

European Branch Trip to Belgium, Luxembourg & Germany April 2008

It was around midnight on the 3rd that the mini-bus arrived at Blyth, signalling the start of our second European tour of 2008. I inserted myself in the usual seat, behind the steering wheel, beside me was Metal Mickey and behind were Standback, the exiled Brummie and Horizontal Harry, these were the guys I was about to share the next three days of my life with. We had a ferry time of 05:20, so why we started a 3hr 45min drive at Midnight is beyond me, so we were always going to be early and we were, despite the A1 being closed at Markham Moor (necessitating a diversion via Newark), the A20 being closed in Dover (a further diversion through the city centre to the Ramsgate road), the GPS being on British Winter time and Horizontal Harry, the exiled Brummie and Standback all pushing out big ZZZZ's, we still arrived in time for the 04:15 sailing.

French customs were struck down with their usual dose of apathy, the crossing was smooth and empty, breakfast was enjoyed (then washed down with a beer, we do have a reputation to uphold you know) and it was my turn to sleep while Standback drove us to Châtelet. Our first numbers arrived at 09:25 when 7 stored class 22XX electrics were seen at Le Campinaire station, these turned out to be the ones we had seen in Châtelet yard last year, before we arrived at Châtelet depot at 09:40. Being a Friday morning the depot was almost empty with just 2722/41 and DMU 4119 at home. Next we searched the yard, pulling in 4 further numbers, before heading of to the CFV3V preservation site at Mariembourg. There is a quarter roundhouse here, which, along with the yard, contained examples of former SNCB, SNCF, DB and PKP traction, 19 numbers in all. Metal Mickey tried out his French and established that there was a museum at the other end of the line in a town called Treignes and this was our next call. This is a purpose built facility, it cost 4 euro 50 to get in and contained a further 27 preserved locomotives, including SNCF 'crocodile' BB12120, SNCB diesel 5120 and CFL DMU 201+211. It's a nice set up and well worth a visit if you are in the area.

Our next call was to be the depot at Luxembourg, but, just of the route is the station at Arlon and it broke the journey. We woke Harry from his slumbers on arrival and a walk on the station found 17 numbers, with a gaggle of SNCB electric loco making up the bulk of them. Detour over we made Luxembourg depot 20mins later and got 'the nod' for a visit. There is extensive building work in progress, with large areas of (what was) the depot yard dug up, we still found 58 numbers at home including 'flat iron' 3612, diesels 1801/10/18 and shunter 1002 among the new influx of both diesel and electric locomotives CFL have gathered together. We also found the shell of long withdrawn electric 3001 inside the roundhouse, I can not see that running again. After saying thanks we went to Bettembourg Station, mainly for the yard shunters, but diesels 1817 & 1820 and SNCB 1314+1310 passed on freights while we were there. After we had identified the shunting locos we went to the 'nearby' stabling point, which took a lot longer than we expected due to the closure of the only entry

we knew, we know the new one now! Further ageing diesels 1809/15/17 were there, along with 856 which was still plying it's trade by shunting in the yard.

The drive to Trier took no time at all, to those who were asleep (I'll mention no names) and we saw out the light by spending the last 90mins of it on the Hbf. It proved very interesting, CFL 1151 (ex DB 202242) passed on a freight, as did 151118+151094, CFL 4005 & SNCF 37016. Diesels 218151 and 218217 both worked trains to/from Köln, but undoubted highlight was the appearance of 181224 (Standback 'copped' it) with a Luxembourg bound Euro City express. As the light faded 'Hochwaldbahn' VL4 worked into the yard and we left for the hotel. We used the Golden Tulip (or the Golden Rat, as it became known) along with 3 coach loads of Chinese which made for a very busy time at dinner, which was excellent by the way, washed down with a pint or two. The waiter discovered we were English and promptly spoke to us in French for the rest of the night (there must be a story there somewhere) and we all enjoyed the offerings. I must now say that I retired to my bed at this point, but according to reports the rest of the party went into town, the Exiled Brummie downed 7 further pints before singing 'my way' on the karaoke, Metal Mickey hit the Campari and came second (to a one legged, gypsy from Frankfurt) in the pole dancing competition and Standback took the lock of his wallet and bought a round of drinks. Only one of the above statements is actually false, answers on a postcard please, accompanied by a £5 cheque made payable to 'the European Branch Benevolent drinking fund' first prize wins a recording of the exiled Brummies version of 'My Way'.

