

Lights, camera, action!

From *Brief Encounter* to the Hogwarts Express, trains and railways have played a starring role in many great movies.

Jon Bryant remembers some classic scenes

A cloud of locomotive smoke is the film editor's perfect tool for shifting to a new scene and it was used in one of the first films ever made, the Lumière brothers' *L'Arrivée d'un Train en Gare à La Ciotat*. Shown to an audience in 1895, some of whom reputedly tried to flee the theatre, it featured a steam train stopping at La Ciotat station in the south of France. With the camera rolling, passengers began stepping extravagantly from the footplates, running alongside the engine and pulling themselves up into the carriages with a single bound.

Fifty years later, another generation of passengers started falling in love in station refreshment rooms – and the romance lives on. We look back at some golden moments on the silver screen, and at how you can come close to re-creating the journeys – but, we hope, without the murders or revolutions...

Doctor Zhivago

Repeating Yuri Zhivago's flight across the icy wastes of northern Russia in a cattle train may not be everyone's idea of a holiday, least of all if you have an aggressive mad-eyed dissident as your travelling companion, played by a young Klaus Kinski in David Lean's 1965 film.

Bundled up in overcoats in a filthy carriage, with a bubbling, slopping potato stew in place of a buffet car, Zhivago (Omar Sharif) and Tonya (Geraldine Chaplin) stare at other people's misery in a carriage that looks more like a prison camp. The grimy inmates are bound for the Gulag with a contingent of Red Guards. They have to crash through ice to sweep out the dirty straw on the carriage floor.

Meanwhile the train, with red flags fluttering, thrashes through the perfect white snowy scenery, half *troika*, half symbol of a new powerful

Soviet futurism. Zhivago steps off the train when it is held up, and gazes at the distant Ural Mountains; he thinks he is free. The long journey is a lot nicer today in a luxury train with a proper buffet car and flushing toilets...

RELIVE THE ROUTE: *The Classic Traveller* offers a 15-day Trans-Siberian Express tour from Moscow to Beijing. Departures from May to September 2010. From £3,999pp, including flights from London, private rail carriage and sightseeing excursions. (0800 988 5822; www.theclassictraveller.co.uk)

North by Northwest

It's a case of mistaken identity. In Hitchcock's most stylish, light-hearted thriller, Roger Thornhill (played by the charming, grey-suited Cary Grant) is pursued across America by mysterious agents. Thankfully, it gives

Zhivago's long journey across the icy wastes is a lot nicer today, in a luxury train with a proper buffet car

him a chance to travel on what was known at the time as "the most famous train in the world", the 20th Century Limited, a luxury express service operating between New York and Chicago.

After walking along the crimson-carpeted platform, Thornhill jumps on to the train and proceeds down one of Hitchcock's long-shot corridors before bumping into the impeccably glamorous Eve Kendall (Eva Marie Saint), who hides him from the dim policemen chasing him. The duplicitous Kendall has arranged for him to sit opposite her in the dining car. He orders a Gibson cocktail and asks her: "What do you do besides lure men to their doom on the 20th Century Limited?"

The charcoal grey of the train and the smooth, buffed lines of the carriage furniture were perfect symbols of a new, luxury America that was beginning to be obsessed with espionage and winning the

