

A Capitol Bash

A trip to the US planned at short notice after realising holidays were available either side of a long weekend in my roster. I'm going for a bash of commuter systems around Washington and New York, the first 5 days I will be doing Marc and VRE for their MP36s plus hopefully some P42s on Amtrak trains with VRE step up ticket[s]. I'm overdue a bash of Long Island RR this will be my main target in New York but I will also do some NJT as well.

Monday 28 April 2014

I'm flying British Airways as they were the only airline offering a mid afternoon departure to DC, I had finished nights that morning and couldn't make the mid day flights, service was as good, bad, or indifferent as most of their competitors. Landing was about 45 early due to tail winds, but we were then kept waiting about an hour for a gate, there were only 4 staff on at immigration so a slow passage. A bus into DC in heavy rain that would last on and off for the next 3 days. I turned my phone once on the bus to immediately be plagued by texts from BA asking how was the flight, based on the above I resisted replying WTF do you think !

On arrival in down town DC or more precisely Union Station I purchase a Washington to Baltimore weekly ticket for Marc but from Amtrak, I am unable to buy a VRE ticket as their card only machines don't like chip and pin cards and the alternate ticket outlet is closed, not that they tell you where it is, [more later]

I thought/hoped Marc would provide a winner to start the trip, Marc thought otherwise providing a dud HHP8.

G-VIIN Boeing 777 14.30 London Heathrow – Washington Dulles BA265
Washington Marc 4911 21.00 Washington – Baltimore 548
Baltimore P

On reaching Baltimore I take a taxi to the Mount Vernon Hotel where I have the next 5 nights. For those interested it was a reasonable priced city centre hotel about halfway between and 15 mins walk to Penn or Camden stations, see internet for more info.

Tuesday 29 April

I only require MP36s on Marc so my plan is go to Penn see what turns up then make it up as I go along when winners turn up.

Baltimore P Marc 27 + 17 05.40 Perryville – Washington 511
BWI Airport 25 06.15 Washington – Perryville 502
Baltimore P 26 + 20 06.30 Perryville – Washington 517
BWI Airport 21 + 19 07.40 Baltimore – Washington 419
Washington

Once back in Washington I go buy a VRE 5 day ticket to Alexandria [equal to a Marc weekly but there is no weekend service on VRE so it's called a 5 day] and some step up tickets to use on Amtrak trains. I note that the 5 day ticket is shown as valid through May 5, I take this to mean it is valid for 5 consecutive operating days and not the calendar week other systems use, which is what their user guide says.

I had intended to alternate between Amtrak and VRE but after a couple of trains Amtrak is either late or falling apart due to a power outage earlier in the day so I stick to VRE.

Washington Metro
Alexandria Am 72 07.38 Lynchburg – Boston 176
Washington VRE V63 12.55 Washington – Fredericksburg 301
Crystal City VRE V69 13.15 Washington – Manassas 325

Alexandria	Metro		
Washington	Am 135	06.10	Boston – Newport News 95
Alexandria	Metro		
Washington	VRE V53	16.10	Washington – Fredericksburg 305
Crystal City	VRE V54	16.40	Washington – Fredericksburg 307
Alexandria	Metro		
Washington	VRE V51	18.00	Washington – Fredericksburg 311
Crystal City	VRE V55	18.10	Washington – Manassas 335
Alexandria	Metro		
Washington	Marc 14	19.45	Washington – Baltimore C 856

A successful afternoon picking up 2 Amtrak and 6 VRE finishing with another winning MP36 on Marc to Baltimore Camden. At Camden I go to Dempsy's Bar and Grill which I later discover only let me as the rounders oops I mean baseball is rained off. Although it's a brew pub both beer and food were very average, they appear to make most of their money from baseball fans on game days as their beer garden overlooks the pitch, I will try elsewhere tomorrow.

Wednesday 30 April

Slow start as many engines are the same but on different trains, picked up 4 new later in the morning as I suspect loco's/trains off other lines were used on trips on the Penn line. Back in DC I have another bash on Amtrak and VRE.