Le Campinaire Station (09:25) 2206/30/33/36/40/43/47 with 187+653 passing
Châtelet Depot (09:40) 2722/41 4119 **Châtelet Yard (09:50)** 7363/76 7748 SNCF
36027 **CFV3V preservation site, Mariembourg (10:30)** Steam 52467 64250
503696 PF84 TKT4887 (polish) SNCB 4407 4608/10/11 7304 SNCF 63123/149
X4345/67 8327/62 Y5130 6502 **CFV3V preservation site, Treignes (11:20)** Ex
SNCB Steam (38025)601, (38025)602, 808, 1002, 8098 ex DB steam 523314
Industrial steam (André Dumont) 08/09 CA 04

DG 22 MF 62/73/83/91 Sefea No2 ex SNCB diesel 4616 5120 550.09 CV69, ex
SNCF diesel 3998 Y6563 electric 12120 ex CFL diesel 201/11 ex DB diesel VT95
(795662) industrial steam 'Brabant' 2368 diesel 9008.**Arlon Station (13:25)**
505/07/14/20/23 657 2007 2304/18/25/39/47/63/71 4110 ES404 **Luxembourg
Depot (14:20)** 518 806 851/57/58 904/05/06/07/12 1002 1022 1062 1101/02 1501
1581 1604 1801/10/18 2001/05/07/16/17/21 2201/03/05/06/08/09/10/11/12
3001/12/13/15/16/17/20 3612 4003/06/10/14/19 185555/564/566/567 628456/488
928456/488 preserved PV6 **Bettembourg Station (15:25 – 15:50)** 502/15 1503
1817/20 2012 4008/13 SNCB 1310/14 **Bettembourg SP (16:25)** 314 502 856 1003
1103/04 1504 1583/84 1809/15/17 SNCB 1323/27/40 **Trier Hbf (17:30 – 19:00)**
140542 143194/825/925 151094/118 181224 218151/217
425112/130/133/585/590/612 426004/043/538 628455/505/506 644037 725002
726002 928455/505/506 SNCF 37011/016 CFL 1151(ex DB 202242) 4005/07
Private owner ES64 U2 097 Hochwaldbahn VL4

It was obvious that whatever time we decided to take breakfast, the coach loads of Chinese would too. The pandemonium of last night's dinner doubled at the breakfast table and we were lucky to get the slice of toast we enjoyed! We made Trier depot by

08:00, we got a guide who showed us round, trying (mainly in vain) to explain things to us in German. The obvious highlight was the presence of SBB electric 10008, which we had seen in March at Rheine but this was run close by 110166/295/320 being available for photos. After saying our thanks we played 'spot the Köf' locating & photographing 335055 at Theo Steel in Ehrang, before moving on to the nearby SP. This produced just 7 numbers, but these did include 212047, now working for EFW.

It was now time to rid Metal Mickey of his latest 'millstone' and visit the steam museum at Hermeskeil, just a 20min drive away. I'd like to report we all stayed awake during this drive but, despite only being 3 hours since this morning's alarm, one of us slept the whole way. It cost just 3 euro to get in and the place was full of (mainly rusting) steam locomotives. Photos were hard as they were all squashed together, the good looking ones were inside the shed, which was as dark as a coal hole picnic, and many had no identification numbers on them, but, what a place! The 'millstone' now cut loose we headed off to play a further game of 'hunt the Köf'. To make it harder Bassalt AG of Kirn had taken 322617 out of use and hid it inside a shed, necessitating the help of a lorry driver to locate it, encouraged by this success, Metal Mickey flagged down a passing train, at Stromburg, and made the driver open the shed at Schaefer Kalk GmbH revealing 323781. With the game now over we headed to Mainz. It's a long time since we last visited Bischofshiem depot so I was looking forward to this. We had heard that a collection of shunting loks had begun to gather here and once we had been given permission to visit we tracked them down. In total there were 15 class 360/363/364/365 shunters plus 381020 in the 46 numbers we found on shed. 381020 has had an interesting life, built in 1938 it was delivered to the German railways on 24th September of that year as Ks4987. It survived until withdrawal on 24th May 1983 and was 'dumped' at Frankfurt No 2 depot until its closure. It then spent time in 'preservation' (and I use that term loosely) at Bochum Dahilhausen before being accepted back into DB ownership on the 1st January 1994 and claimed by DB Museum Nürnberg in 1997, being out-based at Mainz who keep it running. It was locked inside the shed during our visit so our cameras were distracted by the presence of long withdrawn diesels 212302/358 215135 and 216067/173 which, although difficult to get, just had to be photographed.

