

EAST TO WEST AMERICA AND VANCOUVER, 2012 TRIP

A briefer than normal account of a recent trip to USA, finishing in Vancouver BC. On this trip I was joined by Anthony Flynn who scored all track apart from a little of Metra, and north of where the Empire Builder turns right after leaving Seattle, plus Seattle to Port Moody on WCE. All locos apart from a couple of METRA, a couple of Amtrak's P42s and all of WCE except 904 and 906 were new for Anthony, my winners are underlined. Tickets used were an Amtrak 15 day (8 journey) pass and commuter rail tickets bought as required.

Sat 22nd September 2012

We took an afternoon flight from London to New York's JFK airport with Virgin, which included a severe, but short burst of turbulence that was enough to spill drinks and make a few people scream. Once in NY we had to queue almost two hours at immigration before we made our way into the city on Airtrain/LIRR, where we found ourselves with time to kill before a suitable train into New Jersey, so we collected our pre-booked Amtrak tickets which was done with ease. We took a trip to the JJ Bittings brewpub in Woodbridge before a slight double back to Rahway where we checked in to the hotel outside the station before a nightcap at a local Irish bar.

Virgin G-VHOT (VS045) 14xx London Heathrow to New York JFK
LIRR EMU (xxxx) 18xx Jamaica to New York Penn
NJT 4638 (7273) 2007 New York Penn to Woodbridge
NJT 4638 (7272) 2252 Woodbridge to Rahway

Sun 23rd September 2012

With an afternoon train from NY with Amtrak we did a quick trip with NJT to Ridgewood, taking a different route out and back. Once in NY we spent a bit of time in Stout NYC near Penn station, where one of our rounds of drinks was free because the barman managed to almost soak me in beer when he knocked a pint over on the bar in front of me. Luckily I leapt out of the way quickly and just a little beer got on me, the stool I had been sat on was soaked. From NY we took the Lake Shore Limited north then west to Chicago overnight, with time for a beer at Albany during the loco change/portion from Boston shunt, although today's portion started at Albany with a bus from Boston.

NJT 4600 (7216) 0900 Rahway to Secaucus
NJT 4110 (1863) 1035 Secaucus to Ridgewood (via Bergen County)
NJT 4010 (1712) 1133 Ridgewood to Secaucus (via Main Line)
NJT 4635 (7228) 1229 Secaucus to New York Penn
AMT 704 (49) 1545 New York Penn to Albany
AMT 203 & 108 (49) 1905 Albany to Chicago Union (arrive 0935 Monday)

Mon 24th September 2012

We arrived slightly early into Chicago and dumped our bags in a locker before taking a roundabout route to Libertyville where we visited Mickey Finns brewpub. We then headed back to Chicago, before going to the Haymarket brewpub near to OTC station.

Then it was back to Union to collect the bags, before we took a peak hour train to LaVergne and watched the following precession come through. Eventually we carried on towards Aurora with my last BNSF loco doing the honours as far as Downers Grove, where we broke our journey to visit Emmett's brewpub. The conductor on train 1281 remembered me from earlier in the year and had a bit of a chat with us on the way. Once eventually in Aurora we booked into our hotel and visited the Two Brothers pub in the old roundhouse, they previous owners used to brew their own beers here and Two Brothers are currently fitting in equipment to resume brewing at this location in the near future.

METRA 118 (2213) 1030 Chicago Union to Western Avenue
METRA 427 (2113) 1044 Western Avenue to Prairie Crossing
METRA 103 (2134) 1204 Prairie Crossing to Libertyville
METRA 108 (2138) 1410 Libertyville to Chicago Union
METRA 201 (1253) 1648 Chicago Union to LaVergne
METRA 116 (1281) 1815 LaVergne to Downers Grove
METRA 191 (1291) 2025 Downers Grove to Aurora

Tue 25th September 2012

After a bit of a lie in we made our way back to Chicago, and planned to visit Revolution Brewing near California station on the blue CTA line. A quick look at OTC revealed a winner for me, 133, on the 1135 departure, so we took this to Ravenswood in zone B as we had a spare ticket to use up. From here we did a bus to Jefferson Park and then the blue CTA line to Revolution, it would have been so much easier if the 1130 had been 133 instead and saved us a bus trip over to Jefferson Park. Eventually we made our way back to Union in time to board the Southwest Chief, which we would do as far as Albuquerque.

