was told very early on that I didn't need to stay at school beyond 16 as I would only end up getting married and having a family. I duly left school at 16 and married my next-door neighbour at 20 and had two daughters in quick succession.

Married life wasn't the 'roses around the door' experience I expected and in spite of running a very successful business with my husband, I made the difficult decision to leave the marital home with my daughters who were only 5 and 7 years old at the time and start again. We walked away with a stuffed dolphin (my daughter couldn't sleep without it) and started again!

I found a job in a bank as a cashier, the pay was poor, but it put a roof over our heads, but it quickly became apparent that my daughters were bright, and the school suggested that they could easily both get places at university. Having never been to university myself and researching the cost my heart sank. I realised that I would need an additional source of income to be able to give them the chance I never had.

The local paper advertised a role as a train conductor and when I saw what it paid I immediately applied and was lucky enough to be offered an interview and assessment. I was the only women at the assessment day one wet Sunday, 23 men and me! As the day went on each test reduced the number of candidates until it was down to four, including me. I was called into the recruiter's office and told I had passed the assessment day but

wouldn't be offered a role as I was not suitable, I was too 'posh' and it wasn't a job for a woman, he wouldn't want his daughter to experience 'messroom' culture. After some 'debate' he agreed to recommend me but his final words as I left the room were 'I'll give you three months!'

I was only the second woman conductor at the depot. Yes, it was daunting on the first day, yes, I was initially treated with suspicion, the uniform didn't fit very well, there were no dedicated women's staff toilets, but it turned out to be the happiest seven years of my career. I made some amazing friends, many of whom I still hold dear today. Both my daughters achieved their ambition of gaining degrees and going on to become teachers, one as a deputy head of a primary school and the other a senior leader of a secondary school. Life in the rail industry has moved on and we now have some amazing women role models. I would never have believed that twenty years later I would return to the city of my birth as the Managing Director of a Train Operating Company. I have learnt so much in my career journey and worked in some fantastic places along the way, but I will never forget the wonderful times working with some great people (some I still see on the platform to this day!) as a conductor. The industry offers career opportunities for people like me who might not have the academic evidence but have the determination to prove their potential.

Two women I met early on in my career inspired me to be ambitious, Dyan Crowther and Heidi Mottram. Seeing what they achieved when women were a scarce commodity in the industry gave me the drive to apply for a manager's role, and the rest is history. I'd love to think that one day I will have that impact on someone early in their career.



ITALIAN ADVENTURE - HADYN PASI

In 2018 myself and a friend were travelling through Italy by train to mark our graduation from university. Neither of us spoke a word of Italian and thankfully, the couple who sat beside us didn't speak any English. We were exhausted and looking forward to not having to make small talk with strangers throughout the journey. How wrong we were! The lady pulled a bag of fresh cherries from under her seat, placed it on the shared table, and insisted we join her in eating them. They were the most delicious cherries I have ever eaten. She continued to chat away to us in Italian, even after we apologised for our lack of language capabilities. Nonetheless, she and her husband laughed, shared stories, and we all tried our best to communicate over shared fruit. The couple told us of their 50 year marriage and showed us photos of their grandchildren. Whilst still embarrassed by my lack of knowledge of the Italian language, I am so pleased we were able to communicate with this wonderful couple, albeit through nods, laughter and cherries. So often on public transport, I am guilty of staring into my phone or plugging in my headphones, but this journey was a reminder of the importance of seeking human connection and finding joy in the fleeting encounters with fellow passengers.



ON TRACK - DOROTA DURAZINSKA

My father used to work for Polish Railway Lines so as a child I spent a lot of time on trains visiting my grandma every fortnight. A journey was 2 hours long and was incredibly boring. We didn't have laptops or smartphones, just books. When I grew up, I decided I wanted to be an engineer, I wanted to build tall buildings and bridges, so I applied for a place at university. There were 5 specialisations: construction, technology, bridges, highways and railways. I wanted to be in construction, technology or bridges, railways were my last choice. I took my entry exams, but I did not get a place on my first choice of specialisation. The university placed me on the railways course instead because there was room there. Two years later I changed my specialisation back to construction but as I started with railways, I had to repeat the subject. For another year I had twice the exams and coursework, but I did it and escaped railways. After graduating from university, I came to the UK to study English. That was 18 years ago. I am still here and now work as an engineer in the railway industry! I love my job and didn't escape railways in the end. I guess it was meant to be.

THE SEASIDE TATTOOIST - SARAH G

In 2018, depression and stress as a result of my job left me a shell of my former self. I struggled to maintain friendships, parent my children effectively, and even my marriage suffered as a result. Luckily, I found an outlet to this in the form of body decoration; namely tattoos and piercings! My favourite tattoo artist is located on the South coast, so I decided to visit him via train. Being able to leave my worries at the station whilst I enjoyed a book and some peace, not to mention some incredible views of the coast, was really special. I don't think you can beat the gentle swaying of a train with a fresh coffee (in a reusable mug, of course) to soothe the soul. My mental health is much better now and I have fond memories of my journey to my seaside tattooist.



TRAIN GIRLS - HELEN BENNETT

Travelling from Kent to London in the 1990s was a memorable time for me. I met many of my lifelong friends in the front carriage of the 9:31 to Charing Cross. Some of us got on at Dartford, then others followed at Bexleyheath and Welling. By the time we got to London we took up the whole carriage. Joyce did mock-up accidents, Kitty organised holidays for under-privileged children, Ernest was a Salvation Army Brigadier and Jim repaired stained glass windows. We had nicknames for passengers who weren't in our gang too! The Kit Kat man got on at Barnehurst – he always had one for his breakfast! Every Christmas we had a party on the train. We put bunting and tinsel up at the window and drank mulled wine! Although I have retired on the south coast, I still make time to see my train girls.



LEST WE FORGET - MADDY MILLS

I took my father on Le Shuttle, through the Eurotunnel, to visit the grave of his Great Uncle James Hyde (my Great, Great Uncle) in Etaples Military Cemetery in France. We stood together at his grave at 11.00 a.m. on 4th April 2016 – exactly 100 years after James died of his wounds in World War 1. We lit a candle and placed a cross by his headstone. He served with the Royal Fusiliers as a Private and was only 23 years of age when he died. It was a very emotional moment to think that we were the first family members to ever visit his grave. My father and I will never forget the experience.



LONGEST JOURNEY - PENNY GREENWOOD

My mother helped me pack a suitcase, which we hid in the shed in case my father found it and stopped me leaving. On my last day at school I'd asked a teacher, who knew a little about my home life, if she could lend me some money for my fare. I needed enough for a single ticket, so she gave me a ten shilling note to be paid back when I started work. At last, I was on the station platform waiting for the train that would take me to freedom. Then there it was, huge and noisy, filling the air with clouds of hissing steam and the smell of burning coal.

Mother had told me to get in the Ladies Only compartment to be nearer the guard. It was almost full of women and children off on a shopping trip. 'Have you far to go, love?' One asked, eyeing my large case, so I told her where I was going. 'Not too far then', she said, but she was wrong. I've travelled a lot since then but that journey remains the longest of my life.



INDIA 1984 - ANNIE MUSGROVE

Deep in my memory is a long-distance train ride I took as a backpacker from Goa to Kochi (formerly Cochin). Travelling 3rd class on hard seats I got into conversation with a man travelling home to his wife and family after months working away. The train stopped for a couple of hours in his home town and he invited me and my husband to have dinner with his family. We jumped off the train and followed him down unlit alleys, balancing on planks across open drains until we reached his home deep in the shanty town. In this small and spotless home, his wife showed little surprise at our arrival and we were treated to an impromptu Indian feast laid out on their biggest space, the family's bed. The warmth of the family's welcome and the generosity they shared have stayed with me long after the end of my trip.



STARTING YOUNG - MARJORIE BIRCH

July 1946 at the age of 11 months I embarked on my first train journey. My family was travelling from Blackburn to Fleetwood for their annual holiday. The event was the annual Wakes Weeks when the cotton mills in East Lancashire, closed for two weeks in the summer. Our holidays over the years were always at seaside towns initially Blackpool and Fleetwood and as my sister and I got older further afield to Ilfracombe and Paignton. We always travelled by train, as we didn't have a car. Our holiday started the moment we got on the train with I-spy, colouring book and spotting buildings from the carriage window. Train travel has always been part of our lives. My late husband and I travelled through France and Italy by train appreciating the wonderful views and the ease of movement within countries. When driving, detours in France often resulted in arriving at a preserved railway or a small village station for a supposedly "unplanned" train journey. Latterly, my involvement with Community Rail Lancashire has given me the opportunity to pass on my enthusiasm for train travel and the excitement of that first rail journey to over three thousand young children in Lancashire.

CATHERINE HUDDLESTON - ON TRACK TO LOVE

Right then, where do I start? I was on my usual train home from the office and when the train arrived at Lancaster there would be a change of crew. I recognized the guard, Phil from several other journeys but we had never really spoken. This would all change today, due to the wrong type of train on the service. Being my helpful self (and as Community Rail Partnership Officer for the line), I offered to help and get the 60+ school children off. I felt unusually nervous and shy in Phil's presence, but the timing of this chance encounter wasn't quite right. Our situations changed, numbers and social media information were exchanged and in July 2019 we got together. In doing so, I accidentally upheld a family tradition of meeting your partner on public transport (my parents met 'on the buses' where my Dad worked as a bus driver). It's amazing how public transport can lead you to more than just your destination!



GOING GNOME - CHARLOTTE CROWDER

Mencap was invited to an awards evening hosted by Merseytravel and we won a huge Merseytravel gnome. It must have been about half the size of me and I had to take it home on the train! I had to carry the gnome through Liverpool to the train station and when I got to the station all the guards were laughing and wanted to take photos with it. On the train I put the gnome on the seat and literally the whole carriage was laughing. It was great! Everyone wanted to sit by the gnome and have pictures taken, I even got a photo of the gnome and two policemen. The thing was I wasn't going straight home but going on a second date!



A JOURNEY BACK IN TIME - CHRISTINE HOLLAND

My husband and I were Friends of St Anne's Station and as such received a pass to travel on Northern. We decided to go from St Annes to Colne - the end of the line. As we travelled through industrial towns and stations, some so small they are "request stops" it felt like we were travelling back in time. Colne is a world away from bustling St Annes - we walked up the main, but empty road, with narrow streets of terraced houses on either side.

No trees, gardens or flowers to be seen. We met a man and asked where the town centre was, he replied "you've walked through it. Colne is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays. The market is here on Wednesdays, when the town comes to life!" We walked back to the station and caught the next train home, suddenly eager to return to our "Garden Town by the Sea". My husband died the following year, so we never got to see a lively Colne, but it was a day to remember while tending our beautiful garden at St Annes Station.



DAYS OUT - MENCAP

Mencap groups use the train when we are going to activities in different places. We've been to Crosby to the beach and we also have a building in Crosby that we use. We also go to Southport and enjoy going to the arcades. When we use the ramps on and off the train the guards are great and really helpful...sometimes really funny!

GOING SOLO! - JULIE

My favourite and most memorable train journey is when I caught the train on my own from Preston to Edinburgh to do some training. I like being with people and so I've never travelled on a train on my own. I was extremely worried, but it was amazing. I booked myself on first class as a treat! The journey was amazing. It was a windy day in Preston but after a while it started to snow. Everything looked like a winter wonderland, probably because I had time to enjoy it, as there was no one there to distract me!





INDIAN ADVENTURE - AISHA

The journey from Surat to Mumbai on a very old rickety train was an exciting one. The train was crammed with people sitting almost everywhere. At every stop, sellers were getting on and off selling tea, fizzy drinks and snacks like bhel puri, roasted nuts and Mumbai mix and shouting as they walked through the carriages. Best and memorable train journey ever as a child.



سورت سے ممبئی تک ایک بہت پرانی رکتی
ٹرین میں سفر ایک دلچسپ تھا۔
ٹرین تقریباً ہر جگہ بیٹھے لوگوں کے ساتھ تھی۔
ہر اسٹاپ پر فروخت کنندگان بھیل پوری، بھنے
ہوئے گری دار میوے اور ممبئی مکس جیسے
چائے، فزی مشروبات اور نمکین فروخت
کر رہے تھے اور بگھیوں سے گزرتے ہوئے
چیخ رہے تھے۔
بچے کی حیثیت سے اب تک ٹرین کا بہترین
اور یادگار سفر۔



NIKCING OFF - LIZ

We used to nick off school on the train and get free rides to Manchester and Blackpool as teenagers, sneaking about in the loos and jumping walls and barriers. Down the ramp and into the lifts to escape fares! Good days! I met a lad on the train once and got chatting and missed my stop and had to pay extra to get back. There were no phones back then, so I never saw him again. Simon was his name. I often wonder about him... he gave me a big kiss! OMG!!!