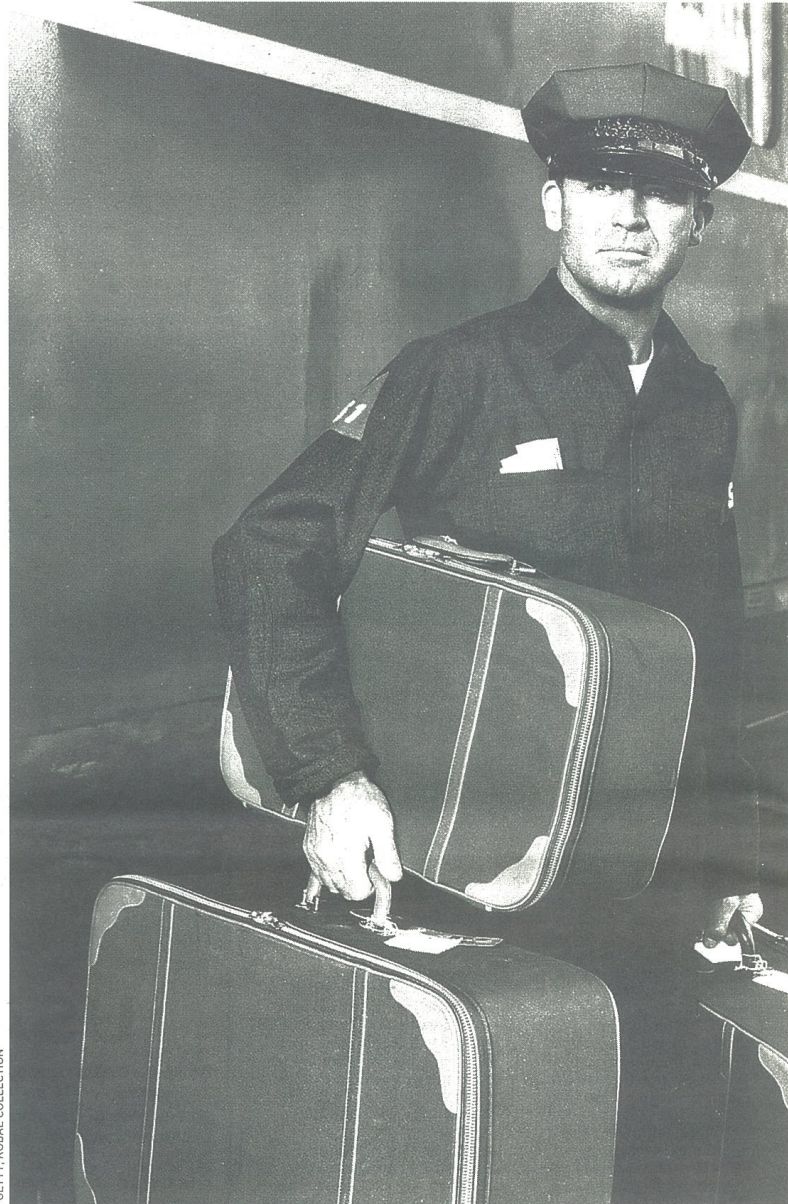
Cold War. Eight years later, the train was discontinued.

Travelling across America is still one of the most romantic ways to visit the country – even if not on this iconic train.

RELIVE THE ROUTE: *Great Rail Journeys* offers a 21-day USA Coast to Coast journey from New York to San Francisco (via Chicago). Departures from April to October 2010. From £2,750pp, including flights from London, US airport transfers, accommodation, rail and coach travel and all excursions. (01904 521936; www.greatrail.com)

Out of Africa

A steam locomotive snakes through the grassy plains towards Nairobi as Karen Blixen (Meryl Streep) gently reminisces: "I had a farm in Africa, at the foot of the Ngong Hills." John Barry's sweeping strings accompany the puffing train as the camera pans back to show



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how insignificant is the wisp of steam issuing from the engine as it disappears across the plains. Blixen wears a cream and blue braided outfit done up to the throat, with a man's blue tie, and stands at the back of the carriage with her deerhound on a lead.

The next morning, the train pulls up to allow hunter Denys Finch Hatton (Robert Redford) to load enormous elephant tusks on to the back, while Streep keeps an eye on her Limoges china and glassware stacked up in the next carriage. Finch Hatton says he won't be boarding the train and she looks disappointed. So are we – but we know the two of them will end up together... if only he'd caught the train that day instead of going by plane.

RELIVE THE ROUTE: *Somak Holidays* offers a 9-day trip to Kenya including the Nairobi to Mombasa train, a visit to Daphne Sheldrick's elephant orphanage, lunch at Carnivore Restaurant and five nights' half-board at the five-star Serena Beach Hotel & Spa. Departures from May 2010. From £1,145pp (quote "Telegraph"), including flights from London. (020 8423 3000; www.somak.com)

Murder on the Orient Express

Anyone who was anyone in 1974 was in Sidney Lumet's version of *Murder on the Orient Express*. It was Albert Finney's only outing as Hercule Poirot, but a cast including Ingrid Bergman (who won an Oscar), Sean Connery, John Gielgud and Lauren Bacall makes up for some of the bizarre accents and inadequate moustaches. A stopped watch in the victim's pocket, a long list of overacting suspects and heavily rehearsed alibis made it the first classic, big-budget Agatha Christie.

The thick snow outside (filming took place in the Jura Mountains in France), which blocks in the train, heightens the trapped feeling of the passengers inside the



coach. "Has it occurred to you that there are too many clues in this room?" asks Poirot, inspecting the murder scene.

There are definitely far too many props for one film. It seems that on the Orient Express no one wants for anything, whether it's white gloves for sleeping, bowler hat supports or moustache protectors. The train is a fantasy of decadence, charged by a furnace, crashing through the plains of Eastern Europe.

A decade earlier, James Bond (Sean Connery) has a brutal, claustrophobic and exhilaratingly vicious fight against SPECTRE assassin Red Grant aboard the same train in *From Russia with Love*, yet *Murder on the Orient Express* somehow seems more fitting and civilised for a train that enabled members of the refined and wealthy West to visit the mysterious East, while all the time cossetting them inside the

Rail stars Clockwise from main picture, Cary Grant and Eva Marie Saint in *North by Northwest*; Albert Finney in *Murder on the Orient Express*; brotherly love in *The Darjeeling Limited*; Geraldine Chaplin in *Doctor Zhivago*; Meryl Streep and Robert Redford in *Out of Africa*

opulent comfort of their first-class carriages.

