

European Branch to Switzerland, Germany, France and a little bit of Austria 30th April to 4th May 2004.

An alarm call at 01:45 signalled the start of our latest European tour (not good for the marriage) and at 02:20 The Exiled Brummie and Augustus arrived at Blyth where I joined them. A brief call to shoehorn Metal Mickey into the car and we were on our way to Birmingham airport. Here Toby was located lounging around in the departure area and with the whole party now together we made our way to the check in. Duo did the honours, our 06:15 flight to Stuttgart departing and arriving bang on time, Europcar know the script and we were underway at just after 09:40. Now the more observant among you will have already noticed our soon to arise problem, I will not spoil it for those who have not noticed as all will be reviled as you read on.

With Clara in control we arrived at Karlsruhe depot with no problems at all, a visit was secured, also with no problems, and our guided tour found 26 numbers "on shed." Included in the numbers were a short line of "withdrawn" class 218 diesels, 218238/297/302/306 and if our understanding was correct these have been sold to Iran! