

# Germany & Belgium

## October 2006

I thought that we had stopped with the early starts now, but the sound of my alarm clock buzzing away at 03:10 on a Friday morning reminded me that we were back with them. This is our final planned trip for 2006 and it was as wet as a fishes wet bit when I opened my front door to Pete (Metal Mickey) Ayton and Malc (Standback Fusilier) Thornycroft as they arrived in Malc's mini-bus to begin our latest adventure. I had my bags loaded in before our party was made whole by the arrival of Warwick (The exiled Brummie) Wooldridge and we headed for Dover.

Metal Mickey used the drive down the A1 to familiarise himself with the workings of his brand new GPS, he had just about managed that by the time we reached Dover, early enough to catch a ferry before or planned one to Calais. As crossings go it was quite a rough one, but we managed to keep our breakfast down all the way across, even when a 'young' lady threw herself at Standback! We used the time productively to throw some ideas around for next years trips and I'll turn my jottings into reality as soon as I can. It had dried up slightly by the time we had reached France, our first port of call was entered into Clara Von Co-pilot and we were off. I would have liked at this point to tell you where we were heading but the trip planning committee (Metal Mickey and Standback) were keeping it secret. Now it the back I became aware of much tutting and head shaking, with mutterings of 'that can't be right' at our GPS estimated time of arrival. After a while I asked what was wrong and was told that the ETA was miles out, I pointed out that Clara was still on English time and all became well in the front again, I still did not know where we were heading, so I thought a quick snooze would be in order.

When I again opened my eyes we were pulling in alongside a Köf diesel shunting loco, it was not shunting, it was not moving, it was not ticking over, I would like to say it was plinthed, but I can not, it was abandoned in the car park of 'Chez Jacky Antiques'! We were at a place called Lontzen, (I think this is possibly the most 'interesting' location to ever appear in a visit report) still in Belgium but only just, the lok was carrying the number Kö 4978 which translates to ex DB 310778 and it made it's way into our cameras. We ignored Montzen (too many locos in one place) that was a mere 2Km away and headed into Germany and our Hotel, the Ibis at Aachen. After winning the fight with the car park barrier and dumping our bags we headed first for the small Hbf depot, it was almost empty containing just 6 numbers. It was the on to the Hbf for a 3 hour stint on the platforms. This proved to be quite entertaining with 14 freights and a fair few passenger services keeping our cameras busy. Metal Mickey suffered the indignity of having a complete photographic list failure attempting to find out if he required 111010, discovering, as he did, that the list was missing everything between 111001 & 111059. Private owner class 66 locos in the shape of Rail4Chem's PB05 and DLC PB03 passed on freightliner services, DB's 151044 powered through on empty flat wagons and SBB's 482044 & 482045 provided further variety to our day. Once the light faded we headed back to the Hotel for a de-louse and a well earned beer, before eating in a nearby restaurant. Our waiter spoke excellent English and provided answers to all our questions with regard to the menu. After filling our bellies we walked back to the Hbf, more to walk down the food than for anything else then returned to our hotel for a final beer before bedtime. This should have been the last entry for today but alas Vesuvius erupted at 23:52 waking everyone in the room (bar himself) before finally going quiet at 00:17!

**'Chez Jacky Antiques' car park, Lontzen (14:10) ex DB Kö 4978 (310778) Aachen Hbf Depot (15:00) 362390/582 643215/224/715/724 Aachen Hbf (15:15 – 18:30) 110337/377 111007/010/014/113/125/152**

111157/160 140388/495/752/837 146006/010/018/019/026 151044 152069/128 155262 185255  
294399 362915 406012/013 425059/522/523/573  
643202/203/209/210/214/215/223/224/225/226/702/703/709/710

643714/715/723/724/725/726 SNCB 161/62/63 SBB 482044/045 Private Owner DLC PB03  
Rail4Chem PB05 1202 Thayls 4322/31/41 **Aachen Hbf (22:00 – 22:30)** 111151 146006 SBB 482014

The usual Ibis breakfast selection was indulged in this morning and we had the entire breakfast room to ourselves, but then what do you expect at 07:00 on a Saturday morning. After eating our fill we walked down to the Hbf, armed ourselves with a 'Schönes-Wochenende' ticket boarded RE4859 the 08:13 'Rhein-Serg Express' from Aachen to Segan, which we would ride to Köln. The train was pulled along by electric loco 111115 and for most of the journey we had the top deck of the carriage to ourselves. Stolberg produced 295715/758/777, but this was the only real excitement until 103184 was seen just outside our destination. A quick change of platform saw us board RE11109 the 09:34 to Koblenz, which was worked by 146024. The train was a 'wedge', we were lucky to find seats, again on the top deck, of the last carriage, where we were re-united with the over sixties, naked, cycling club, the leader of which looked suspiciously like Bryan King (where were you at 09:40 on this morning then Bryan?). Obviously being drunk in charge of a pushbike it not a criminal offence in Germany as they were going through bottles of wine at an alarming rate before leaving the train at Remagen. From there to Koblenz we had plenty of room, more than enough to spot 225021 at Koblenz Lutzal and to gaze out into the pouring rain during our 15min signal check outside our destination. We eventually entered the Hbf, just in time to see a steam lok departing from the opposite end, well to be precise, the steam from the lok as it departed. It was still raining, the group split into two, with Metal Mickey and Standback taking a taxi back to Lutzal for a visit to the DB preservation site located there, and The Exiled Brummie plus myself staying on Koblenz Hbf to photograph the passing freight. I think the jury is still out on who made the best choice, it rained heavily for the first hour, we sheltered in one of the many waiting huts on the platform ends, emerging only to photograph privately owned, black liveried 185557 as it passed with a freight. After that first hour the rain obligingly stayed away, the freight picked up and MWB V1201 (ex DB 202753) put in an appearance. The party was made whole again when the Lutzal two returned and we all boarded RB12518 the 13:18 from Koblenz to Köln, pushed by 143833 and rode it to Linz.

Linz is the home of the SVG railway company and their railbus number 102 (EX DB 798623) was standing in the platform as we arrived. I must admit we had been tempted to take a ride in this line, but Linz is also a well known freight 'hot spot' for the west bank of the Rhein. If we had known then, what we know now, we would have rode the line! We stayed exactly one hour, 4 freights passed, the highlight being 140816+140821 heading towards Koblenz with a well loaded coal train, MWB V1202 (ex DB 202630) left the yard and Metal Mickey managed to wipe his camera's memory card of all the photos he had taken at Lutzal, other than that it was crap! We found out why the minute we boarded or next train. This was RB12520, the 14:53 Linz to Köln, which was being propelled by 143856. The second we sat down brought the announcement of a delay due to engineering work on the line and the single line working in progress had caused the diversion of freight down the opposite side of the river. MWB1202 had positioned it's self at the rear of the long engineers train, which was topped by 261671 when we saw it at Unkel.

We parted company with 143856 at Köln Deutz where we stayed, in the fading light for just over two and a half hours. Köln has changed a lot in the years we have been coming and now most trains in and out are units of some form, EMU's have replaced many 143 on the S-Bahn services, DMU's have replaced almost all the class 218's on the Trier service and all long distance express trains are now ICE units. This said there are still locos to be had, with class 101, 111 & 143 still performing regular turns. 18:35 brought the arrival of 111115 with RE4876 for Aachen which gradually lost time the entire journey, finally arriving at Aachen 21mins late at 20:07, with a dinner reservation at 20:30 we had to get a move on.

We made it, but the excellent, English speaking waiter of yesterday had been replaced by Manuel from 'Faulty Towers' who promptly threw dishes all over the floor, changed Warwick's fries for a baked potato and was unable to produce any large beers, opting instead for beers served in 'obtrex' glasses! That said, the food was once again excellent, even if the Chicory was a bit too spicy for three of our party. We rounded the day off with a final beer in the hotel and headed for bed, looking forward to our planned visit to Gremburg in the morning.

**Aachen Hbf (08:00 – 08:15) Stolburg Hbf (08:34)** 152165 294715/758/777 **Düren (08:50)** 423796  
**Köln Ehrenfeld (09:12)** 112166 151064/105 362540 **Köln Hbf (09:25 – 09:35) Köln West (09:40)**  
 101048 294767 HGK DE13/62/84 **Bonn Hbf (10:00)** TLG 10 (ex DB 232446) **Remagen (10:20)**  
 643005/024/505/524 **Koblenz Lützel (10:45)** 225021 **Koblenz Hbf (10:48 – 13:18)**  
 101044/051/067/078  
 101088/093/131 110166/401/437 143168/263/657/822/833/910/919 146022 151010/027 152060  
 155008 181202/222 185557 189022/056 218411 363710 401019/071/520/571  
 425028/054/091/101/105/134/136  
 425594/603/640 612122/622 643016/017/516/517 OBB 1116248 SBB 482047 Private Owner ERS  
 6604/07 MWB 1201 (202753) VT 257/259/262/265 **Koblenz Lützel (13:22)** 101039 185270 294808  
 preserved EMU 430114/414 Neuwied (13:30) 185172 **Bad Honningen (13:45)** 189069 **Linz (13:51 –**  
**14:51)** 140816/821 143568/910 151030 189096 425102 SNCF 37022 Private Owner MWB V1202 (ex  
 DB 202630) SVG 102 (ex DB 798623) **Unkel (15:07)** 143164 Private owner EBN 261671 (ex DB  
 261671) **Troisdorf (15:33)** 152021 423534 Private owner RSE 364428 **Köln Dutz (15:55 – 18:35)**  
 101001/003/033/085/097/112/119/122/136 110363/373  
 111008/011/014/015/113/118/125/128/146/148  
 111159 112158/164/166 143259/552/568/588/600/605/612/618/833/856/910  
 146006/013/014/015/017  
 146019/024/029 218137 401013/068/513/568 402004/011/019/039 403001/002/004/005/011/015/016  
 403017/025/035/506/510 406001/002/012/552  
 423038/043/047/051/053/057/192/193/194/196/198/249  
 423250/251/255/256/258/263/291/293/296/298/300/534/539/541/546/547/691/696/698/748/754/762/7  
 91 425037/038/054/092/098/101/102/103/105/528/538/591/596/597 628508/704  
 644002/005/011/014/016/018/019/021/022/025/027/028/032/034/038/043/047/051/053/062/063/502/5  
 16  
 644521/551/563 928508/704 Private owner LTE 185529 Thayls 4303/43 **Köln Ehrenfeld (18:50)**  
 151089/095/096 362540 644043/053 Private Owner WLE 51