METRA 187 (1262) 0920 Aurora to Chicago Union
METRA 133 (323) 1135 Chicago OTC to Ravenswood
AMT 206 & 139 (3) 1500 Chicago Union to Albuquerque (arrive 1555 Wednesday)

Wed 26th September 2012

Arrival in Albuquerque was on time and my main objective was to get NMRR loco 105, my last one. I devised a move that would cover 5 trains and the only one we wouldn't cover would be the "booked" pair. Third train we did produced 105 so I was happy with that, we had a reasonably early finish and booked into our hotel at Sandoval/US550 before having food in a nearby Denny's and then we got some beer from a local gas station.

NMRR 108 (512) 1626 Albuquerque to Sandoval/US550
NMRR 106 (515) 1716 Sandoval/US550 to Los Ranchos/JC
NMRR 105 (514) 1749 Los Ranchos/JC to Sandoval/US550
NMRR 109 (517) 1831 Sandoval/US550 to Los Ranchos/JC
NMRR 102 (516) 1906 Los Ranchos/JC to Sandoval/US550



Me with my last NMRR loco at Sandoval/US550.

Thu 27th September 2012

We got up for the booked pair which was two we hadn't had yesterday, eventually we ended up in Santa Fe for a break where we found 103 stabled in the station so it must have done an early arrival in, meaning 8 of the 9 NMRR locos had worked since we'd been in the area, loco 101 was dumped on the shed at ABQ the whole time. At Santa Fe we visited the Blue Corn Café and brewery, before heading back to ABQ where we did a free bus to near the brewery tap of Marble Brewing. After a quick couple of pints there, we went back to the station and boarded the next leg of our journey, heading to LA.

NMRR 107 & 104 (Ex102) 0646 Sandoval/US550 to SF County/NM599

NMRR 109 (509) 0737 SF County/NM599 to Albuquerque

NMRR 108 (510) 0935 Albuquerque to Santa Fe

NMRR 108 (511) 1302 Santa Fe to Albuquerque

AMT 153 & 46 (3) 1645 Albuquerque to LA Union (arrive 0735 Friday)

Fri 28th September 2012

Arrival in LA was about 50 minutes early and to pass a bit of time we went to San Bernardino where we spent a while watching a few freights pass through, before returning to LA via an alternative route. Once in LA we checked into our hotel before venturing out to cover the peak hour services between LA and Burbank and return, however plans changed when we saw the sole Metrolink F40 ready to come off shed and so we doubled back and ended up going for that instead, its rarity causing a bit of excitement amongst the local railfans at Fullerton, Fullerton also boasts a station bar with some fine locally brewed beer available. Having found ourselves over this side of LA we

now stayed around for a while, we finished at LA and had some fine food and beers in Spring Street Smokehouse round the back of our hotel.

M/LINK 873 (302) 0745 LA Union to San Bernardino
M/LINK 853 (811) 1120 San Bernardino to Santa Ana
AMT 455 (573) 1240 Santa Ana to LA Union
M/LINK 880 (909) 1505 LA Union to Glendale
M/LINK 867 (116) 1523 Glendale to LA Union
M/LINK 800 (686) 1550 LA Union to Fullerton
M/LINK 902 (609) 1649 Fullerton to Norwalk/SF
M/LINK 887 (688) 1711 Norwalk/SF to Fullerton
M/LINK 800 (689) 1739 Fullerton to Norwalk/SF
M/LINK 860 (606) 1804 Norwalk/SF to Fullerton
M/LINK 852 (707) 1841 Fullerton to LA Union



Metrolink has just one F40, and it doesn't get out much. Here it is at Fullerton, train 686.