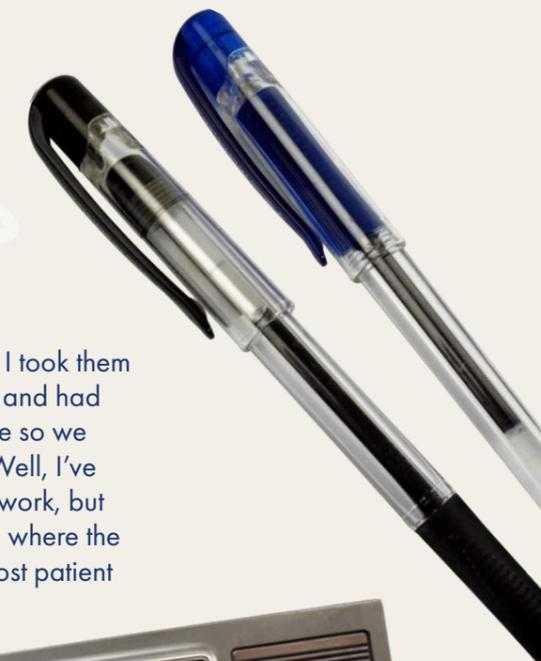
DRIVERLESS - LESLEY

When I lived in Market Rasen my sister and her husband came to stay so I took them into Lincoln by train. We went to the Cathedral, had lunch, fed the swans and had a quick drink before catching the train home. There was only one carriage so we climbed aboard. It was due to leave but we were waiting for the driver. Well, I've never known this train to be full even when people are going home from work, but today it was packed. Everybody was huffing and puffing and wondering where the driver was. Well, it was 45 mins late now and my sister, who is not the most patient of people, kept asking if I was sure this was our train, and it was! She was now chewing on her arm as her belly was rumbling. I got off the train to call a guard. He had no idea where our driver was. I told him if he didn't find him, we were going to revolt and start walking down the track! It turned out the driver had forgotten about us and was playing at being the fat controller in the stock yard shunting unused trains around! I got back on just as he came slowly down the platform as though nothing was wrong! There was a news report all about it. My sister and her husband have never returned and I don't think they ever forgave me. She will never come on a chuffing train with me again!



MEMORIES OF MALAYSIA - MUMTAZ

My most memorable train journey was in Malaysia. The air-conditioned carriage was a welcome break from the scorching heat. The journey was unique in that the train travelled on tracks that were at a height, allowing you to take in the sights and sounds of the country. Beautiful gardens, slums, waterways, high rise buildings, not forgetting the traffic beneath. Such a beautiful experience. I would compare it with monorail in Blackpool but would do it no justice, it was absolutely awesome.



TWO DAY TRAIN JOURNEY - MAHNOOR VAQAR

It was summer in Pakistan when my family decided to go by train from Karachi to Peshawar. Aged 26 I had never travelled by train. I knew that we'd be with people from different backgrounds and judgmental men so I made sure to wear clothes that fully covered me. The train would take two days so we took sanitizer, snacks and a first aid box.

At the station I saw some men staring and chasing the women. I stuck with my family as in our country the only way to be safe is to be on the defensive.

On the train we stayed in a separate compartment. It was fun sitting by the window and watching everything. But then I needed the washroom and had to face the nasty men and their tricks. I went as fast as I could and the washroom was worse than my expectations. I couldn't even breath!

It was all so peaceful as everyone went to sleep. I had the upper level of the bed - it was so uncomfortable! The next day we stopped at some stations where I bought some bangles for myself and my friends.

Travelling by train was not as bad and dangerous as people say but it's not safe for women to travel alone without a man to protect and guard them.



EXCITING TIMES - SOFIA

The three-hour train ride from Preston to London is filled with excitement as the kids busy themselves with books, toys and a special picnic, all adding to the excitement of the trip. They exchange waves and childish chitter chatter with other passengers, who patiently smile and reminisce about their own trips with loved ones in years gone by. Ticket stubs are safely packed and placed in backpacks to be added to scrapbooks. The break will be over in a blur and the return journey will come all too soon, but the excitement of the journey home will be happily repeated with laughter and enthusiasm and maybe a nap or two.



FIRST CLASS - FARHANA

I travelled from my grandparent's village, Harangham, to Mumbai. The trains are very cheap in India compared to British trains. I remember how cramped it was. My mum warned me not to use the bathroom because it was always dirty, and it was unlikely anybody would clean it. British people should travel first class, my mother told us. There were no seats on standard class, as it was too busy. We had to stand up for five hours to get to the city.



FOG ON THE TYNE - ANGELA

This is me and Victor on the train to Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, my home town. I miss Geordie Land so much and love to visit by train looking out of the window watching the world go by.

اور خواتین کا پیچھا کر رہے ہیں۔ میں اپنے خاندان کے ساتھ ساتھ رہی تھی۔ محفوظ ہونے کا واحد راستہ دفاعی طور پر ہونا ہے۔
 ترین میں ہم ایک الگ ڈبے میں رہے۔
 کھڑکی کے پاس بیٹھ کر اور سب کچھ دیکھ کر مزہ آیا۔
 لیکن پھر مجھے واش روم کی ضرورت تھی اور مجھے ان فحش مردوں اور ان کی چالوں کا سامنا کرنا پڑا۔
 میں جتنا تیزی سے جا سکتی تھی میں گئی۔
 اور واش روم میری توقعات سے بھی بدتر تھا۔
 میں سانس بھی نہیں لے سکتی تھی!
 یہ سب اتنا پر امن تھا جب سب سو گئے تھے۔
 میں بستر کی اوپری سطح پر تھی۔ یہ بہت بے آرام تھا!
 اگلے دن ہم کچھ اسٹیشنوں پر رکے جہاں میں نے اپنے اور اپنے دوستوں کے لئے کچھ چوزیاں لیں۔
 ترین میں سفر کرنا اتنا برا اور خطرناک نہیں تھا جتنا لوگ کہتے ہیں لیکن خواتین کے لئے ان کی حفاظت کے لئے مرد کے بغیر تنہا سفر کرنا محفوظ نہیں ہے۔

پاکستان میں موسم گرما تھا جب میرے اہل خانہ نے کراچی سے پشاور جانے کا فیصلہ کیا۔
 ۲۶ سال کی عمر میں نے کبھی ترین میں سفر نہیں کیا تھا۔
 میں جانتی تھی کہ ہم مختلف پس منظر اور فیصلہ کرنے والے مردوں کے ساتھ رہیں گے لہذا میں نے ایسے کپڑے پہننے کو یقینی بنایا جو مجھے مکمل طور پر ڈھانپتا تھا۔
 ترین میں دو دن لگ جائیں گے تو ہم نے سینیتائزر، اسنیکس اور فرسٹ ایڈ باکس لیا۔
 اسٹیشن پر میں نے دیکھا کہ کچھ مرد گھور رہے ہیں

MAKING MEMORIES - LISA

I can recall taking Nathan on the train to Blackpool, just me and him when he was younger. He was so excited to go on a train and see all the scenery and animals as we clacked passed them and of course looking for Blackpool Tower was something else he was super excited about. We had a great day playing crazy golf at the Pleasure Beach, with fish and chips on the seafront. It was a fab day for making memories.



THE MAN WAS FOUND - NATASHA LAYTON REES

I travel to work daily on the railway. I go from Bat and Ball to Tonbridge in Kent so this involves changing at Sevenoaks. Most of the time it runs smoothly, on some occasions it doesn't. One journey back in 2016, I was travelling back from Tunbridge Wells, when just outside Tonbridge I had to wait at a red signal. The train in front of the one I was travelling on had broken down – there was just track all around us. Someone in the next carriage had managed to get the doors open and had got out onto the track. The driver had to contact the electricity board to get the live rail switched off in case the trespasser touched it. The man was soon found and then we were on our way.



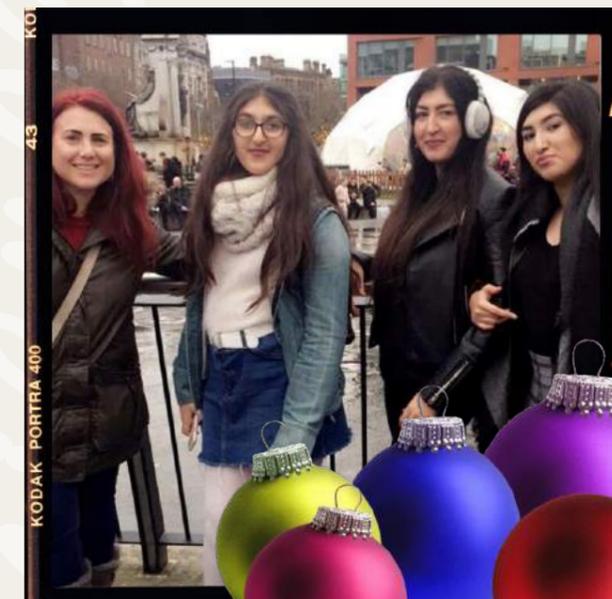
DAD AND I - JULIE

I remember travelling with my Dad on the train a lot when I was little. I used to love it because it was just me and him and I had his full attention and we had lots of laughs playing games and watching the world go by out of the window. Once we were travelling back from Crufts, the dog show in Birmingham, and he was blowing raspberries on my belly. Dad used to be a train driver and I got spoilt by his workmates too.

VIA HALIFAX - SHAZ AWAN

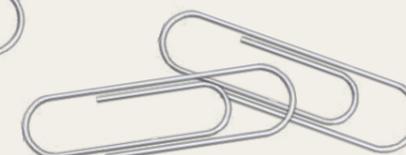
Going to the Manchester Christmas Market was a lively adventure that began when our train from Bradford Interchange was cancelled. Instead, we caught a train to Halifax and visited Piece Hall which was a welcome unplanned visit to somewhere new. As the train gathered speed a thrilling feeling overtook us all. Being British born Asians we'd never experienced a Christmas Market and we wanted to celebrate the holiday together.

Travelling by train is comfortable and I really enjoy the views from the window. On the way to Manchester we saw countryside, farms, forests and old factories. I like the freedom of movement you have on a train as opposed to wearing a car seat belt and it's also a great environment to chat with friends.



MY FIRST TRAIN TRIP - SABA

I had never been on a train journey until I went to India when I was 16. My Dad said it was not safe to travel by train but I begged him until he gave in. I was with my Mum and my uncle and my cousin were to be our chaperones. The ticket cost 15p and the train derailed, apparently this is very common in India. The sights and smells and watching the locals was fascinating. There were many people selling snacks that looked delicious but my Mum refused to let me try any. There were many locals that came on to sing and play music in the hope a few coins would be tossed to them. Many people had no shoes on. If only I had been allowed to talk to people I would have loved to learn more about the culture and share experiences.



NEW CONNECTIONS - AISHA

One of my most memorable train journeys was to Manchester Victoria train station. I was with my family and we were travelling to the airport about to go on holiday. I distinctly remember this journey as we began talking to an old German man and he told us about his various travels and endeavours around Europe with his friends during the 70s. This gave us an opportunity to talk and connect with someone who we usually wouldn't interact with.



WHEN TWO WORLDS COLLIDE - STACEY ALLOT

Friday 22nd February 2019, 10.47am, Brighouse to Kings Cross, The Grand Central....and it really was that in every way. Taking me on my first journey to meet the girl of my dreams. 2 hours and 57 minutes of extreme nerves, excitement and that sick feeling every now and again. Just short of 3 hours felt like a year however the end result was something magical. Trying my hardest to keep myself occupied I plugged my iPad in and attempted to listen to some music but everything reminded me of her. Staring out of the window first of all being greeted with the Yorkshire countryside and ending up in the hustle and bustle of busy London. The best journey of my life and I'm now lucky enough to take her with me on each and every one.



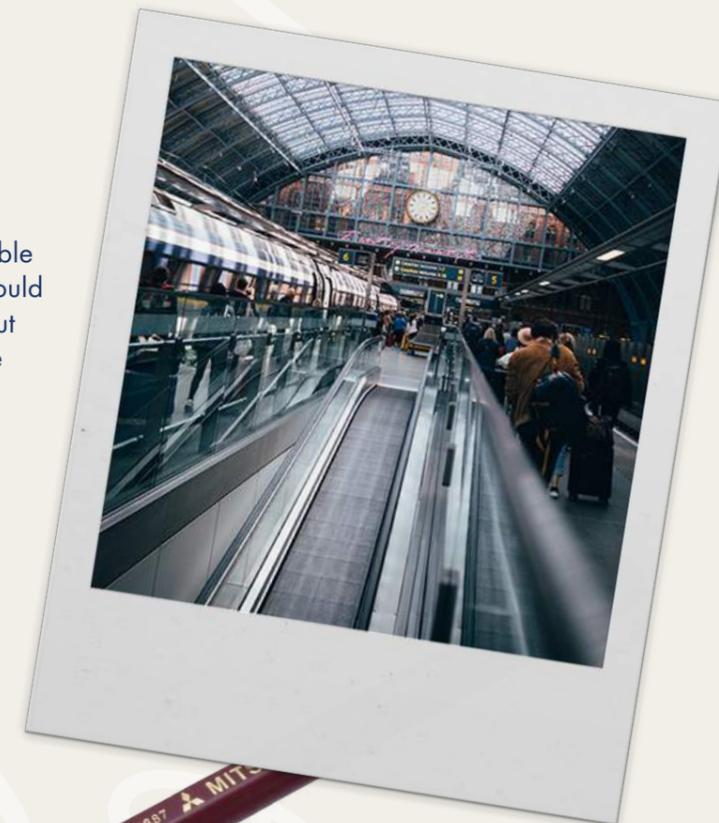
£5 RETURN - VERONICA MCDONNELL

I am a southerner from Richmond-upon-Thames who has lived in Lytham St Annes for 67 years. Together with my husband we were able, in the mid 1950s, to travel from Ansdell and Fairhaven Station to Euston Station and on to visit my parents. Was the fare really only £5.00 return?



FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADULthood - ZAINAB

Travelling to college on the train was a memorable time for me. It was the part of my day where I could socialise and enjoy being with my friends without having the stress of work on my mind. It is a time which I will always treasure. With all the fun of riding on the train came the feeling of independence and maturity. This led to my realisation that I had made the transition from childhood to adulthood.



TRIP TO THE RAILWAY MUSEUM IN YORK - ANONYMOUS

I took a journey with a group of women who had worked on a community rail project. The other attendees hadn't travelled on a train before or for a long time. My son came along on the journey and it was an eye opener as to how much my son can enjoy himself as he is autistic. There were other mums on the trip who don't always feel confident taking their kids out and I found this very reassuring. In fact, one mother hadn't left her family home with her children for over seven years.

We went to the Railway Museum in York which has very interesting old trains. My son made friends with the other children and I got to have fun connecting with new people.





MANCHESTER CHRISTMAS MARKET - ANONYMOUS

Last year we got to go on a few community rail journeys to York and Manchester. We stopped off at Halifax on the way to the Manchester Christmas Markets and visited the beautiful Piece Hall. The journeys were rare experiences for my family and me as we don't travel very often. I had been on the train several times but I wasn't at all confident with rail travel and things like timetables confused me if I were to go on my own. Due to taking accompanied journeys, I've been gaining confidence in taking the train. My sister joined us on the visit to the Christmas market and this was a nice first-time experience for us as we can't often travel together due to care responsibilities for our vulnerable parents.



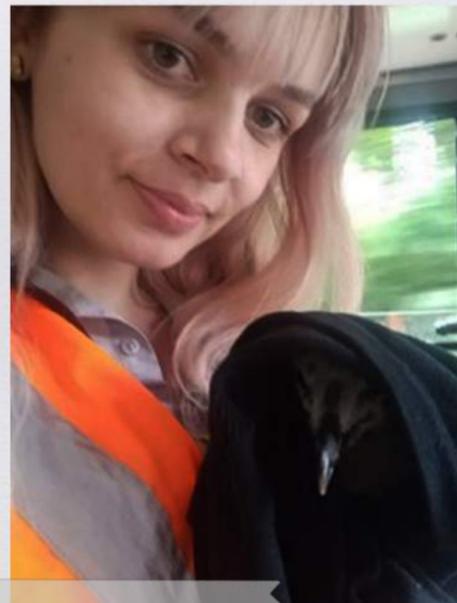
LIFE CHANGES - JACKY MASON

In 2004 my husband and I took a backpacking rail trip around South East Asia. An hour before we left I made a snap decision to quit my job but hadn't had time to tell him.

We arrived in Singapore and travelled by train through Malaysia and Thailand. I felt very young and carefree even at 46! After a week on a Thai island we arrived at Surat Thani to take an overnight train to Bangkok. I called into an Internet cafe and was shocked to read an email from my son telling me that he was going to have a baby later in the year! I went from free-railing-young- person to granny-to-be very quickly. I remember that exciting overnight journey (especially the toilets) as being when the next phase of my life began. I arrived in Bangkok feeling a bit shocked and a little more grown up...but very excited too.

SEAGULL RESCUE - AMY

I'll never forget the day I rescued a poorly baby seagull from Bury St Edmunds Station in Suffolk. I'd noticed him a few days before and it broke my heart when I saw he hadn't moved in those days. With extra time on my hands and a fantastic driver, I was able to safely throw a spare piece of uniform over the seagull and take him with me on the train! We became good friends as I gave him water from my flask. I contacted a fantastic seagull rescue in King's Lynn and they gladly took him on. I still get updates about Laurence the Seagull to this day!



SINGING ON THE TRAIN - SAM KEMP

In the mid-1990s I travelled from my home town in Norwich to Dartford in Kent with my best friend. I parked my car near my mum's house and then made it to Wembley arena with another mate in tow. The three of us travelled to see an Erasure concert. I am a massive fan! I've met them so many times and have been to all their concerts. On the way home the carriages were pretty busy with fans but also everyday passengers. I was still so buzzing about the concert and so started singing STOP at the top of my voice. All the passengers joined in with me - fans and other travellers. It was an amazing time and journey. I'll never forget that memory.



FROM TAIPEI TO SHEFFIELD - SYLVIA CHEN

In 2007 I travelled alone from Taipei to Sheffield, moving to a city I couldn't locate on a map and I had only seen in the Full Monty! But thought it would suit me because this country invented trains!

I often travelled around the country with my train-aficionado children. I breastfed on trains, parked my pram in the un-occupied disabled area or cycle storage, walked the length of the whole train, waved and chatted to the drivers and conductors and spent a small fortune on steam locomotive and miniature railway rides. Everytime I ask my children what their highlight of the family holiday was they would always say it was the train journey.

In March 2020, at the beginning of a global pandemic, I was armed with surgical masks, silicon gloves, disinfectant spray, and lab-grade alcoholic wipes, only to find that I had the entire carriage of a commuter train to myself.



TRAVELLING THE WORLD - NINA HARDING

When my husband and I got married, we took the opportunity to leave our jobs, rent out our house and travel the world for seven months. An overnight train from Hue to Hanoi in Vietnam is a train journey I will never forget. Vietnam was such an unexpected joy, full of beautiful landscapes and, even though the people had been through difficult times, they were incredibly welcoming to tourists. We didn't have a lot of money and we travelled the length of the country by bus and train so the opportunity of an overnight sleeper train meant that we would save a night's accommodation costs - bargain! Being in a basic shared cabin we had no idea who would join us. Although we were unable to communicate we had a great experience and shared snacks and slept well before arriving into the multi-cultural bustle of Hanoi.



A HIGHLAND FLING - CAROL SCRACE

Our group of 6, all in our 50's and 60's decided to book a New Year hotel break, which included a grand New Year's Eve Ceilidh dinner and dance. The plan was to meet up at London Euston, travel by train to Glasgow for an overnight stop, then up to Oban. We were all anxious about the dancing part of the celebrations, as many of us had only experienced Country Dancing during our schooldays, so we used the time on the train to pool our scant knowledge and plan our dances. It quickly became clear as we chatted and reminisced, that our catalogue of potential "moves" was woefully thin..... It amounted basically to The Gay Gordons and the St Bernard's Waltz. So we decided that quality surpassed quantity every time, and used that long journey to hone our footwork skills. Such as they were. We plotted the steps on paper as we sat at our tables, and even managed to practice a few steps along the gangway in between, and in the end vestibules outside the toilets. So classy! But it was hilarious and for us, never had a train journey passed so productively and with so many laughs. I'll never forget it. All that hard work on the train ultimately paid off. I secretly entered our two best performers in to the Strictly Come Scottish Dancing competition at the hotel and they actually won a prize - with an exemplary St Bernard's Waltz display.

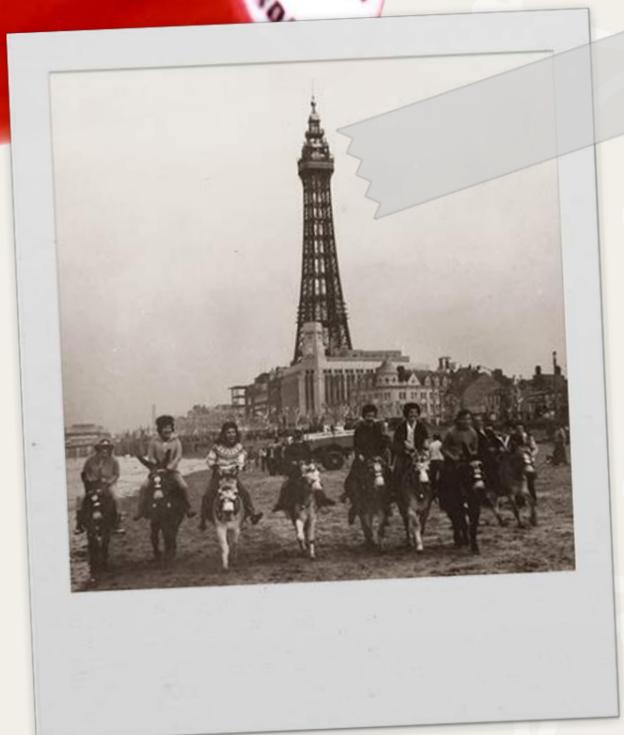


SEPARATION - RACHEL OLIVER

1960. A group of us on the station platform returning to boarding school. A feeling of pending separation from family. The train whistled in the distance then the clanging, screeching, hissing of the steam train arriving. Steam fills the station. Our packed school trunks into the goods van. All aboard in our compartment, the sliding door closed off from the passage. The familiar smell of cigarette smoke ingrained in the upholstered seats. Waving to our families until they are dots in the distance. I wonder now how they felt as we vanished to our alternative world.



BLACKPOOL



BLACKPOOL HOLIDAYS - JANE LITTLEWOOD

Trains are the only form of transport I've ever enjoyed using. Where I've not felt so bilious that I just wanted to stop and get off! Each train journey is remembered as a happy punctuation in a childhood peppered with vomit inducing car, bus and coach travel. The holidays to Blackpool were the best! Much better journeys for me than the ones by road! Coming into the railway station, the last few of the young lads with their home-made carts, ready to take your luggage to your digs. Once a profitable job for a teenager, eventually to die out altogether. Suitcases weren't on wheels in those days - the best you could get was a flimsy trolley with tiny wheels and a bungee cord to half-heartedly strap it in place. Ladened up like we were leaving home, we'd arrive in the resort. Suitcases, bags, dog and all. That train journey spelled the beginning of a world of wonder to me. I'd have exploded with excitement if the 7-year-old me had known that one day I'd live here. Right across the road from the sea. But every time I travel along the Fylde Coast, I still get that same fizz of excitement that I had back then!

A FOUNTAIN OF COCA COLA - JO FLETCHER

Dashing through Euston railway station to catch the Preston/Blackpool train, my mum and brother managed to get on the train with just one minute to spare. Relieved but panting my mum lugged their suitcase and her bag along the narrow walkway finally finding two seats opposite each other. My brother sat down and my exhausted mum flopped into her seat putting her bag on the table in front of her. My thirsty brother lifted a can of Coca Cola out of her bag, placed it on the table and as the ring pulled the cold, sticky, sweet, black coca cola spurted out like a fountain hitting my mum directly in the face. It landed like glitter in her hair but ran down her face dripping off the end of her nose and chin. The hustle, bustle and chatter around them silenced instantly, everyone's eyes were on my mum and my brother was holding his breath waiting to see my mum's reaction. After what seemed like an eternity my mum burst out laughing. Across the aisle the table of children burst into a frantic blurr of fingers signing their hilarity while laughing open mouthed in silence.



KNIT NATTER, CHIT CHATTER - SARAH WELLS

Before we pulled away from the railway station a crochet triangle was nearly complete. Maybe between us we could create bunting as long as two train carriages, about fifty five feet! The West Yorkshire ladies were on a roll. The South Yorkshire ladies yet to embark. Knit natter, chit chatter. Tray bake and chocolate cake, the more the merrier what a lark! A festival of threads part of Woven on the Penistone Line. Tommy's mum brought him along, he enjoyed the ride and a singsong. Knitted platforms were not a regular sight, created by communities by those wishing to brighten the day as you pass by on the train and go on your way. We didn't get off at the Sheffield end and headed back to our textile town with a flurry of excitement to get the job done with more refreshments served and another bun. We completed our challenge, I'm happy to say, and the teamwork and laughter made it a fantastic day!



TO BUCKINGHAM PALACE - JUNE KELLY MBE

On October 6th, 2013 myself, my mum and my dog Precious took the train from Manchester Piccadilly to London Euston. We were so excited as I was going to London to meet Prince William at Buckingham Palace as part of a 3-day event after being named The FA Pride of Britain Champion. The journey was smooth, and we travelled in 1st class. Our dog Precious got fussed over by the train staff. A great memory.