A further eruption from Vesuvius, this time at 05:07 brought the final day to a start, despite repeated attempts I failed to get back to sleep and hit the breakfast bar at 07:00. Checkout was totally painless and we were on the road by 07:30. The Technical Collage at Aachen west was our first stop, but this failed to produce the expected Köf, so we marched on to Aachen West SP. This did produce, 14 numbers in all including Blue and Beige liveried 225027. The drive to Köln Gremburg took less time than we had thought, unfortunately we arrive at exactly the same time as the entire Köln fire service. There was a strong smell of electrical burning in the air and we decided against speaking to the depot engineer when a mini-bus loaded with police arrived, so we visited the nearby yard, 11 numbers, and headed for Eifeltor Yard. Extensive road works in the area caused the use of our 'Manually Accessed Positioning System, or MAPS for short, in order to locate the entrance. Once we had obtained permission a walk round found 36 locos scattered around, including designated museum lok 151049 in the old green livery and no fewer that 12 SBB electric locos. The sun had come out and we managed the odd photo, but it was nothing compared to what we had missed at Gremburg (Oh well, we will just have to come back sometime).

We were chasing time now, heading back towards Calais and our Ferry, Shaarbeek was to be our next port of call, SNCB diesel 5217 broke up the journey by being close enough to the E40 at Leuven to be identified and the catering department produced coffee all round. Schaarbeek was bathed in bright sunlight when we arrived, an ask got the nod and a walk round produced 74 numbers, the shed front was packed with withdrawn shunting locos and 5511 allowed it's self to be photographed. We were running early and so headed for the depot at Merelbeek, it is behind a large gate, which was closed, forcing us to tackle the squark box. The conversation, in French, went along the lines of 'can we visit your depot please', 'do you have a permit?' 'no, we thought we would ask you' 'you better come in then.' With that the gate opened, we were half expecting the engineer to say no once we got to him, thinking he may have the intellectual capacity of a boiled potato and be playing a game, but he turned out to be a very nice man and allowed our full visit. 69 numbers were at home, the position of the sun allowed excellent photos and we even managed to 'cop' something.

Final trip of the year now over, we did the usual beer stop and loaded down with cheep wine blinded all the pilots attempting to land at standstill airport. It's great thanks to all the people involved,

everyone did something to make this trip work. We will start again in 2007 so watch out for us, you may even want to join in, you will be welcome.

**Aachen West SP (07:45)** 140043/864 155161/203/231/256 225011/024/025//026/027/028 241803  
690501 **Köln Gremburg Yard (08:50)** 140399 152108 155261 290045  
294169/175/200/693/706/830/856 **Köln Eifeltor Yard (09:30)** 139314 140369/627  
151049/058/140152002/150 155056/116/141/199/262 185017/043/046/078/189 189063  
294393/787/807 SBB 421373/375/376/378/387/388/396 482019/021/022/026/042 Private Owner  
V1001-21 185554 **E40 close to Leuven (11:53)** 5217 **Schaarbeek Depot (12:20)** 545 774 1190  
1344 2147 2216/23/43 2311/23/48/58 2632 2703/19/40/59 5183 5212/15 5301 5509/11/12 5941 6077  
6221/23/49/53/81/82/94 7336/38/60/73/80/87/88/90/92/93 8011/32/35/37/49/52/55/64/65  
8201/02/03/04/06/07/08/10/11/13/17/19/22/33/41/43/72 ES208/401/407 Steam 29.013 with Thyals  
4345 passing **Merelbeek Depot (14:10)** 335/64/88 416/20/39 569 601/04/74/88 712/43 1212  
1301/08/11/14/15/19/29/34 2368/70 2507 2752 4158/59/62/67/68/70/71/74/76/89/92 6210/29/38  
7311/53/56/67/68 7718/79/80/84/85/86/91/93/94/95/96/97 7801/02/05/09/20/22/25/35 9123/36/50/52