Baltimore P	Marc 4915	06.13	Baltimore – Washington 409
BWI Airport	4902 + 4900	07.00	Baltimore – Washington 415
Odenton	21 + 19	06.30	Perryville – Washington 517
New Carrollton	17 + 27	07.50	Washington – Martin Airport 610
Baltimore P	15	09.25	Baltimore – Washington 425
Washington	70	10.30	Washington – Baltimore 416
Seabrook	28	10.25	Baltimore – Washington 427
New Carrollton	23 + 71	11.20	Washington – Baltimore 418
Odenton	34	11.35	Baltimore – Washington 429
Washington	Am 82	06.10	Boston – Newport News 95
Alexandria	Metro		
Washington	VRE V59	15.35	Washington – Fredericksburg 303
Crystal City	VRE V50	15.45	Washington – Manassas 327
Alexandria	Metro		
Washington	VRE V52	17.05	Washington – Manassas 331
Crystal City	VRE V62	17.15	Washington – Fredericksburg 309
Alexandria	VRE V50	17.10	Manassas – Washington 338
Washington	Marc 72	18.55	Washington – Baltimore 854

It was Marc's turn to fall apart following a loco failure so I bailed out to Camden again. On train 854 I got talking to Steve and Richard two fellow UK enthusiasts over for Simon Bennett's trip, we exchanged gen on both railways and pubs. Steve and Richard had also been to Dempsy's and were equally unimpressed with the place, I had intended to try the Pratt Street Alehouse, they had already tried it giving it an excellent review so we all retired there for a meal and beer. 2 or 3 of the 17 house beers weren't available but 4 were available on hand pump an excellent choice and the food was good too.

Thursday 1 May

I decided to try the Camden line today, this proved successful in that I picked up 2 winners but I ended up festering at Muirkirk as trains were delayed by flooding from all the rain of the past 3

days. I met Steve and Richard again who told me the Penn line was no better following another power failure and a tree down on the overheads. I went out to Alexandria to meet train 176 coming back from Lynchburg with a winner then went for a pint.

I went to the Chop House Brewery, I walked in to find Simon Bennett at the bar having his lunch after just arriving from the UK, while he was expecting to meet a load of UK enthusiasts there for his trip I was not one of them so having travelled about 3500 miles he met someone who lives less than 40 miles from him he was withered.

Baltimore C	Marc 13	06.30	Baltimore – Washington	847
Muirkirk	29	07.10	Baltimore – Washington	849
Washington	Metro			
Alexandria	Am 174	07.38	Lynchburg – Boston	176
Washington	Am 161	06.10	Boston – Newport News	95
Alexandria	Metro			
Washington	Am 144	08.15	Boston – Lynchburg	171
Alexandria	VRE V50	17.10	Manassas – Washington	338
Washington	Marc 72	18.55	Washington – Baltimore	854
Baltimore C				

VRE are having a meet the manager day in Washington Union station this gave the UK enthusiasts present chance to raise the issue of machines that don't take European credit cards and the lack of information on alternative ticket availability, to be fair they are very receptive to the complaints and doing something about them.

Once more back in Baltimore and the Pratt Street Alehouse there is a gathering of UK enthusiasts mostly there for Simon's trip.

Friday 2 May

The law of diminishing returns had applied as the week went on so today I figured I either get up at about 04.30 into DC to cover the Brunswick line or get up later have breakfast at the hotel and miss nothing. Smug mode set in when I blundered into a winner on the 09.25, after checking a few trains there didn't appear to be any winners about so I put my tourist head on and went to the cathedral. Upon returning to Union Station the Lynchburg gives me another P42 and I pick up the last VRE MP36 that I need of those out.

Baltimore P	Marc 4913	08.10	Perryville – Washington	523
BWI Airport	35	09.25	Baltimore – Washington	425
Washington	Am 16	08.15	Boston – Lynchburg	171
Alexandria	VRE V50	17.10	Manassas – Washington	338
Washington	VRE V60	18.40	Washington – Fredericksburg	313
Alexandria	Metro			
Washington	Marc 14	19.55	Washington – Baltimore	856
Baltimore C				

I do the Camden line back to Baltimore again and again stop at the Pratt Street Alehouse for a meal and a beer.

Saturday 3 May

Move too New York today, I couldn't find a Baltimore – New York fare under \$100 but Alexandria – New York was \$67 so I go south to go north.