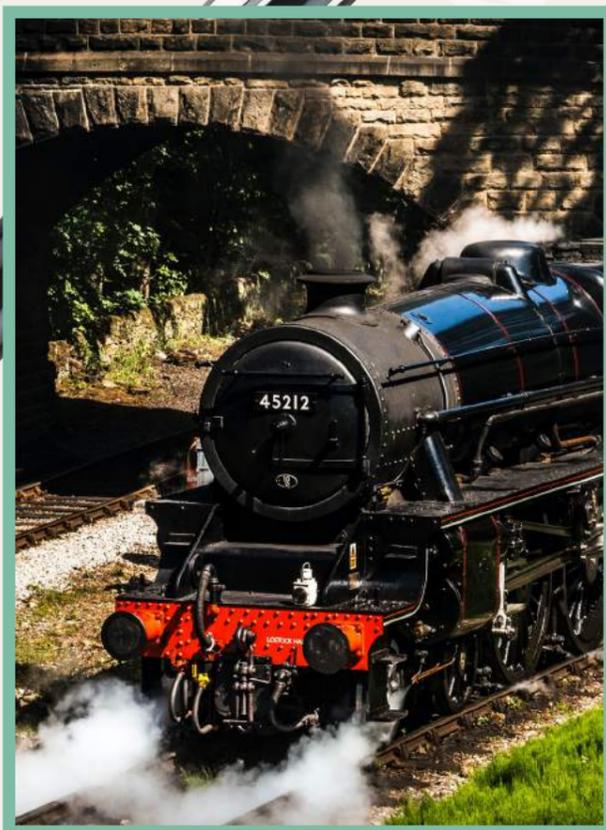
NEW THINGS - SALMA

My first train journey was when I was 10 Years old. The first step was getting the tickets. My mum needed help buying the tickets as she didn't speak much English at the time and I was too young to know how to get them, so our neighbours helped her. The excitement of packing was the next step and going onto the train was the next. I remember being nervous as we needed to make sure we got onto the right train. When I was on the train the scenery was so beautiful and the journey so peaceful and the other people were so nice. My mum bought me a colouring book and felt tips. I took my homework and some music. When the journey was over my uncle came to collect us and took us on the underground: that was another mission well accomplished!



TRAIN TRICKERY - EMMA

Omgsh! I can tell you about when I tricked Clare! The summer after our mum died, I bought tickets to go on the Fellsman because Clare is a massive train fan, especially steam trains. As we got to the station, she had a massive grin on her face because we saw the steam train pull into Clitheroe station. She took some pictures and I said, 'let's have a look inside', she refused at first because she thought we weren't allowed but I said we would only be a minute. I sat down, and she was trying to get me to stand. The train started moving and I showed her the tickets. She was so happy. It was worth all the trickery! The journey itself to Settle or Carlisle was not exactly straight forward as we broke down and ended up with only an hour to look around instead of half a day which sucked but Clare didn't care as she had been on a steam train.



(TRIGGER WARNING: THE FOLLOWING STORIES CONTAIN THEMES THAT SOME READERS MAY FIND DISTRESSING).

EDINBURGH AND BACK IN A DAY - JACKIE BRINDLE

Edinburgh and back in a day. November 16th 2018 and we're on the early train from Lancaster to Edinburgh for a friend's birthday treat. It's been a tough week and it's good to get away for a night. Woohoo! We manage to find a spare table seat and lay out our carefully packed continental breakfast and Prosecco. Beautiful scenery flies by. We laugh and chat, and ask a stranger travelling alone at the next table if she would like to share our food. Our eldest daughter, Anna, rings. She talks about Christmas plans, the car she's going to buy in the New Year, her little dog Tilly waiting to go for a walk. She rings off "See you next week - love you Mum".

3pm and we're back on the train. The staff at Edinburgh station have changed our tickets and put us in an empty first-class carriage. I check the time again on my watch and notice I have a resting heartbeat of 130. I wonder vaguely if I might drop dead before we reach Lancaster, then hope that I do. My face is burning and I have a raging thirst. I want the journey over and I want it never to end. Maybe I could stay on the train to London then get on the Eurostar and keep on going. I watch a flock of birds fly across the setting sun. The train staff come by to check on us every 20 minutes offering

drinks, food, and onward transport from Lancaster station. I drink six bottles of water and stare at the food on the table. My throat has closed up. I need to ring everyone I care about and stab them in the heart. Anna is gone - found hanging at home just two hours after our phone call. "This train is now arriving at Lancaster."



THE DAY TIME STOOD STILL - KAYE ROBINSON

It was a normal day, Friday, 7:06 and the train heads to the bustling, bright lights of London. Busy and crowded carriages, but comfortable as I tap away at my laptop, watching the early morning sunrise across the endless fields. We stop and start, picking up morning commuters, holidays goes and tourists along the way.

9:11 we stop abruptly, a glance from the 3 women sat with me as I clench the table from the force of the brake. My face told a story and within minutes, a dispirited voice tells us our worst fears we'd hit a person. Calm and quiet fills the carriage, sadness fills the air. As time passes voices are heard cancelling plans, flights are missed, court cases are postponed and time stops, time stops for 5 hours but for one-person time had stopped forever. We all hugged our loved ones tighter than ever that night.

"It's alright to ask for help"

SAMARITANS

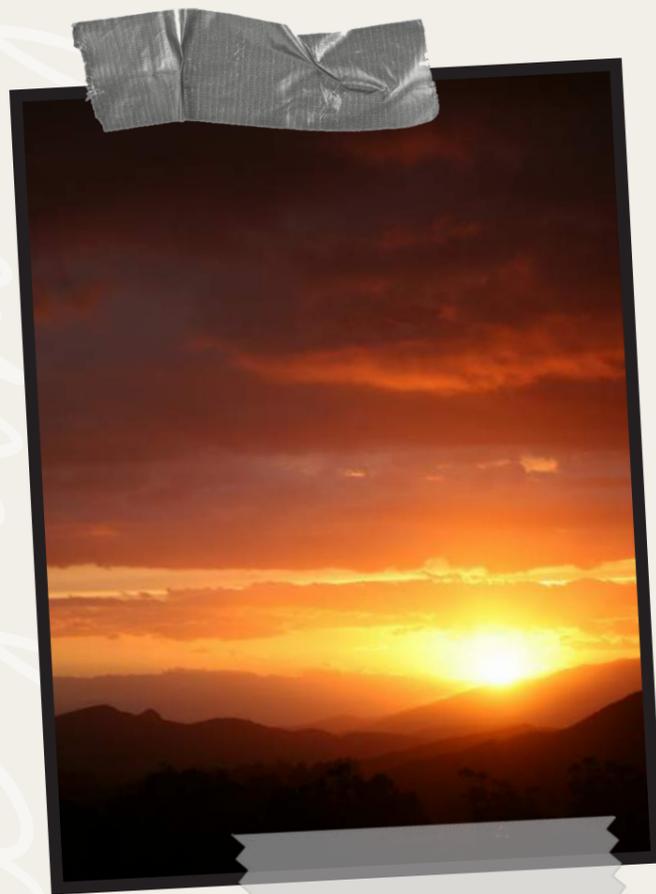
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2 DAYS BECAME 4 - MARGIE SWANEPOEL

I was going on holiday from Johannesburg to Knysna to visit my parents. I was nursing, and had a second class train ticket which meant it was a six sleeper compartment. I was booked in with another woman and a mother with a toddler and a baby!

The journey took two nights and a day and passes through the barren, dry Karoo. But this year they had floods. The train was stopped in a little town next to a river in flood. We watched trees, cars and sadly animals being washed away.

Local women offered to take anyone with young children to their homes for a bath and the chance to wash nappies. After a long delay the train was rerouted and once more was stopped by a river in flood. Eventually after four days I arrived in Knysna and was very happy to get off, and hoped the return journey would be less exciting!



MANCHESTER - LONDON - JOANNE GARDNER

I love train journeys. I love the excitement, the scenery and the wobble of the buffet car. How to choose my favourite is so difficult. But I have to go back to the journeys I took with my younger sister Sue when we were teenagers. Our elder sister had moved to London to teach and we regularly went down to stay with her and her new husband. Our parents saw us off at Manchester Piccadilly and it was so exciting. The thrill of the journey, we felt so grown up and free, and the thrill of arriving at the busy Euston station was so memorable, it totally roused the senses. That's what memories are about!



WE WILL REMEMBER THEM - SALLY BUTTIFANT MBE

We started to gather on the platform. Would there be room for us on the train? Would we get to Manchester Piccadilly on time? Would everything go smoothly? The chatter grew louder, skirts swirled, jaunty hats worn, the young paper boys being teased by the soldiers and told off by the nurses. Time to get on. A pacer train they call it, bus seats and wide windows perfect for chatting and singing. I spoke to the bemused conductor, not sure he had ever had a theatre company on his train before! An accordion started and we sang songs popular during WWI. 90 minutes soon passed. An unforgettable journey for us and the passengers getting on and off, surprised to see soldiers, nurses from 1914.

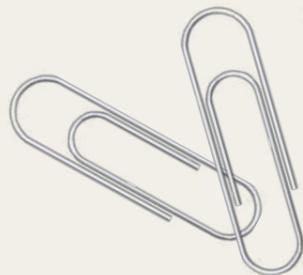
We performed Over By Christmas, by Helen Newall & Matt Baker. A WWI commemoration reminding us that it wasn't over by Christmas and a reminder of the important role the railway played then and now. We will remember them.



A MYSTERY PERSON - CAROL NETTLETON

Paul and I had booked a steam special from Carnforth to Barrow. It was a nice day so we were looking forward to the scenery and watching white clouds of steam floating past the carriage window. On the way back to Carnforth a chap came round asking whether we'd enjoyed the journey. "Yes". He then asked would we do another – thinking quickly I said I would, but it would have to be on the footplate of the loco.

The mysterious character said "give me your money, and I'll organise it for you". Paul and I wondered whether we'd be conned but true to his word he explained that he'd organised with the crew that I was to be on the loco to Ulverston, where the train stopped, and then it was to be Paul's turn. The day was truly memorable. And who was the mystery person? Well, let's just say he was the owner of the engine.



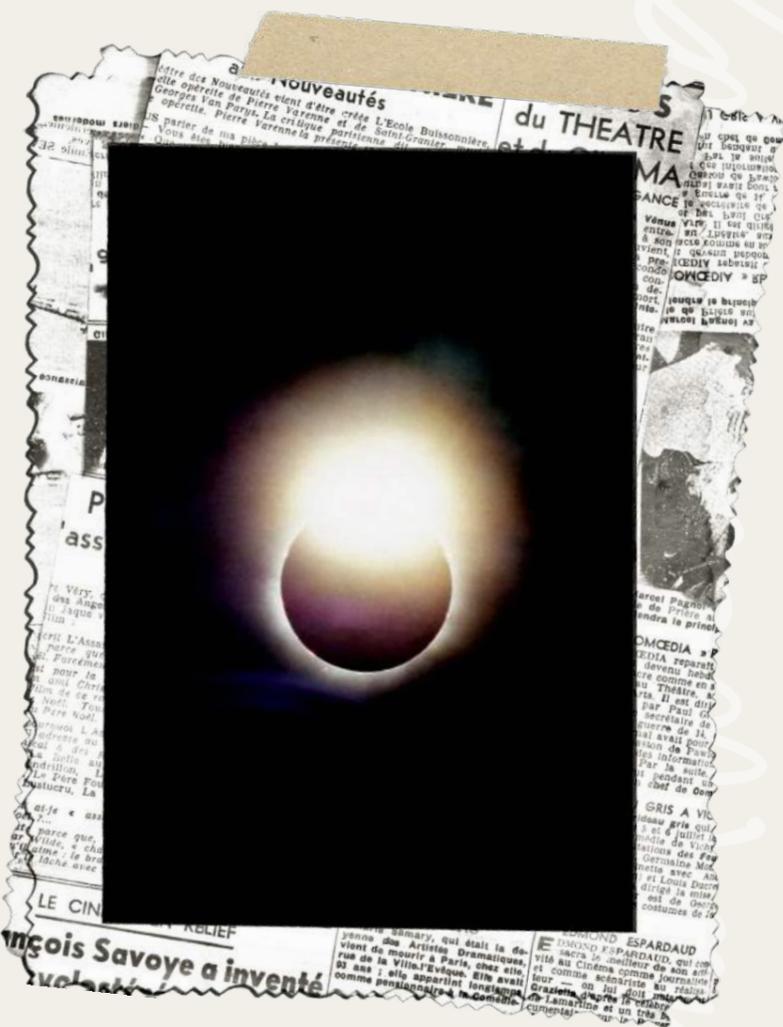
THE ECLIPSE - MICKEY WATERS

In August 1999 I took my two young children all the way from Herfordshire to Plymouth by train to see the Solar Eclipse. I stayed with my brother and his two young children. We travelled into Cornwall and to the coast. We all watched in amazement as the sky darkened, the birds quietened, and the sea looked like concrete. Then all too soon it started changing back again and the birds were singing loudly just like a dawn chorus. The following day we travelled back home again on the train. The whole carriage was full of people who had all shared this incredible experience.



TO RUSSIA WITH LOVE - JEN DAWSON

It seems like we have so much choice here in Russia. From penny rides around the suburbs to hundreds of pounds to travel across Siberia. I was fortunate, my first ever ride was from St Petersburg to Moscow on the Red Arrow! It was a wow journey - first class for my first overnighter. It was a luxurious carriage and service but the bumping and clattering in the night meant I would have had the same night's sleep anywhere else in the train - luxury isn't everything! The next time I went to Moscow was on the super speedy '4 hour' Sapsan Express. (I like speed so I am waiting for the next improvement) If you like trains, Russia is a great place to visit for a range of classes and carriages at great value. There is even service with a smile!