RELIVE THE ROUTE: *The Orient-Express* group offers a two-day one-way journey from London to Venice (or Venice to London). The train leaves London Victoria at about 11am and arrives in Venice the next afternoon at about 5.30pm. From £1,550pp. The company also offers a Brighton Murder Mystery day trip on the British Pullman. From £310. (0845 077 2222; www.orient-express.com)

The Darjeeling Limited

Slumdog Millionaire may have won the awards, and it certainly has a lot of platform scenes, but for Indian train action Wes Anderson's 2007 film *The Darjeeling Limited* is invincible. Three oddball brothers are on an enforced bonding trip across India – and carrying a lot of baggage.

The train was handpainted by local truck decorators, who spent weeks adding elephants, temples and cricket matches to the carriage sides. It's a piece of art and the brothers' ochre and kingfisher blue suite is the most expansive carriage ever seen on a train.

Anderson insisted on shooting the entire film while the train was moving, so the juddering and pulsating is authentic, carried along by a mix of local Bengali rhythms. Seventies rock and Beethoven.

The brothers think they want to grow closer, yet have no idea where they are going. This is why they need to be in a rail movie not a road movie – the fixed tracks give them no choice. Until, of course, the train gets lost.

RELIVE THE ROUTE: *Page & Moy* offers a 10-day return trip on the Palace on Wheels train from Delhi, with stops at Jaipur, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur and Udaipur, departing April 19, August 9 and September 13, 2010. From £3,340pp, including return flights from London and a local English-speaking guide. (0800 567 7400; www.pageandmoy.com)



New Year Holidays by Rail



Harz Mountains at New Year

◆ Experience this fantastic 9-day holiday by rail to the Harz Mountains region at New Year. Our outbound journey allows for time in the Rhine Gorge where we discover the charming town of Rüdesheim and the city of Heidelberg, an historic town which lies on the River Neckar. Once in the Harz Mountains, we visit Quedlinburg, an unspoilt town with UNESCO World Heritage status, and also enjoy a journey on the *Bracklen Railway* for a narrow-gauge ride to the summit of Brocken.

◆ On New Year's Eve, after a morning walking tour, we take a fabulous journey on the *Selketal Railway* and the *Harzquerbahn Railway* to Wernigerode. On New Year's Day we journey to pretty Goslar for a guided tour and a scenic journey through western Harz.

◆ Price includes First Class rail travel, all hotel accommodation with breakfast each day, 7 dinners, all excursions, all transfers and the services of a Tour Manager.

9 days departing 27 December 2009 - £1,350
Christmas Departure also available



Nice & the Côte d'Azur at New Year

◆ Avoid the winter's frost on this stylish 8-day holiday to Nice, where our hotel is wonderfully situated on the world-famous Promenade des Anglais. Experience historic Antibes, the foothills of Provence, Cannes and glamorous Monte Carlo, a wonderful way to celebrate the New Year!

◆ On New Year's Eve, we travel to Monaco where we experience the changing of the guard, the world-famous casino, the Grand Prix circuit and the Jacques Cousteau Oceanographic museum before we return to the hotel where we enjoy a six-course dinner and champagne accompanied by a pianist. New Year's Day is free for you to relax, take advantage of the hotel's facilities, stroll along the Promenade des Anglais or explore the Riviera.

◆ Price includes First Class rail travel, all hotel accommodation with breakfast each day, 1 lunch, 4 dinners, all excursions, all transfers and the services of a Tour Manager.

8 days departing 28 December 2009 - £1,498
Christmas Departure also available



Lake Geneva at New Year

◆ Relax in the lovely lakeside setting of elegant Vevey for a 6-night stay. We enjoy visits to the Château de Chillon for a guided tour and a visit to Montreux. We take the scenic *Mont Blanc Express* to the town of Chamonix, where we join the *Montenvers Mountain Railway* for a trip from the valley floor through snow laden pine forests to Montenvers.

◆ On New Year's Eve we travel on the historic *TransOrmonan* narrow-gauge railway up to the charming mountain village of Les Diablerets, where we enjoy a traditional fondue lunch. We spend New Year's Day in the pretty village of Gruyères, with its imposing chateau, and Gstaad before joining the *GoldenPass Line* for the journey past snow-covered peaks and through wooded valleys before descending to Montreux.

◆ Price includes First and Standard Class rail travel, all hotel accommodation with breakfast each day, 2 lunches, 4 dinners, Standard Class Regional Swiss Pass, Lake Geneva Riviera Card, all excursions, all transfers and the services of a Tour Manager.

7 days departing 27, 28 December 2009 - £1,290
Christmas Departure also available



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