Baltimore P	Marc 25	08.05	Martin Airport – Washington	677
Washington	Metro			

Alexandria	Am 135	08.15	Newport News – Boston	194
Washington	943	08.15	Newport News – Boston	194
New York P	LIRR EMU	17.45	New York – Long Branch	6860
Jamaica	LIRR EMU	17.45	Brooklyn – Hempstead	6760
Queens Village	LIRR EMU	19.11	Hempstead – Brooklyn	6765
Jamaica	LIRR EMU	19.45	Brooklyn – Hempstead	6764

Yet another farce on Amtrak when train 194 was 80 late, they did tell passengers it was late just didn't tell them why it was late. LIRR proved to be another system that doesn't like chip and pin cards when I go for a ticket, the woman staff selling me a ticket says they don't take European credit cards [more later]. I have booked a hotel at Queens Village as it was £100 less than those around Jamaica over the 5 nights, and it would cost nothing getting to and from it as I already have a LIRR ticket. Not a good choice Queens Village is not the greatest of areas and there are no places to eat nearby, the hotel is being refurbished and it needs it, it's basic at best, I don't intend to spend a lot of time in it so it will do. I return to Jamaica to get food, beer and LIRR timetables so I can plot moves.

LIRR notes

A few quick notes on LIRR for those unfamiliar with the system. The LIRR is a 3rd rail EMU heavy system but has 45 loco's to work the none electrified lines which are East Williston – Oyster Bay, Huntington – Port Jefferson, Babylon – Montauk and Ronkonkoma – Greenport of which the later has a very limited service. The 45 loco's are made up of 24 DE30ACs numbered 400 – 423 normal diesel electric locos and 21 DM30ACs numbered 500 – 522 dual mode or ED's in UK terms [503 was destroyed by fire and 507 had it's 3rd rail equipment removed after a fire so was reclassified and renumbered to DE30AC 423]. the none electrified branches are worked by shuttles, Oyster Bay trains run to/from Jamaica as do some trains on the Montauk line exceptions are detailed below.

There are 5 trains in the morning peak off the diesel lines into New York Penn and 4 return trains in the evening peak, if there is a 5th evening train I didn't see it and it is not obvious from the timetables. These trains are worked by top and tail or push pull DM's, it is not possible for a loco and coach set to do more than one train so 5 sets are required with 10 loco's. In addition to the t+ t sets there are 11 trains off the diesel lines to Hunterspoint Avenue and Long Island City these can be DE's or DM's I viewed a t+t set with DE's on one of these trains. Some of these trains go back out to work branches after the rush hours and return for the evening trains. I didn't see enough to establish patterns. Hunterspoint Avenue and Long Island City are close to Subway stations, Long Island City is effectively carriage sidings by mid afternoon there is a line up of trains there so it would be possible to view what's coming out although I don't know if you could determine on which trains.

I purchased a New York – Port Jefferson weekly ticket which covers zones 1 to 10. Weekly tickets run Saturday to Friday zones/fares are on the LIRR website. I was able to use my ticket on all lines within zones 1 – 10 not just the Port Jefferson line without being challenged.

Sunday 4 May

I start the Sunday covering some of the loco hauled trains on the Montauk line before heading into New York where I buy a New York to Newark weekly on NJT so I can do their trains when there's not much out on LIRR. I pick up a couple of winners on LIRR but have a bit of a scratch fest on NJT with 9 in the afternoon.

Queens Village	LIRR EMU	07.11	Hempstead – Brooklyn	6711
Jamaica	403	08.10	Jamaica – Montauk	8704
Bay Shore	402	07.04	Montauk – Jamaica	8701
Jamaica	510 + 512	10.10	Jamaica – Montauk	8706
Bay Shore	407	10.05	Speonk – Babylon	8735

Babylon	407	12.19	Babylon – Patchogue	8764
Oakdale	416	12.05	Speonk – Babylon	8737
Babylon	EMU	13.10	Babylon – New York	6105
New York P	NJT 4526	15.11	New York – Dover	6929
Secaucus	NJT 4653	13.59	Trenton – New York	7840
New York P	4610	15.56	New York – Rahway	7657
Secaucus	4504	16.11	New York – Dover	6931
Newark Broad St	4501	16.05	Dover – New York	6930
Secaucus	4639	16.18	Trenton – New York	7850
New York P	4659	17.53	New York – Trenton	7863
Secaucus	4648	17.56	New York – Rahway	7665
Newark P	4608	18.00	Rahway – New York	7252
New York P	LIRR EMU	20.45	New York - Long Branch	686
Jamaica	EMU	20.45	Brooklyn – Hempstead	6766
Queens Village				

Monday 5 May

First full day doing LIRR, I have previously had just under half the loco's on LIRR so can reject duds. My plan is cover the t+t trains first thing, return to Jamaica to do the Oyster Bay branch, back into New York to cover the remaining t+t trains then take the first winner where ever and work it from there.