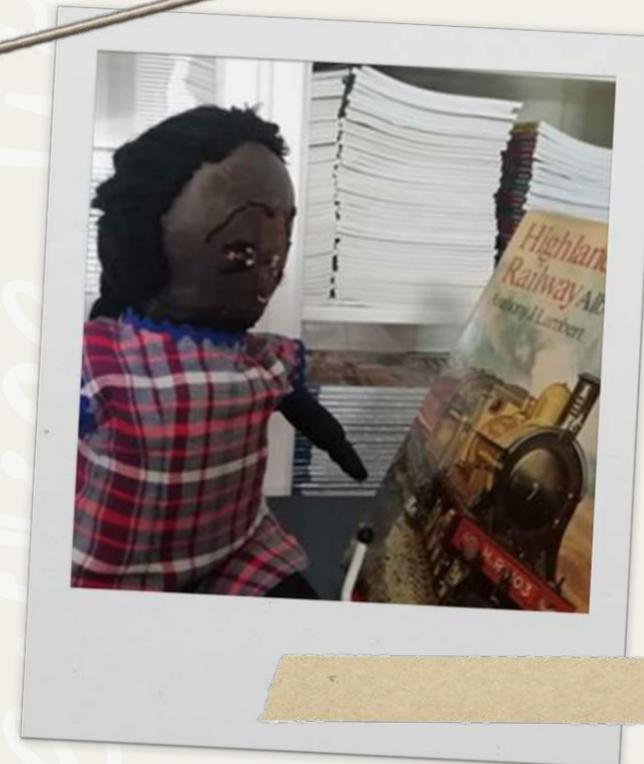
FARO - PORTUGAL IN OCTOBER - SUE MITCHELL

We arrived in Faro expecting a cool autumnal day, but - hit by a wall of heat heralding the start of an adventuresome fortnight. Small apartment set in the countryside away from the coast. Lovely, I thought! Not so, my beloved. Struggling up an overgrown path he stopped No buses, no TRAINS! What are we going to do? High, above the treeline, spotted a vapour trail, and sounds of a TRAIN. Invigorated, rushed up the path - there it was. An active railway station! Poco Barretto. Like no other we'd seen. But terrific - comfort levels low (see pic) - make your own seating from bits of the platform! But an amazing holiday ensued - the station building a modestly priced fabulous bistro that morphed into a nightclub, live music. All Portuguese customers, warm and welcoming to us. Fabulous holiday.



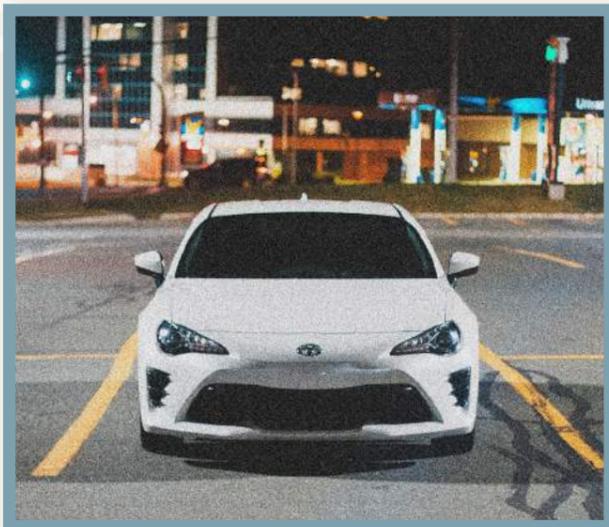
TOPSY'S ADVENTURES - FIONA FORSYTHE

Topsy and I always travelled by train. Grandma made her, sewing her love into Topsy's eyes, her giggly laugh into her smile and sewing an old BR duster into a dress. Perhaps, whilst she sewed, Grandma talked about starting her married life as the Signaller's wife, explaining how she found her husband dead in bed beside her in a railway flat in Glasgow, exhausted by long shifts. One day on our local blue train, a drunk man snatched Topsy from my arms and shouted at us. She smiled back and he dropped her gently into my arms. Journeys to Grandma in Perth were more luxurious and there were longer journeys to see family in Gosport. Earlier this year, we asked Topsy if she fancied a holiday, 'by train?' she asked. No, Topsy, this one has to be by car. Topsy never moans, except when she travels by car 'I don't like this seat belt, I can't see and I'm under lots of stuff. We never needed all this when we travelled by train and I always had a view' Aye Topsy, you have a point!



SMALLTALK TO LIFELONG FRIENDS - ABY

Some of my fondest memories are from the daily travelling from Bolton to Salford Crescent to study at university. I didn't appreciate it at the time that the daily friendly faces I'd meet along the journey and all that small talk would turn into lifelong friends! I missed those carefree journeys so much when uni. life was over. I got a car soon after and haven't been on the train since. Writing this has kind of made me want to go on a train journey really badly.



WISH I COULD DO IT AGAIN! - LYNN

One year we went to Switzerland and went on a train journey that went through the mountains. When we weren't in the tunnel (going in and out of the mountain) the view with the snow on the tops was out of this world. The best train journey ever. The guards and staff on the train were all dressed in their traditional dress. Food was coming round all the time with a hot type of punch. It was just amazing. No words really to describe how wonderful it was. Wish I could do it again.



MAKING ART & LOVELY TRAIN JOURNEYS - NAZ

Having a mental health problem is quite draining. But the time I've been with Arts 2 Heal has changed my life, from making art to lovely train journeys. I thoroughly enjoyed our trip to Cambridgeshire, we made many stops, but the atmosphere was wonderful.

The views on the train were beautiful and having our group together on a train to see a lovely monument was amazing. It brightened my day and really cheered me up, I look forward to many more.



THE UNEXPECTED - FIONA HALLWORTH

A diet of "The Railway Children" and "Brief Encounter" hard-wires anticipation of the unexpected in a train journey:

Illiterate in Thai and trying to buy a ticket in Bangkok; playing scrabble with the King of Thailand's electrician; comic train BTM-PAD managers raising passenger spirits; observing uninhibited humanity at close quarters; spying on intriguing laptop work and reading materials; meeting strangers transpiring to be connections; sharing wine with celebrity Stevie from "Made in Chelsea"; making judgements on good and bad parenting; inventing backstories for nervous, ebullient interview candidates; sharing secrets with strangers.

Journeys over, stepping steeply down, swept into frantic footsteps.



SAVELOYS IN THE ROCKIES - MITCH MARSHALL

We were in Canada on a two-day train journey from Jasper in the Rockies to Prince Rupert on the west coast. The Engineer came through the train to say hello in full Casey Jones gear including spotted neckerchief. We stopped at a few stations as there were few settlements but at one of the stations, the train firstly left the platform then stopped suddenly and shunted back again. The engineer announced that the Second engineer, a woman had left her handbag in the restroom. Women drivers eh? Also, we had been advised to take our own food as train food was awful, we took some sandwiches etc but the family sitting opposite us munched their way through lots of large and horrible looking saveloys all through the journey. Not a pretty sight!!

WE GOT TALKING - AMINA

I used to travel to work from Blackburn to Manchester and I met this lad regularly on the train. It happened that he worked at the same place as I did and we got talking. He was a marketing director, smart fellow, good looking, worked on the floor above mine when I was an accountant. Often we would stand closely by doors, more closely than necessary even though the train wasn't that crowded, luckily usually there were no seats on the journey home. When we got off we always walked along making small talk.

This was our routine for months then one day he asked me out. I said sorry I don't do that (religious reasons). So the time after he asked if I would marry him. I never saw him after that on the train journeys and I didn't have the courage to find him at work.



TRAIN TO MY AUNT - TAMMY

When I was at my worst, mentally, I knew I had to pull myself out of it. All the mental health support is useless unless you make the effort yourself. I was agoraphobic and I hadn't left the house in about 3 years. I started with little things like going to the shop. The time I knew I was going to be OK was when I really wanted to see my aunt. I got on the train at Blackburn on my own and was terrified. Then I started to remember all other train journeys I'd been on. I recognised all the hills and buildings. By the time I got to Bamber Bridge I was so happy and excited. My aunt and cousin were there waiting for me. I hadn't seen her for about 10 years and I had the best time. I still have the train ticket.



COLOURFUL NATURE - DIANNA

One of my favourite train journey memories was on a sunny Sunday in autumn. I worked in Gibraltar and saw nothing but concrete and sand and I was craving a bit of colourful nature. We took a journey via rail through the mountains and up towards Ronda. I was like a child switching different sides of the train trying to see all the spectacular views of autumnal colours spread out over valleys.

Watching the rivers meandering on their way, turning into waterfalls cascading down sheer cliffs. I just wanted to stay up there forever.



BREAD! - CLARE

When my granddaughter was little, I took her with me to get some bread and as it was a nice day I thought I would take her on the train and get off at Pleasington where I would phone my hubby to pick us up. Well, the Preston train goes through Pleasington so that was fine. My granddaughter had never been on a train so it was a little treat for her until we got up to get off and the train whizzed through Pleasington so with one panicky granddaughter and some bread I had to wait until we reached Preston where we got off with tears rolling down the child's face as I phoned my hubby to pick us up. He couldn't believe we had caught the wrong train as all I went to the shops for was bread. At least now I know where to get on and off and where the train stops!!



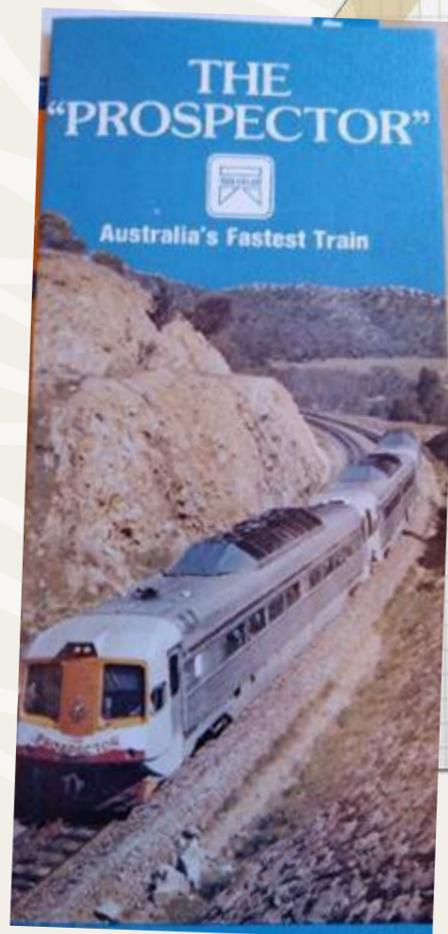
50 YEARS LATER - JAYNE EMERY FORD

I took my dad down to London for the first time in 50 years to visit where he grew up, reminiscing over how times have changed, he also showed me and my siblings the route he used to walk to school and the house he grew up in. He was so looked after in first class from a lovely breakfast to lovely sandwiches on the way home. He always talks about it and says nothing could top that experience he had with my brother, my sister and me.



AUSTRALIA'S FASTEST TRAIN - ALISON LEVI

Western Australia 1981. I travelled from Perth to the gold fields of Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie on Australia's Fastest Train the "Prospector". Stainless steel construction, fully air conditioned, air suspension ride, large comfy seats and stewardesses serving from a full buffet car on request at the touch of a button! Better service and overall comfort than airlines of the day and indeed now! The journey was 655 km and took just over seven hours. With views of the wider city of Perth leading into lush countryside along the Swan river and then the awesome bush wilderness. Visiting family in Australia on my own at the tender age of 21 was my first trip abroad. This was an exciting part of the whole experience. The train felt luxurious and the distance into the bush felt like I was so far away from regular civilisation. When we got off the train there was just a sign for the station, no platform or station building and a dirt track road. It was the only train journey for me where you had a brochure which included the route taken and the offer of souvenir purchases such as playing cards, teaspoons, keyrings etc all linked to "The Prospector".



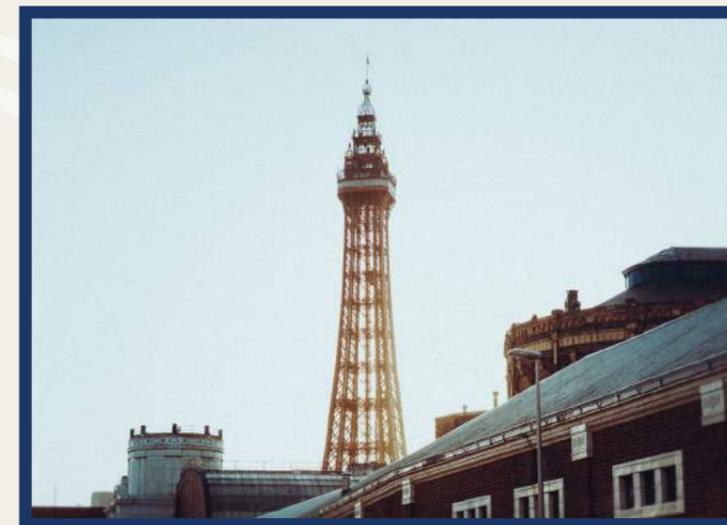
90TH BIRTHDAY - JANET ROSS-MILLS

Florence had worked in a mill in Walton-le-Dale with Annie's mother. They were gold thread embroiderers. Florence had no family so we took her on the Settle to Carlisle railway on a steam train for her 90th birthday treat. It was such a lovely day. The steam engine was like a living, breathing monster and at the end of the journey we were covered in soot!