Sat 29th September 2012

As the hotel breakfast was fairly naff we went to the trad style sandwich bar near the hotel for breakfast instead. Today we used Metrolinks \$10 weekend rover (also valid on Amtrak between LA and Burbank Airport) we split up from each other straight away as Anthony went all the way to Lancaster on the Antelope Valley Line and I stayed more local looking to cover as many locos as possible. We met up briefly when Anthony was coming back from Lancaster and again for the last move to El Monte and back. Of note today was that 7 extra trains each way from LA to Chatsworth ran for "Carmaggedon" due to road closures around LA, they were poorly advertised and barely used, I was the

only person on train 163. Once back in LA we managed to find Bonaventure brewing company brewpub in a shopping centre near the 7th street station on the red metro line. After that we took another metro on the same line back to Civic Center station from where we had a bit of a trek around a dodgy area, along east 1st street to Weiland brewery brewpub. To end we caught the gold line tram outside the pub back to LA Union for the short walk back to the hotel, our wish for a lucky last one in Spring St Smokehouse was dashed as it had already closed.

M/LINK 879 (354) 0900 LA Union to El Monte
M/LINK 901 (353) 0935 El Monte to LA Union
M/LINK 859 (163) 1010 LA Union to Burbank (Carmagedon relief)
M/LINK 882 (262) 1055 Burbank to Glendale
M/LINK 872 (165) 1115 Glendale to Burbank Bob Hope Airport (Carmagedon relief)
AMT 453 (774) 1144 (+20') Burbank Bob Hope Airport to LA Union
AMT 457 (769) 1225 LA Union to Glendale
M/LINK 857 (264) 1311 Glendale to LA Union
M/LINK 879 (364) 1345 LA Union to Covina
M/LINK 866 (367) 1459 Covina to LA Union
M/LINK 899 (267) 1605 LA Union to Glendale
AMT 455 (784) 1632 Glendale to LA Union
M/LINK 880 (368) 1735 LA Union to El Monte
M/LINK 896 (373) 1809 El Monte to LA Union

Sun 30th September 2012

After a bit of a lie in we went again to the sandwich place for breakfast but it was too busy and slow so I ended up in Subway instead. Today's move was just to head north up the coast, and the weather was good and the run up the coast was excellent as usual. Arrival in San Jose was a little late and by the time we got to our planned brewpub, Los Gatos brewing Co, it was shut, so we made do with the place next door instead (Britannia Arms) which luckily was quite acceptable.

AMT 150 & 16 (14) 1025 LA Union to San Jose

Mon 1st October 2012

I had arranged to meet my mate Mike Tisdale in Sacramento today so we headed there, the line is interesting through the bay area and had we stayed on the Coast Starlight yesterday then we'd have done it in darkness which would have been a shame. Mike was due to meet us off our train which now stops a fair way from the station building since the tracks have been realigned, but as he was running late we had a walk around the back of the museum to see big Union Pacific steamer 844 and a GEVO which were there as part of the UP 150th anniversary events that had been held on the weekend. After this we walked to Pyramid Brewing where we enjoyed a few free samples from the barman who was whipped up we were in town just for brewpubs, and Mike joined us soon afterwards. The drinks went down well as the temperature outside was over 100. After leaving Pyramid we made our way to Rubicon Brewing by way of local transit and a bit of walking (transit tickets available free from Amtrak conductors which we took advantage

of) Mike proving a handy guide to us to find the place. Eventually it was time to head back to the station and say farewell to Mike as we were heading back to San Jose. Tonight we managed to try the brewpub there but it wasn't very good so we ended up in the Britannia Arms again.

AMT 59 (528) 0905 San Jose to Sacramento
AMT 2011 (547) 1740 Sacramento to San Jose

