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NEWS

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Back safe from Vietnam – 10,000 miles by train

By Richard Vernalls



Reunion: Peter Flynn is met by his wife Louise Harrison and son Sebastian Flynn, aged nine, after catching trains from South Asia to Worcester.



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THERE was an emotional family reunion at Worcester Shrub Hill station marking the end of one man's epic 10,000-mile intercontinental train journey.

Peter Flynn was greeted as he got off the First Great Western London Paddington to Worcester service by father-in-law Paddy Harrison, of Sinton Green, near Hallow.

Mr Flynn decided to travel by train because of a life-long desire to experience the Trans-Mongolian railway, running from China to Russia.

He also embraced his wife and nine-year-old son on the platform at 3.39pm, on New Year's Eve.

For the 48-year-old Australian it marked the end of an extraordinary 15-day train journey travelling 'soft' or first class from the southern tip of Vietnam in south east Asia, through China, across Asia, then Europe and finally the UK.

Flying from Australia on Tuesday, December 16, he spent Christmas Day looking out on the vastness of Mongolia and sharing a drink in the dining car with other travellers, almost all of whom had no clue it was Christmas "There was no mention of it,

one Mongolian guy had heard of it but had no idea it fell on December 25,” he explained.

“There were no other Westerners on the train and the only other two ‘foreigners’ were from Singapore.”

In Saigon, Vietnam, he remembered local delicacy grilled weasel from a menu and experienced temperatures of -32C in Mongolia’s Gobi desert.

For his wife Louise Harrison and son Sebastian Flynn it was a joyous reunion.

They flew out from their home in Brisbane, Australia, several days before Mr Flynn boarded his flight to Vietnam for his first connection.

The trip meant he missed his wife’s 46th birthday but he wished her happy birthday by text.

“What did amaze me was that all along the route phone reception never dropped,” he said.

Mr Harrison and his wife Maureen, both 77, hadn’t seen their daughter and grandson for two years or Mr Flynn for three years.

For them the get-together was the best way to welcome the new year. Mr Harrison, said: “We’re so pleased to see him and it is a tremendous achievement.”

Miraculously, every one of Mr Flynn’s eight connections including a trip on London’s underground and the transfer to Worcester ran on time, though one train arrived two days earlier than scheduled in Beijing, China.

Mrs Harrison said: “We haven’t seen him since December 9 when we flew out to the United States.

“It’s just great to see him, he’s always been the intrepid traveller and this is a great one to achieve.”

Sebastian, hugging his father, said: “It’s great, he’s got lots to tell me about.”

The family are looking forward to a few quiet days in Worcestershire before returning to Australia.



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