A long drive to Köln followed, Metal Mickey brought the catering trolley to life, Standback nearly steered the van into a small car, the exiled Brummie passed round the shortbread, I wrote the visit report this far and Harry, well, he nodded off! Eventually we arrived at Gremburg Depot and it was raining. Metal Mickey produced a brolly (apparently he rusts when wet) and we got the OK for a visit. The umbrella had a strange effect on Metal Mickey, who ran around like a headless chicken while the rest of us did the depot in an orderly fashion (it must have effected his magnetic field). We all enjoyed the presence of 212024 and 290371, which has been re-painted in the old dark red livery, otherwise the depot contained the usual collection of Köln freight locomotives, 68 in total. The numbers get less here every time we visit. We saw out the rest of the light, which was not a lot thanks to the rain, at Portz am Rhein, the S-Bahn station we visited earlier in the year. Judging by the quantity of litter scattered around the station it had not just won the 'best kept' station award, but we did not let this put us off. Our reward was 5 passing freights in the 45mins we stayed, 152087 155117, 185048/081 & 189995 doing the honours. Once it got too dark to get decent photos we headed to the hotel, we used the same Best Western

as we had used in March, the top floor of which provided a good view of Köln Kalk Rbf, giving 8 further numbers to finish the day off, which included Bayerische Oberlandbahn (BOB) V126 which is ex DB 212089

Despite the excellent Greek restaurant being just 10mins walk away, Standback threw a fetlock so we had to use the Hotels facilities. That said, we were not disappointed, the waiter did his best to promote the local dishes and I must say the coconut ice cream on fried pineapple was delicious. After last night's (alleged) fun, frolics and hockey, pokey penny-a-lick, I thought I had better keep an eye on them all, they all went to bed before 10pm!

Trier Depot (08:05) 110166/295/320 143102/129/147/149/662/919/925/945/946/953 218136/217/425 335103/136 425085/131/132/633/636 426508/536 612004/006/504/506 628233/313/489/490/491 928233/313/489/490/491 SBB 10008 with SNCF 37025 passing **Theo Steil, Trier harbour (09:15)** ex DB 335035 **Ehrang SP (09:35)** 145029 152059 155004 185084 SNCF 37014/016 private owner EFW (ex DB) 212047 **Hermeskeil Steam Museum (10:25)** ex DB steam 01 204 22 066 41 1025/1137 42 2754

44 167/177/196/264/434/500/635/1040/1056/1106/1251/1412/1537 50 607/1446/1832

50 3014/3553/3555/3649/3662 52 662/1423/2093/6721/8006/8090/8113/8120/8123/8197

57 5212/5885 58 1616 ex DB diesel 232305/375 310131/309 322137/172/177 323158/375/861/867 ex DB electric E44 198 E94 110 254006/066 with ex DB 345055 701114/120 visible in the nearby station **Bassalt AG, Kirn (12:45)** ex DB 322617 **Schaefer Kalk Gmbh, Stromberg (13:30)** ex DB 323781 **Mainz Bischofsheim Depot (14:25)** 139250 151007/162 155017 182023 185037/225 212302/358 215135 216067/173 225081/091 294578/634/646/724/746/756/802/808/817/834/872 335224 360775 363194/679/699/717/730/772 364403/524/767/851/869 365140/148/227 381020 Köf 6748 (323818) SBB 421383 **Köln Gremburg Depot (17:00)** 139172/314 140044/214/394/504/640/646/785/790/805/834/858/872 151021/024/137 152044/100/147 155029/096/105/117/158/161/213/266 185012/066/070/082/168/170

185175/220/247/248/254/264 189004/060/072/096 212024 225020/023/024/026/040/053

225059/060/145 290371 294165/682/715/726 296050 333681 335218 362390/540 363436/675 365203 **Gremburg Yard (17:55)** 145049 152003/025/150 294856 296042/053/059 **Portz am Rhein station (18:15 – 18:50)** 111146/156 143647/661 152087 155117 185048/081 189995 403036/052/506/515/552 423041/048/056/194/538

423544 **Köln (Cologne) Kalk Rbf (19:40)** 294175/720/725/777/787/807 335011 private owner BOB V126 (ex DB 212089)

So the final day started, breakfast was, once again, well worth the effort with an excellent spread including bacon and eggs which was accompanied by a sharp pain in the back of the hand from Standback's fork, if you could not get out of the way in time. Checkout was painless and we hit the road just after 7.30am. Heading for Vorhalle Yard (Hagen) we drove through hail, sleet and torrential rain but made it by 08:40, there was no one awake. Despite the fact that it was not actually raining Metal Mickey got his broly out (there must be a law against getting it out in public) and we pinned down a driver for permission to visit. The small shed was locked, but we identified it's two residents through the windows, in all 39 numbers entered our books. Hochwaldbahn VL12 (ex DB 202330) made a decent photograph and it took a while for us to identify 'worklok 2' as 332294 but we did and visit over we moved on towards Oberhausen. We did not get too far before we were stopped in our tracks by an accident in front of us causing a stand of over 20mins waiting the police to clear a path. Horizontal Harry took this time to catch up on some much needed sleep.

We made Oberhausen by 10:25, a full visit was granted and 68 locomotives were at home. NS diesel 6463, complete with nose end chimney a-la class 294, was posing under the church tower today and the same two blue shunters were here as in March. Also here was 215049, it was inside the depot undergoing attention, it belongs to the DB Museum at Nürnberg, but is loaned out to the nearby BSW group at Oberhausen-Osterfeld and became the second member of this extinct class we had seen this weekend! Next came Oberhausen Yard where among the gaggle of shunting loks were withdrawn 225012/014/113 all of which were needed for photographs. Final call in Oberhausen was at the West 'depot', we need to use this term loosely now as the old depot building had been demolished. Spitzke Logistik GmbH (SLG) owned 232-SP-040 (ex DR 142002) was among the 21 numbers here, along with a further NS diesel, this time 6480. Once the scene was captured in our camera's it was time for the long drive to Calais, via the cheep beer shop. Thanks to the earlier hold up we had to abandon our planned visit to Merelbeek Depot. Loaded down we headed to the port, English boarder control were in fine form, examining all passports with a fine tooth comb and even extracting the Exiled Brummie from the mini-bus for a closer examination (?), apparently they were concerned that he could not speak English (we had to explain that he came from Birmingham and has never been able to speak English). For once we were first on the ferry and hence first to the food court, meaning we were in the bar early, a major blow for Standback who was 'press ganged' into buying a round. The look on his face when Metal Mickey asked for a cognac reflected the pain his wallet must have felt. Arrival at Dover was in a snow storm, which had covered the unloading ramp (a slight hill) with about an inch of snow, As usual I took the last leg of driving, we were loaded down with beer and hence the front wheels, where the drive came from, were slightly raised and being first on, we were first off, I'll leave the rest to you but Horizontal Harry now has a hernia! At least the roads were empty, visibility was about 8 feet until we reached the M25 then it suddenly cleared, we blinded the pilots attempting to land at Stanstead, before arriving home just in time to set off for work! Another excellent adventure over, we are already planning our next.

Vorhalle Depot & Yard (08:40) 140542/632/727/761/788/853 152097/117/150/158
155010/049/114 185212/264 189065/077
294584/604/671/771/772/785/790/793/813/903 296037/045/046/055 332294 335121
363824 365109 701038 NS 6461 private owner Hochwaldbahn VL12 (ex DB

202330) **Oberhausen Depot (10:25)** 140450/644/766/855/857/861/870/871/876
151007/066/080/148 155012 185285 215049
225001/008/015/016/021/032/075/109/120/131/134
232055/083/109/129/201/280/283

232298/330/357/505/509/534/567/589/685/904/905/909 290569
294154/630/769/830/891 333679 335006/082 362756 363128/160/739/823
364511/520/611/762/890 365838 795240 NS6463 **Oberhausen Yard (11:10)**
225012/014/113 232203/374/700 294173/667/789/791/848/853/857/881
365158/217/732 **Oberhausen West (11:40)** 140476/800 145051 155175 185049
189062/088 225005/084 232413/494/902 294168/694/782/831/860/890 NS 6480
private owner SLG 232-SP-040 (ex DR 142002)