BLACKPOOL - NAOMI

My parents didn't own a car when I was a child, so we often travelled on the train. I used to love it. My first memories of being on a train are of going to Blackpool in the summer holidays to see the sea and ride the roller coasters on the Pleasure Beach. Then at Christmas time with all the twinkling lights and excitement of shopping and hoping the things you had seen would make it under the Christmas tree, was so magical. I remember standing on the platform and being able to see my breath, it was so cold!



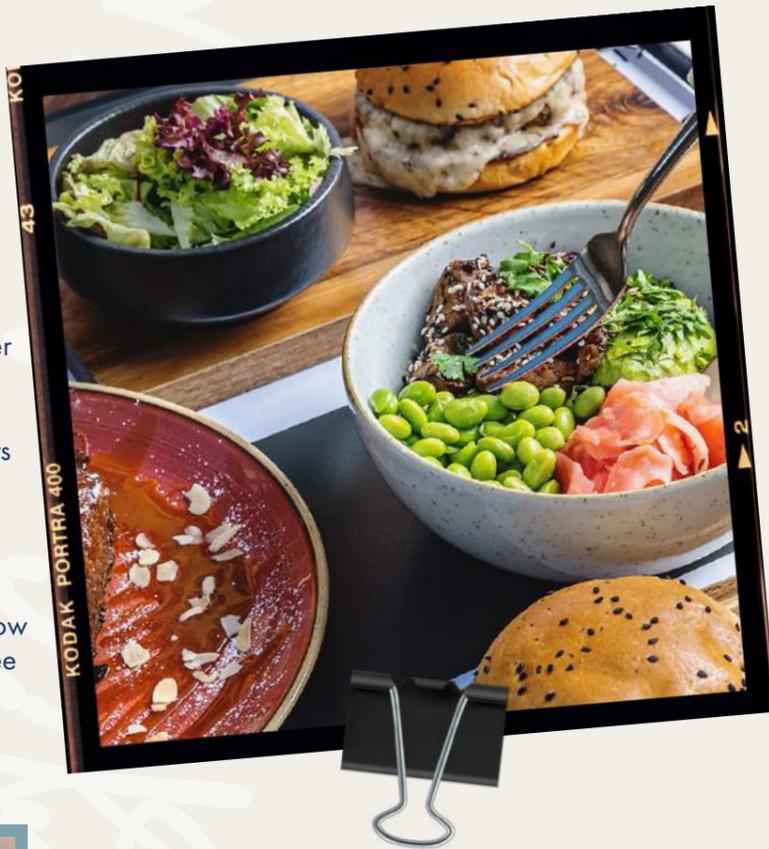
NOSTALGIA, REDISCOVERY AND OUR SHARED FUTURE - JOOLS TOWNSEND

Last year, I took my parents on a train trip, to a historic, pretty town, full of stories, nestled in the South Pennines. Our trip included a ride on a heritage steam railway along the valley. Boarding the train, squeezing into the booth, and smelling that old-train smell of wood and upholstery, my mum was struck by a wave of nostalgia. She told a story of when she was a child, in the early sixties, and her dad, bought their first family car. My mum didn't realise at first that this meant their family holidays to the seaside would change forever: no longer would they have the magic of the train ride to take them there. She was told they'd be going by car from now on, the 'modern way', my mum was devastated, but eventually got used to it. From that point to this, she barely used the trains. Something was lost, only to be rediscovered on a leisure trip on a heritage railway in Yorkshire, nearly six decades later. It made me think how we've lost a great deal, socially and culturally, in the mass take-up of the motor car: so many of us have lost touch with greener, freer, more sociable and adventurous ways to travel. And so much we have to gain, by rediscovering trains and buses, walking and cycling: shared and caring forms of mobility, travel and discovery, that can help to protect our shared future.



THE WRONG TRAIN! - LISA

I got on the wrong train from Preston to London once. I was traveling with my friend and she insisted it was the correct train as there were two heading to London on adjacent platforms. Ours was clearly the slow one. Once we got on the train we looked for our seats but there was another couple sitting there, we didn't mind standing for a while thinking they'll soon be off, when the conductor came along. We showed him our tickets and he said we were on the wrong train. At first I thought he was messing, then he said quite firmly that he could ask us to leave on the next platform. My friend almost cried but I have special flirting powers. The lovely man instead directed us to follow him and seated us in first class. We even had a free lunch!



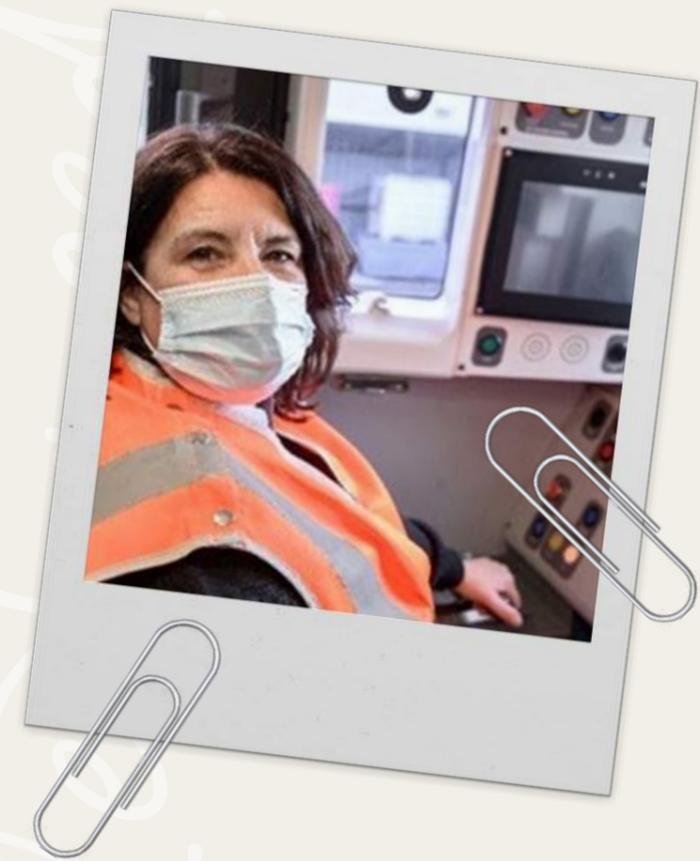
CHINESE BULLET TRAIN - DIANNE REEF

In 2017 I had the pleasurable experience of travelling on the Chinese bullet train from Beijing southwest to Xi'an. We bought tickets prior to arrival. My 17-year-old daughter and I were placed in a female only carriage with my husband, two sons and a friend separately in the male carriage. This was strange for a moment but then we felt very safe, comfortable and quiet. The train left (and arrived) on time and was extremely smooth. We were able to wash properly, privately had a snack (the boys being boys with their DIY extra-long drinking straws!) and slept like a log. We left in darkness and had a fantastic view and the Beijing lights at daybreak. We were able to observe the outskirts and then the city of Xi'an. The return trip was also on time equally smooth and again still dark as we raced through the Chinese countryside arriving back in Beijing at daybreak to observe hundreds of carriages holding what appeared to be an army of military vehicles. To our room for a refreshing shower!



CAREER ALL CHANGE - LISA GIBBS

I first applied to be a train driver when I was just 21, but back then it was all paper-based and quite technical, so I completely doubted my ability and walked straight back out of the assessment centre. Several years ago, I was working at a bank and was chatting with one of my customers who worked on the railway and said I should apply. I was 49 when I changed careers. After working on the platform for six months, I was keen for the next step and moved up the ranks to becoming a train conductor. It wasn't long before I then went through driving training. I've been qualified and driving on my own now for about a year and I absolutely love it. I cover London Victoria to Selhurst and I still have about five routes to learn. One thing I'd definitely love to do is drive one of the Thameslink Class 700 trains one day! I'm glad things didn't work out when I was 21 as I feel a lot more prepared to be now. I joined the railway before turning 50 so I'd encourage others not to be bound by age. The railway is open to everyone young or old!



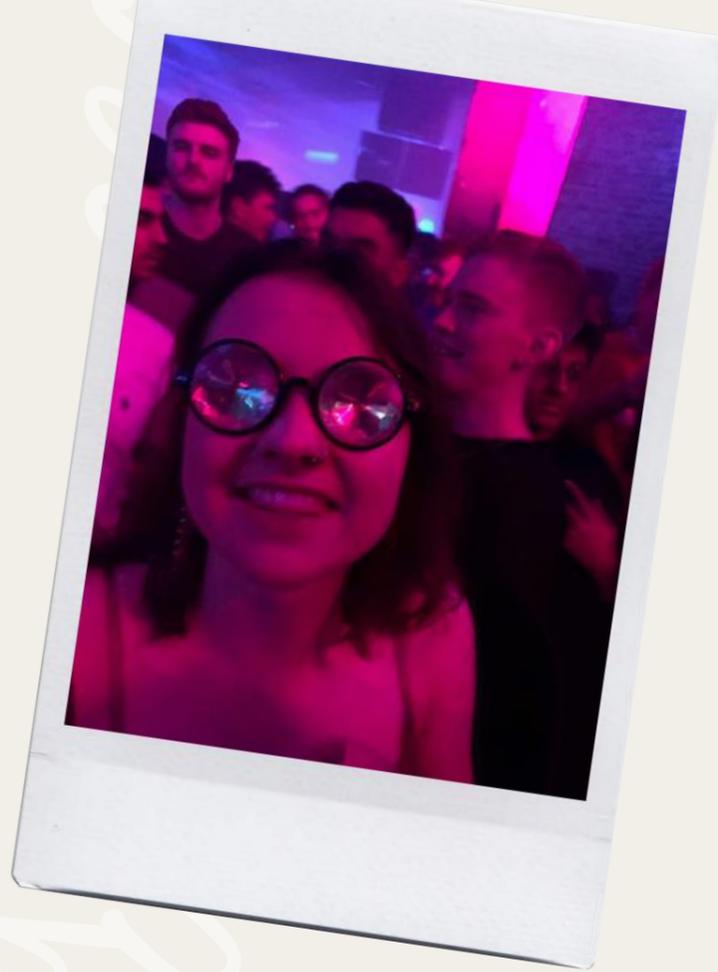
NORTH YORKSHIRE MOORS RAILWAY - DECEMBER 2018 - KATHY GRIBBIN

It was nearly December and once again I was faced with the question that strikes fear in every parent's heart... 'where are we seeing Santa this year Mummy?' My friend asked if we'd like to join them on the Santa express going from Pickering. A resounding 'absolutely yes!!' We decided to surprise the children (mine Charlotte aged 6 and hers Nathaniel also aged 6). Pickering Station was so magical with all the Christmas decorations and twinkling lights. We got our mince pie and hot chocolate (with a cheeky Baileys for the adults) and when the steam train pulled into the station with a lot of steam snorting we were all entranced. Once boarded we experienced that excitement when the train judders and starts to move. The children had never been on a train before let alone a steam train and they were so excited to be traveling the same way that Harry Potter did to get to Hogwarts. Then Santa arrived with perfect presents for the children and good wishes for us all. A few rousing songs led by the elves later and we were back at the Station. We still haven't managed to top that experience...



LONDON TO LEEDS 20/20 - SASSY HOLMES

Before 2020 went into lockdown, and prior to worldwide imminent doom on the horizon, I had one of the best weekends of my life. I had just been to stay in London with some of my best friends, and we saw one of our favourite DJs play. The next day I woke up, after such a wonderful evening, and spontaneously decided to get on a train and go surprise one of my other best friends in Leeds for her birthday. Exhausted, but running on adrenaline and excitement, that train journey from Kings Cross to Leeds was the most content experience of my life; kit kat and cup of tea in hand, pouring rain on the train windows, leaving behind one brilliant night and going towards another. Hindsight is 20/20 (pun intended) but looking back on that weekend really cements for me how extensive and impressive it is that we are all connected, how much I value my friends and the time I spend with them, and how excited I am to be able to do this again soon.



THAILAND - ANTHEA HANSON

Four months into our intrepid trip around the world, my family including my young sons arrived in Bangkok and found out my mother-in-law had fallen ill back home. My husband had to return to her but urged us to carry on with our adventures. A day later I found myself sitting on the floor of the vast expanse of Hua Lamphong station at midnight along with hundreds of other almost entirely Thai people, trying to stay awake. My mind was full of questions. Is that crowd of youth looking at me friend or foe? It didn't help that when I bought the tickets the man said, "hold on to your son as people will try to pinch him." I held on to him for dear life. Eventually it was time to board. The children were excited about the bunk beds and travelling overnight but exhausted from the trauma of the previous day and the late hour. I was determined that they shouldn't see any cracks in my armour, but I didn't sleep a wink. The carriage was lined by bunks, there is some privacy afforded by a curtain but little security. With the ticket man's words still ringing in my ears I kept an eye on the boys all night long.