Queens village	LIRR EMU	05.58	Hempstead – Brooklyn	711
Jamaica	516+ 521	05.50	Oyster Bay – New York	503
New York P	EMU	07.22	New York - Jamaica	
Jamaica	505 + 520	06.21	Speonk – New York	2737
New York P	EMU	08.33	New York – Babylon	28
Jamaica	518 + 508	07.35	Port Jefferson – New York	615
New York P	EMU	10.00	New York – Babylon	38
Jamaica	401	11.05	Jamaica – Oyster Bay	506
Oyster Bay	401	12.28	Oyster Bay – Jamaica	517
Mineola	423	13.05	Jamaica – Oyster Bay	510
Sea Cliff	522	13.28	Oyster Bay – Jamaica	519
Jamaica	EMU	? ?	- New York	
New York P	520 + 505	16.19	New York – Port Jefferson	658
Jamaica	406	17.12	Hunterspoint Avenue – Port Jefferson	662
Greelawn	410	17.30	Long Island City – Port Jefferson	664
Kings Park	412	18.49	Stoney Brook – Huntington	
Huntington	EMU	20.05	Huntington – New York	
Jamaica	EMU	20.30	Brooklyn – Hempstead	778

Doing the t+t trains out of New York proves difficult as platforms are posted only minutes before departure giving limited opportunity to view the loco's if dud you then have to fight the tide of commuters rushing for their train, better to do them in the morning from Jamaica where viewing both loco's is much easier. I do the first winner to Greenlawn as the next train is none stop to there, it proves a good decision when the next train is also a winner. Also at Greenlawn there is a good beer shop so I pick up a couple of bottles for later.

Tuesday 6 May

Today's plan is to cover the last of the t+t sets not seen/had, if possible get back to Jamaica to cover a train too Hunterspoint Ave/Long Island City. Spend the middle of the day on NJT then return to LIRR for the evening rush.

Queens Village	LIRR EMU	05.58	Hempstead – Brooklyn	711
Jamaica	501 + 511	05.08	Speonk – New York	2733
New York P	EMU	07.22	New York – Jamaica	
Jamaica	LIRR 414	05.39	Montauk – Long Island City	
Long Island City	Subway			
New York P	NJT 4655	10.04	New York – Dover	6619
Secaucus	4611	10.29	New York – Montclair	6233
Newark Broad St	4646	10.06	Dover – New York	6632
Secaucus	4609	10.14	Trenton – New York	3836
New York P	4501	12.46	New York – Dover	6627
Secaucus	4522	12.49	New York – Highbridge	5175
Newark P	4509	12.18	Highbridge – New York	5176
Secaucus	4634	12.58	Dover – New York	6634
New York P	Subway			
Hunterspoint Ave	LIRR 509	16.44	Long Island City – Oyster Bay	560
Jamaica	404	17.12	Hunterspoint Ave – Port Jefferson	662
Greenlawn	422	18.49	Stoney Brook – Huntington	657
Huntington	EMU	20.05	Huntington _ New York	
Jamaica	EMU	20.30	Brooklyn – Hempstead	778

As can be seen the last required t+t set turned up early so I was able to get back for 414. In the afternoon train 662 provided a winner again so another trip to Greenlawn and the beer store , I view trains at Greenlawn as it gives me more options but no more winners. When passing Jamaica earlier there were some loco's moving about in the distance I'm wondering if there will be some swaps and new loco's come out tomorrow.

Wednesday 7 May

The only required loco I have seen working on LIRR is 421 so today's plan is go to Jamaica and deck chair for it, then head for NJT. I intend to return for the evening rush to confirm nothing new has come out. Things don't always work to plan !

Got to Jamaica just getting the deck chair out when 411 came in on the 06.50 from Huntington a train I didn't think was hauled as runs totally within electrified territory [411 was one of the loco's I had seen moving about the previous evening] as it was required I did it to Hunterspoint Ave then leapt back to Jamaica. Just outside Jamaica on my return I passed 511 +515 on the late 06.23 Speonk – New York, another swap/chuck out and another winner I would have to cover the t+t turns in the evening. I had not been back long when 421 came in so that was had to Long Island City for the ferry to Manhattan for a change. I again spent the day doing NJT before falling into 515 +511 on the first train out of New York that afternoon. I checked the remaining hauled trains without any more winners appearing so returned to Manhattan to the Heartland Brewery and a blow out meal.