Tue 2nd October 2012

Today's plan was to do Caltrain and visit San Francisco. I started slightly earlier than Anthony as I went out to Santa Clara to cover an inbound ACE service (I'd bought the ticket for ACE from the Amtrak desk the day before). My move to Santa Clara was with Caltrain winner 916 so that was a good start, and with 900, another winner in place to work train 139 a little later I was pleased, this now left me needing just 3 Caltrain locos. Anthony met me on 900 and we got off at Millbrae to cover a San Jose bound service, but as it was dud we ended up on BART into Powell, SF. From here we did the tourist thing, cable car to Hyde, a quick beer and a pie in a pub with 80 beers on draft, a quick look up Pier 39 and then a heritage tram to Embarcadero, where the tram got caped due to a failed trolley bus in the way. So then we did MUNI to the Caltrain station for the afternoon rush. We departed on the 1537 service and saw the only loco at the station I needed was 902 so having worked out what it was doing what I doubled back for it. (The departure boards are displayed at the platform ends nice and early to allow this). Once on 902 I did it to Palo Alto where as Anthony got off early to start stepping up with other locos, I started heading back towards SF from Palo Alto when I got a text off Anthony to say his train (370) had struck a car near Palo Alto, I must have passed this train seconds before the collision! This threw the service into chaos and I got on 272 at Redwood City and as it was stuck behind 370 it waited for about 50 minutes to get going again. With no time to cover any SF bound trains now my last two locos (911 and 918) passed and I couldn't do anything about it. Anthony met me at Palo Alto off 272 and we did the next fast to San Jose where we arrived about an hour before the Coast Starlight north. Because of the Caltrain delays we were pushing it to have an evening meal in the Britannia Arms before getting on the CS, but when we got there we found out by the magic of wifi that it was late so we took our time, getting to the station about 30 minutes before the CS pulled in.

CALTRAIN 916 (231) 0820 San Jose to Santa Clara
ACE 3105 (05) 0840 Santa Clara to San Jose
CALTRAIN 925 (237) 0940 San Jose to Menlo Park
CALTRAIN 907 (236) 1022 Menlo Park to California Avenue
CALTRAIN 900 (139) 1037 California Avenue to Millbrae
CALTRAIN 912 (258) 1537 SF to Millbrae
CALTRAIN 906 (159) 1610 Millbrae to SF
CALTRAIN 902 (268) 1656 SF to Palo Alto
CALTRAIN 904 (375) 1743 Palo Alto to Redwood City
CALTRAIN 906 (272) (1845) Redwood City to Palo Alto (not booked stop RWC)
CALTRAIN 917 (376) 1812 (+50) Palo Alto to San Jose
AMTRAK 201 & 185 (14) 2039 (+80) San Jose to Tacoma (arrive 1940 Wednesday)



Caltrain 916 at Santa Clara – train 231.

Wed 3rd October 2012

As the Coast Starlight was late it meant we were in busy Sacramento at about 0130 so plenty of disturbance while trying to sleep, including a woman who needed help up the stairs near where we were sat and boy, didn't everybody get to know about that – several times! Then there were at least two babies, one of which cried for a couple of hours, then some dodgy guy who was causing a nuisance of himself and eventually got reported to the conductor. This ended up with an loud argument in the vestibule, apparently he had been smoking pot in the toilet and looking through peoples bags, so at 0415 we pulled up at a road crossing in the middle of nowhere and he was handed over to the local police, good riddance and something to smile about on what was probably my worst Amtrak overnight ever, and when I did get to sleep the other baby started crying, FFS! The daylight part of the trip over the Cascades was nice but also done half asleep trying to catch up on rest after a poor night. A highlight after this was the friendly conductor who chatted to us for a while before Portland. Eventual arrival in our destination of Tacoma wasn't too late and after checking into our hotel we walked to Harmon brewery brewpub, it was quite a long walk so we did the tram back which is a free service.

Thu 4th October 2012

An early start to get a Sounder commuter train from Tacoma Dome into Seattle, with new track for me from the Dome station to the mainline junction. At Seattle our next move was a Cascades service to Vancouver BC which was unusually formed with 3 Superliners. This was more new track for me from where the Empire Builder starts heading east. At Vancouver Pacific Central the Canadian immigration service were quite swift processing us into the country, and we made our way on Skytrain to the Waterfront