GET INTO RAILWAYS - NAJLA ALMUTAIRI

I am a Station Assistant based at London Victoria. I arrived in the UK from Saudi Arabia aged 16 with my mum, who had been offered a scholarship to study for a PhD. During my studies, my mother fell seriously ill. After graduating, I spent a year and a half doing all sorts of part-time jobs while caring for my mum and family. However, I began to seek a career to be in a better position to support my family. It was a daunting time as I didn't know where to start and didn't have a CV. Eventually, I found the Prince's Trust, who gave careers guidance and put me on the 'Get into Railways' programme in partnership with Govia Thameslink Railway. Following a work placement, I landed a job as a Station Assistant and was given a supportive mentor. I am now giving back by acting as a Young Ambassador for the Prince's Trust. I enjoy every day working on the railway. I love being part of our team and assisting passengers. My ambition is to progress into a management role and to develop leadership qualities to enable me to inspire and support more young people.



A RIDE UP FRONT - ANNETTE FORD

Having booked a train in Auckland NZ bound for Wellington, an all-day journey, my husband 'just popped off' to see if the train driver would let him have a ride up front. Several hours later the train manager came to deliver our hot lunch. Noticing Tony was missing, he asked if he was the person with the driver. I said "Yes." He said, "I'll take his meal back until we get to a stop as there is no connecting door between the locomotive and the coaches." About an hour later we made the one stop and Tony arrived back - much to the relief of the woman sitting across the aisle who thought we'd left Auckland without him!



OHIYA - CATHERINE PENNY

When the Station Master shouted, "Ohiya!". I could have dreamt I was in Lancashire but no it was the Highlands of Sri Lanka. I was about to board a train, which would take me through the countryside back to Nuwara Eliya. What a journey at altitude, over 6000 feet, with breathtaking jungle scenery, long views, tea plantations, quaint stations, immaculately dressed station master, sadly no top hats, and beautiful flowers and hanging baskets at all the stations. We shared a compartment with Russians, Japanese, Chinese, and Sri Lankas. The names of the stations are memorable Pattipola, Ambewela, Perakupura, and then Nanu Oya. After which, a quick drive back to Nuwara Eliya, perhaps it was all a dream as I passed a hotel called - The Blackpool.



MOTION PLEDGE - FELICITY MACHNICKI

As a parent a day out with children can sometimes feel like a challenge. The thought of taking two under threes on a train journey by myself to a town I was unfamiliar with was a little daunting. However, I had made a Local Motion pledge to travel by train once every month and this was going to be the month I started!

The buggy was fully loaded with sun cream, sunhats, a picnic blanket, water and umpteen toys - we were ready.

The children were so excited about going on a train, they watched the tracks with anticipation and as our train arrived. India let out a 'choo choo'. We boarded with ease and the carriage was spacious with a bench seat alongside the window so India had a perfect view of the scenery all the way. 27 minutes goes a lot quicker than you imagine when you're watching your children fascinated with the sheep, the beautiful sky, the historical buildings along the route and the other passengers getting on and off. When we arrived at Bishop Auckland with its newly painted mural the children were just starting to feel at home.



MY 1974 EURO RAIL ADVENTURE - HEATHER NOWELL

Caerphilly, Cardiff, London, a night crossing from Dover, then to Paris, Munich, Vienna, Milan, Venice, Rome, Sorrento, Rimini, Marotta, Basel, Calais and back home. I was 17 years old having just finished lower sixth form, travelling with a friend.

It was a 3-week adventure that was to include Patras via the Orient Express. Unfortunately, however, that element of our journey didn't happen due to tanks being on the streets of Athens at the time and it being inadvisable to travel to Greece! Carrying a rucksack weighing half my weight with billy cans clinking my every step, we slept in a tent or sometimes on trains to save money. We had told my parents we were youth hostelling, but what we really did was visit major European cities, mountain regions and coastal resorts (not that I'd recommend such deception to others). It was a fabulous travel experience in my teens, making priceless memories; all for the cost of a £25 Euro rail ticket!



STUCK IN THE SNOW - CAROL DEVENEY

My family worked on the railway when I was growing up so we took many journeys by train. My granny was a railway worker and went everywhere by rail and as she started to get older, I was often her travelling companion.

Once, we set off for London Euston on the Sleeper from Glasgow Central on a dark winter night with snow falling gently outside the window. When my excitement died down, I was rocked into a deep slumber by the motion of the train, only awakening as breakfast arrived at our cabin. Peeping out the window I informed Granny, much to her amusement, that London was nothing like I remembered and in fact looked just like Glasgow. She already knew that our train had got stuck in snow during the night and having to turn back we had arrived back in Glasgow in time for breakfast. Despite going nowhere, it was one of our favourite trips together and made it real that sometimes the journey is as important as the destination.



LUXURY BUSINESS TRAVEL IN 1960 - CYNTHIA WHITEHEAD

It was 1960. I was 23. Tomorrow was going to be a special day, because I had been recently promoted to the buyer of the Manchester Miss Department at the prestigious Kendal Milnes store and I was going to join three of my colleagues on a buying trip to London. We were going to be travelling on the new 'Blue Pullman' as it was known and considered to be the height of luxury travel. On the day, I was excited making my way across the station tripping along in my new Hardy Amies suite with pillbox hat and carrying my cream suitcase. No trolleys then, just a lovely smiling porter to take the luggage and show you to your compartment on the immaculate train. I joined my colleagues; one very senior lady, Miss Foulds, who once we were settled, and on our way, brought out a bottle of the fashionable (at the time) Mateus Rose and crystal glasses - cheers! A wonderful happy memory of 60 years ago.

SERENADING THE CONDUCTOR - HEATHER WAUGH

I am 43 years old. I have sung into a microphone only once in my entire life. It was on a train. A train I was driving. I had recently started seeing one of my colleagues, a ticket examiner. This was the first time that we'd been rostered onto the same train. There had been a bit of disruption which meant we had to do a 20-minute journey with no passengers. Just me driving. And her sitting in the last coach on the train. When I was brought to a stop at a signal, I picked up the PA and sang. I will forever claim that I serenaded her but, in truth, there is a reason that this moment is the one and only time I will ever sing into a microphone. And that is that I am a truly awful singer! It was just a couple of sentences because my signal changed. I know she had the biggest smile on her face. It will forever be a special moment to us both. Now, 5 years on and as we begin plans to be married, it remains a memory we will both cherish. Despite my woeful singing.

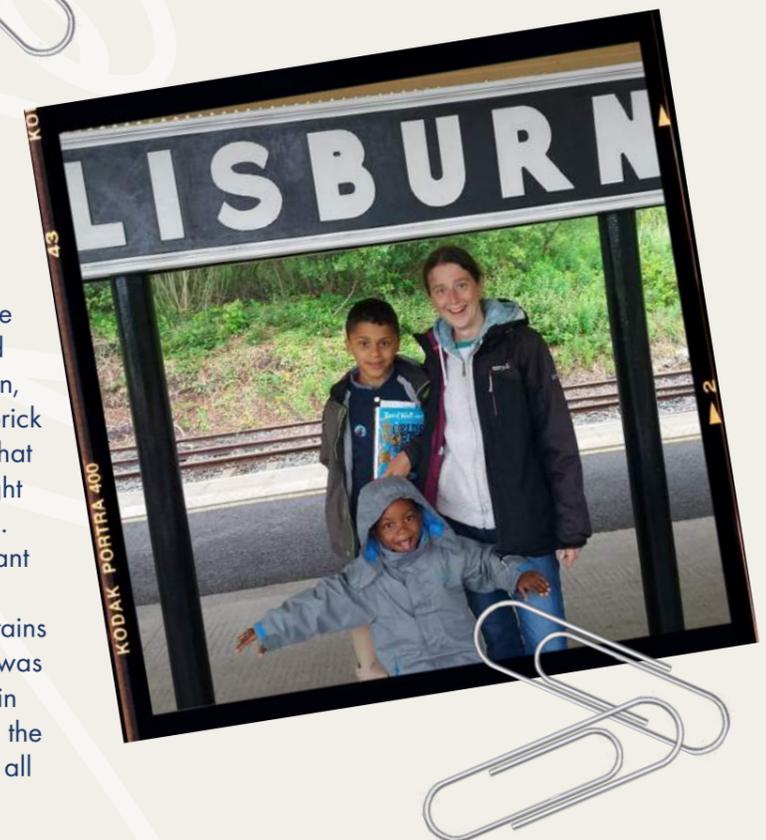


KINDNESS OF STRANGERS - FRANCES POXON

For my 35th birthday, my partner and I took a trip from Pisa to Florence by train and had a lovely day exploring the city in glorious sunshine, eating gelato and visiting the Uffizi art gallery. On the return journey, I noticed that my partner was looking increasingly tired and rubbing his face - a warning sign he might have an epileptic seizure. As we got up to disembark, he fell over the opposite seats and started having a seizure. I panicked as we needed to get off before it set off again. I was unsure how to raise the alarm. Other passengers came to my rescue. They ran in each direction to find the guard while others helped me roll my partner off the seats. The train stayed where it was, and an ambulance was called. A call was put over the tannoy to ask travellers to move to another train. No one complained but gave well wishes before disembarking. A British couple stayed to support me while the medical staff were looking after my partner, even though it was delaying them even further. I was really impressed by the kindness of others; people are so willing to help.

BOMB SCARES - LUCY JANE MARSHALL

I was a teenager when I travelled by train from Lisburn to Belfast. My journey travelled through Catholic and Protestant areas, as I looked out the window travelling through the areas there would either be British, red hand of Ulster flags or green, white and gold, Irish flags. Beautiful murals on brick Walls of troubles past and paramilitary groups that were in those areas. Catholic and Protestant might not have mixed, but we all got on the same train. Pupils from Catholic schools, pupils from protestant school got on the same train, got off at different stops. Bomb scares were a common thing with trains being delayed. It was normal to hear that there was either a bomb scare in Lisburn or a bomb scare in Belfast. Whatever the trouble we all travelled on the same train no matter our religion or believes we all had a destination we had to be at.



NORTH TO SOUTH - KAREN LIVESEY

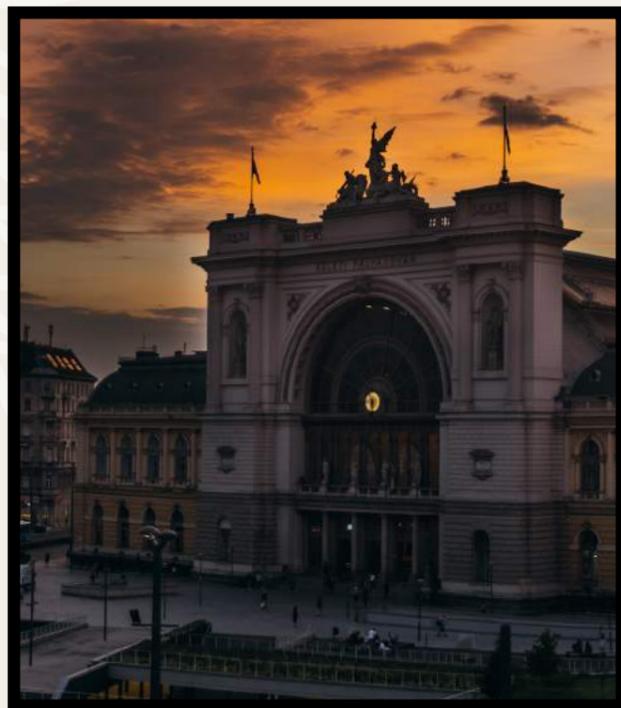
Preston to London Euston, a journey I have taken 100's of times, starting with my first professional job as a Primary school teacher. Homeward bound I mesmerized the landmarks along the South to North linier route and my heart always melted when the train lurched and slowed as it majestically crossed the bridge over Avenham Park. I used to slide the carriage door window down, extend my head out to feel the cool air and peer through the trees to catch a glimpse of the park. I remember my childhood summers and the excitement of sprinting around the circular path up to the sundial and breathing the wonderfully heady scent of wallflowers.

Forty years later I returned to London Euston to see the airport style refurbishment and this time to deliver child sexual exploitation awareness training for social workers in a London borough and staff from a children's home. My educational experiences have morphed me to become a passionate independent trainer for C.A.T.- child sexual exploitation awareness training and a heartfelt Training consultant for Barnardo's. The London route has been a blueprint in my life for years and I now embrace the difficulties and rewards to keep children safe.



HOMeward BOUND - RACHEL O'SULLIVAN

Early morning, Budapest, August 8th 1991. A summer of travel sandwiched between A-levels and university. The sights had been spectacular, the experiences were sure to remain with me but I had decided, it was time to go home. I bid my travel companions farewell and raced across the city to Keleti train station. With minutes to spare and only a 2-litre bottle of water to see me through the 18 hour journey, I leapt aboard a train bound for Paris Gare de l'Est. I was welcomed into a carriage for eight, occupied by three generations of a Romanian family. I spoke no more Romanian than they did English but we got by with limited French. They had prepared food for the journey and there was great hilarity that I'd set off with only a bottle of water. They shared their food and they kept me company; we laughed, chatted and snoozed as the miles slipped by. Unknown to me, my epic train journey home was critically important, my Dad was unwell and the next morning his heart failed; he died within 12 hours of my return. I made it, Dad waited for me, I had time to say both 'hello' and 'goodbye'.



GOING TO LOOK AFTER THOMAS - JANET OWENS

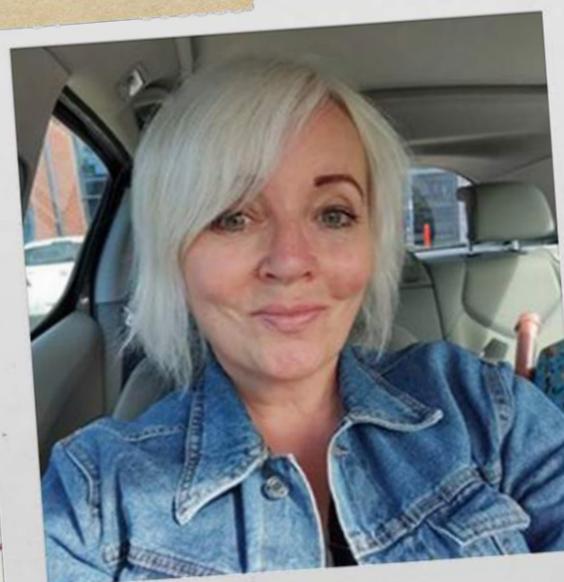
Every Thursday my husband, Bernard and I would take the train from Derby to Sutton Coalfield, changing at Birmingham New Street Station and stop overnight at our son's, Phillip and look after our Grandson Thomas on Fridays, travelling back home later that day. It was possible, from the platform we used at New Street, to take a train north or southwards. One time, when not paying enough attention, we found ourselves going in the wrong direction. It took us an hour before we could hop off the wrong train, return to New Street and then, start again... this time on the right train, going in the right direction!

Another time, again at New Street Station, we were dashing to catch the train onto Wylde Green. I raced ahead to save us some seats, but Bernard didn't quite run fast enough and as he got to the carriage, the door closed! I shouted to him through the glass "I'll wait for you in the station café" and sure enough, he followed me, on the later train. Though Bernard is no longer with us, I have these priceless treasured memories of our misadventures when going to look after Thomas; now 15!



21ST APRIL 2020 FRATTON STATION - REBECCA FRENCH

Only a short journey to Southampton on this lovely spring morning, but to me it was exhilarating, terrifying and exciting. Why? Because this was the day at the age of 51, I drove my first train on my own as a fully qualified Train Driver. For this mum of four, that journey represented months of hard training paying off, moments of self-doubt being overcome and a genuine sense of pride that I'd achieved it. I doubt I'll ever forget that journey.



JOURNEY TO FLORENCE - CHERYL SANDFORD

Visions of packed crowds waiting with excitement for a steam train to chug them away during Wakes Weeks has always ignited my enthusiasm for rail travel. I can barely remember the journeys as a child, but the adventure has remained with me. Last year I experienced a 2-hour rail journey into Florence. We had to change trains and the experience seemed chaotic. Scheduling was hit and miss and health and safety was absent! Whatever the time stated on the board, take no notice! I pointed to the information and the guard told me in his best English "No, no listen to me!" and directed us to a completely different platform that was displayed and was leaving in one minute. On the train we collapsed in our seats in relief. The trains were wonderful and comfortable. had a mezzanine level, few steps up a level, few steps down a level. In the UK, I'm used to standing behind the line so I won't fall off the platform but in Italy you can walk over the track which is level to the platform in order to cross to the other side.

I'm very happy to promote the railway in my job and have witnessed the pleasure this brings on our journeys together. Whatever the experience, the scenery is always amazing from a train!



TRAVEL THROUGH THAILAND - KARLI DRINKATER

Train travel through Thailand is a true adventure. I spent a lot of time hopping platforms with a backpack full of sarongs and a heart full of wonder in the land of smiles when I worked as a scuba diving instructor there for a few years. The train network is impressive and value for money. I'd highly recommend paying to upgrade to overnight cabins if you're travelling the full length of the country and if you're going by rail for over 12 hours.

A friend and I visited some northern towns for a few weeks after a short exploration in Bangkok. Those journeys were a treasure. The locals piled in on bench seats without dividing armrests, wedged in together, some with chickens in a wicker basket, presumably picked up from the market. Getting through the hubbub and to the right platform is an achievement enough. Once you've made it onto the train, you're buzzing with victory. Let the voyage commence.

Eventually, after the initial excitement and saying 'khob khun ka' – no thank you – to the lady who shuffles along the aisles with baskets of baked goods and beer, we drifted off. Lulled into a comfortable doze, the green mountains rolled by as we headed further into the wild, our Siam stories waiting to be lived.

FALLING IN LOVE WITH A TRAIN GEEK - ALISON WATTS

I fell in love with a train geek. Not the anorak-clad-spotter sort but the choosing-timetables-for-bedtime-reading type. I was courted on the top deck of a bus and entertained with observations on late-running trains from the university refectory with its panoramic view of bus and rail stations.

That's a long time ago, but it's no surprise that wandering by bus and rail has been a fundamental part of our lives ever since. We packed nappy bags, snacks and entertainments and took our young children by train to Kent and Sussex – so much easier than long car journeys with space to move around, a table, items of interest to spot ("see that Class 66 loco?" [dad] "see those swans on the river?" [mum]). We frequented our local lines to take the children out and about: country walks; visits to towns, villages.

Later, train geek and I dived under the Channel by EuroStar and explored main lines and remote branch lines throughout France: train geek's heaven. And for me, the joy of the train journey itself, observing changing landscapes and fellow passengers, with time to absorb and build enriching, precious memories. I wouldn't be without our train and bus adventures. Or train geek, come to that.



THE JOURNEY - DIANE RIMMER

We nearly missed the train. Coming from a long line of fuffers, everything has to be just perfect with the unintentional outcome of always being on the last minute. We got to the platform with just seconds to spare. "First class Mum!" I announced. We were travelling from Preston to Waverley Station in Edinburgh for a couple of nights at the Balmoral Hotel. As coffee was offered we were already behaving quite regal and giddy and Mum commented "a complimentary tot of whisky would have gone very nicely with that coffee". I produced a couple of dram glasses and small silver hip flask and poured as Mum let out a sigh of surprise and bliss. As we sat watching the ever-changing landscape, laughing, chatting and recalling shared stories I didn't realise how these cherished memories we were making would keep my Mum close to me in the years ahead as I now travel my journey without her.



ON MY OWN - MARIAM AHMED

I was 13 years old when I went to spend the summer holiday with my Nan in Birmingham. My mum couldn't go this time, but I really wanted to go so she sent me on the train from Preston...on my own! I had been on the train with my mum but never alone, so this was a new experience. Even though I had made this journey before, everything felt new this time. I was really nervous as I boarded the train but excited to be doing something so grown up! Questions raced through my mind as I scanned the seat numbers to find my seat. What if I missed my stop? What if I lost my purse? What if my Nan wasn't there waiting for me at the other end? At the time I didn't have a bankcard or a phone so these thoughts worried me. Once I was settled in my seat, I felt some sort of relief knowing that I would shortly be united with my Nan. The journey itself was pleasant and comfortable. I had a table seat to myself, so I spent most of my time reading and eating snacks! As I arrived at Birmingham station, I gathered my belongings and stood by the train door ready to get off. I remember filling up with excitement as I saw my Nan waiting for me on the platform. I eagerly waited for the doors to open as the train came to a stop. I got off the train, ran over to my Nan and hugged her like it was the first time ever! In that moment I felt proud of myself. I had travelled alone for the first time and I was ok. I could do this again. I'm 25 now and can't remember how many times I have made that journey and so many others by train. It gave me the confidence to travel independently and I'll always remember that.



FROM MOSCOW WITH LENINGRAD - PAT MCMELLON

Memories return of an overnight cross country rail journey from Moscow to Leningrad in January 1981. 40 years ago. A 12 hour journey. Steady progress between Russia's two historical cities passing carpets of sparkly crystallised glittery expanses of white gleaming snow with occasional skeletal silver birch trees for perspective. Cocooned within a carriage and sustained by hot black tea in decorated glasses and servings of pink ice cream. Reminiscent of "Dr Zhivago?" Magical...



A VICTORY AT WEMBLEY - KIM BENNETT

Following Charlton Athletic on their journey for promotion from League one to the Championship culminated in travelling to Wembley stadium. Getting on the train at Crayford Station with dozens of other fans singing the Charlton anthem and having the crafty can of lager. The atmosphere was electric. The magic increased when we reached London Bridge and transferred to the underground. We joined hundreds of fans on the tube train. The air was full of anticipation of the match to come. The sound of singing and chanting for our team there was no sign of trouble, everyone was looking forward to the match.

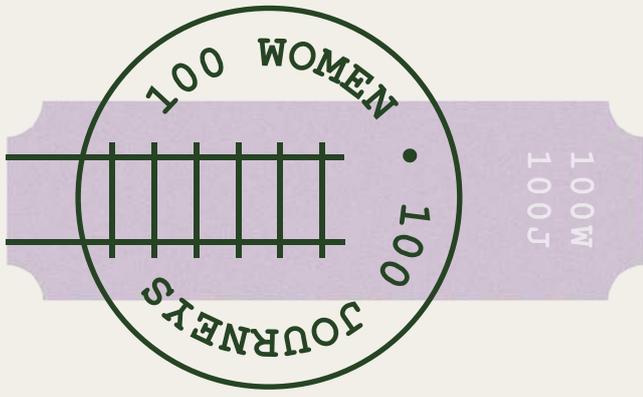
Charlton were the victors, the journey home started with the walk to the tube station with everyone singing. The train journey from London to our home station at Crayford on the local south east train was quieter but still magical as our team had won.



TRANS-EUROPE TRIP JULY 1963 - CONNIE FORSYTH

London - Paris and then a midnight taxi across cobbled roads to catch the Simplon Orient Express to Athens to visit family. Cramped carriages with cases down the middle to use as beds: a very uncomfortable night. Passing through Switzerland, Italy and onward to the then Yugoslavia where the train had to stop at every station with locals bringing on everything they could carry. Early on 26th July we came to a complete standstill in Belgrade for hours it seemed, not knowing why! Lots of whispers, shouting up and down the train suggesting everyone would have to get out of the train; we'd be travelling by coach; we couldn't go any further! After a while, and not being told there had been an earthquake which had flattened Skopje, the train started to edge slowly out of the station at snail's pace. We finally arrived at Skopje Station which was just rubble and the clock on the platform had stopped at just after 5 am. As the rails were cleared the train very slowly proceeded giving everyone a view of the devastation until we finally reached better tracks taking us through fields of sunflowers; along the banks of the River Vardar, reaching the Greek border over 24 hours late.

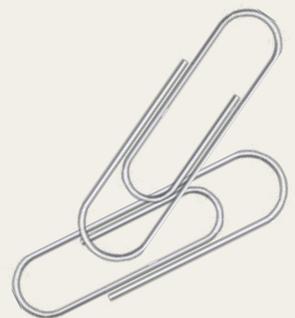




During 2020/21 lockdown Community Rail Lancashire gathered 100 stories from 100 women about their rail journeys, memories and experiences. The stories were published to celebrate International Women's Day. We hope that you are inspired to travel by train once again.

Special thanks must go to all the storytellers for sharing your funny, thought-provoking and, on occasion, sad memories of train travel.

Micky Waters, Jen Dawson, Louise Cheeseman, Haydn Pasi, Dorota Durazinska, Helen Bennett, Sarah G, Maddy Mills, Annie Musgrove, Stacey Allot, Marjorie Birch, Catherine Huddleston, Christine Holland, Charlotte Crowder, Mencap, Mahnoor Vaqar, June Kelly, Art2Heal - Aisha, Naomi, Julie, Sofia, Mumtaz, Liz, Lesley, Salma, Lisa, Angela, Clare, Farhana, Alison Watts, Emma, Aisha U, Zainab, Aby, Lynn, Julie B, Amina, Saba, Dianna, Tammy, Naz, Lisa, Janet Ross-Mills, Penny Greenwood, Jackie Brindle, Natasha Layton-Rees, Shaz Awan, Amy, Rebecca French, Jacky Mason, Sam Kemp, Syliva Chen, Nina Harding, Margie Swanepoel, Fiona Hallworth, Sally Buttifant, Joanne Gardner, Carol Nettleton, Rachel Oliver, Lucy Wright, Jane Littlewood, Fiona Forsythe, Noreen Khan, Sue Mitchell, Jo Fletcher, Mitch Marshall, Carol Scrace, Jayne Emery-Ford, Alison Levi, Dianne Reef, Anthea Hanson, Annette Ford, Najla Almutairi, Lisa Gibbs, Kathy Gribbin, Sassy Holmes, Connie Forsyth, Catherine Penny, Heather Nowell, Jools Townsend, Felicity Machnicki, Carol Deveney, Cynthia Whitehead, Daisy Chapman-Chamberlain, Lucy Jane Marshall, Heather Waugh, Frances Poxon, Kaye Robinson, Rachel O'sullivan, Karen Livesey, Veronica McDonnell, Mariam Ahmed, Janet Owens, Cheryl Sandford, Kim Bennett, Diane Rimmer, Karli Drinkwater, Pat McMellon, Sarah Wells and more!



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