Queens Village	LIRR EMU	05.58	Hempstead – Brooklyn	711
Jamaica	411	06.50	Huntington – Hunterspoint Ave	1631
Hunterspoint Ave	Subway			
Woodside	LIRR EMU	08.00	New York – Huntington	1612
Jamaica	421	07.13	Oyster Bay – Long Island City	
Long Island City	Ferry			
New York P	NJT 4617	10.29	New York – Montclair	6233
Secaucus	4644	10.33	New York – Trenton	3835
Newark P	4502	10.47	Raritan – New York	5132
Secaucus	4640	10.39	Trenton – New York	3838
New York P	4529	13.47	New York – Raritan	5127

Secaucus	4662	13.51	New York – Dover	6631
Newark Broad St	4624	13.47	Montclair - New York	6238
Secaucus	4620	13.54	Long Branch – New York	3252
New York P	LIRR 511 + 515	16.19	New York – Port Jefferson	658
Mineola	LIRR 422	16.20	Oyster Bay – Jamaica	555
Jamaica	EMU	18.29	Huntington – Brooklyn	1717
Brooklyn	subway			
New York P	LIRR EMU	21.35	New York – Babylon	184
Jamaica	EMU	21.42	Booklyn – Hempstead	980
Queens Village				

Thursday 8 May

Last day I haven't seen anything required on LIRR so I get up later go for the last t+t train into New York then spend most of the day on NJT. I return to the Heartland Brewery for a meal before taking the last t+t train to Jamaica where I view a couple of trains then take the airtrain to JFK for flight home.

Queens Village	LIRR EMU	08.20	Hempstead – Brooklyn	725
Jamaica	512 + 510	07.35	Port Jefferson – New York	615
New York P	NJT 4646	09.43	New York – Montclair	6231
Secaucus	4635	09.27	Jersey Ave – New York	3722
New York P	4651	11.06	New York – Trenton	3837
Secaucus	4507	10.47	Raritan – New York	5132
New York P	4634	12.37	New York – Trenton	3843
Secaucus	4605	11.26	Trenton – New York	3840
New York P	4641	13.05	New York – Trenton	3835
Secaucus	4530	13.47	New York – Raritan	5127
Newark P	4616	13.07	Trenton – New York	3848
Secaucus	4532	14.39	New York – Highbridge	5179
Newark P	4644	14.06	Trenton – New York	3852
New York P	LIRR 521 + 516	18.16	New York – Oyster Bay	564
Jamaica	Skytrain			
JFK	G-CIVW Boeing 747	21.30	New York – London	BA 172
Heathrow				

A very successful trip finishing with 77 new.

Paul Redford

The following were viewed in addition to those trains I rode on LIRR

Monday 5 May

512 + 510	05.08	Speonk – New York
403	16.30	Hunterspoint Ave -Montauk
414	16.28	Long Island City – Patchogue
508 + 518	16.49	New York – Port Jefferson
514	16.44	Long Island City – Oyster Bay
401	18.30	Hunterspoint Ave – Port Jefferson

Tuesday 6 May

516 + 521	05.50	Oyster Bay – New York
512 + 510	06.21	Speonk – New York
522	08.06	Jamaica – Oyster Bay

422 07.13 Oyster Bay – Long Island City
423 08.19 Jamaica – Port Jefferson
422 15.24 Long Island City – Port Jefferson
500 + 519 16.18 Hunterspoint Ave – Oyster Bay
509 16.44 Long Island City – Oyster Bay
423 16.30 Hunterspoint Ave – Port Jefferson
404 17.12 Hunterspoint Ave – Port Jefferson
414 17.30 Long Island City – Port Jefferson
514 17.52 Long Island City – Port Jefferson

Wednesday 8 May

512 + 510 05.08 Speonk – New York
516 + 521 05.50 Oyster Bay – New York
518 + 508 05.44 Port Jefferson – New York
413 + 416 05.30 Speonk – Long Island City
511 + 515 06.21 Speonk – New York
407 05.59 Port Jefferson – Hunterspoint Ave
403 16.30 Hunterspoint Ave – Montauk
508 + 518 17.09 New York – Speonk
404 17.12 Hunterspoint Ave – Port Jefferson
411 18.00 Jamaica – Oyster Bay
412 17.30 Long Island City – Port Jefferson
407 17.52 Long Island City – Port Jefferson
420 18.17 Jamaica – Montauk
521 + 516 18.16 New York – Oyster Bay
418 18.30 Hunterspoint Ave – Port Jefferson
422 18.41 Hunterspoint Ave – Oyster Bay