Marriage on the Orient Express

You might not be able to marry on moving vehicles in England, but Scottish laws say differently

The Orient Express is one of the most exclusive venues in the country (and certainly the only one on wheels). But getting married on the iconic train isn’t easy. You can’t get married on any of the Orient Express trains in England. Our strict laws say no to that. A wedding license can’t be granted to moving vehicles, even ones with smash carpets and rose crystal. You can have blessings anywhere you like and you can have your wedding reception on a train. But if you’re getting married in England you have to do it in a ‘readily identifiable premises’. No hot air balloons hitches and no speedy speedboat marriages. And sadly that also means no train weddings, even if the train is stationary and on a platform at the time.

But laws in Scotland are different. That means that the Royal Scotsman is up for grabs and they had a wedding take place earlier this year. The civil partnership between Aaron Qugley and Bradley Herbert took place in August and was the very first wedding on the Orient Express. It might just be the first UK civil partnership on rails.
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“Our guests had no idea that our ceremony was going to be on the Orient Express” says Aaron. “We made them meet us at a hotel, with an overnight bag. We were so excited keeping it a secret, but nervous as well.”

The couple actually met in Australia, when Aaron was doing his PhD abroad. “Because so many of Bradley's family are still in Australia, if we'd had a huge wedding it would have been strange with so many of Bradley's relatives missing out.”

The Royal Scotman might sound extravagant but it has space for just 74 passengers. The train pulled into Waverly station where they married and then the train continued on to pick up the band and photographer on its journey. After a few more stops the wedding party hopped off to have a dance on the station platform. “It was a great day, made even better by everyone staying overnight as the train travelled on.”

“We've been travelling for over the 14 years we've been together we have visited more than 50 countries. Holding our ceremony on a train journey was the perfect metaphor for our life so far. Maybe on our first anniversary we'll even get to visit the Royal Scotman again.”