Station where the West Coast commuter services run from. Also at Waterfront is the sea bus service so we went over to North Vancouver to visit Sailor Hagar's Brewpub, and then back over to Waterfront and Steamworks brewpub. I took the first of the WCE trains from Waterfront and stepped up all the way to Mission City, meeting Anthony on the third train E3. Once Anthony had had 904 and 906 he cleared the small fleet (they have 6 locos). Of note was that a fault with the TVMs at Waterfront meant that when I got my ticket they were just issuing them free of charge to keep people moving, cheers then! We were lucky to find pubs at both Pitt Meadows and Port Haney, the pub at Port Haney, the Billy Miner, had a fine choice of beers but the service wasn't very good (the only no tip of the trip) and let the place down. Once at Mission we took a taxi to our hotel (could have had a lift with the conductor of train E5 but we were keen to get there) and then it was a short walk to Mission Springs Brewing where we had an enjoyable evening, even getting a free (but somewhat naff) T-shirt each as well.

SOUNDER 911 (504) 0600 Tacoma Dome to Seattle
AMT 200 (510) 0740 Seattle to Vancouver Pacific Central
WCE 903 (E1) 1550 Vancouver Waterfront to Port Moody
WCE 905 (E2) 1644 Port Moody to Port Coquitlam
WCE 902 (E3) 1724 Port Coquitlam to Pitt Meadows
WCE 904 (E4) 1814 Pitt Meadows to Port Haney
WCE 906 (E5) 1914 Port Haney to Mission City



WCE 902 arriving at Port Coquitlam with service E3

Fri 5th October 2012

We got up for the last of the commuter services to Vancouver which was still an early morning for us. At Vancouver we took Skytrain to New Westminster and sat by the waters edge for a while to pass time, one freight passed by on the freight route there while we waited. Eventually we made our way by Skytrain and bus to where we were staying in Edmonds, I left Anthony in the hotel and spent a while riding the excellent Skytrain system before going to Waterfront for a beer or two in Steamworks. After checking what was about for the WCE afternoon commute (it was the same 5 locos as yesterday) I found a footbridge and photographed the first two departures, plus also a freight that was shunting about. After this I went back to the hotel for a rest and later met Anthony in a near by pub for the evening.

WCE 903 (W5) 0725 Mission City to Vancouver Waterfront

Sat 6th October 2012

Today I had a lie in and after checking out from the hotel met Anthony in a café run by a friendly Croatian lady for lunch. Soon after I said farewell to Anthony who had some personal business to attend to, he was staying in Vancouver a few more nights where as I was heading home. Having done a skytrain to Waterfront I was going to take the sea bus over to North Vancouver, but got tempted by the sightseeing helicopters and wandered over to see if anything was available. About 20 minutes later and about £100 lighter I was up in the air for an excellent 25 minute flight. After this I spent a couple of hours in Steamworks, and then started my journey towards the airport, stopping off at Yale Town for a few more beers in Yaletown Brewing. After this I made my way to the airport and took my return (with a dud plane) flight to London – trip over.

C-GXHJ (Tour) 1330 Vancouver sightseeing trip

G-VAIR (VS096) 2025 Vancouver to London Heathrow (arrive Sunday)

CONCLUSION

An excellent trip with the usual mix of long distance and commuter rail. Everything went more or less to plan and the Amtrak time keeping was good. Many thanks to Mike for meeting up with us and his excellent company, also thanks to Anthony for his company throughout too. It was nice to make a rare visit to Canada, one day I'll get round to doing some long distance stuff there. I enjoyed Vancouver and its excellent public transport and brewpubs and will most likely return one day so I can try to get my last WCE loco.

Pete Callaghan

October 2012.

NJT: 4010, 4110, 4600, 4635, 4638

AMTRAK: 16, 46, 59, 108, 139, 150, 153, 185, 200, 201, 203, 206, 704, 453, 455, 457, 2011

METRA: 103, 108, 116, 118, 133, 187, 191, 201, 427

NMRR: 102, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109

M/LINK: 800, 852, 853, 857, 859, 860, 866, 867, 872, 873, 879, 880, 882, 887, 896,
899, 901, 902

CALTRAIN: 900, 902, 904, 906, 907, 912, 916, 917, 925

A.C.E: 3105

SOUNDER: 911

WCE: 902, 903, 904, 905, 906

72 loco's – 25 new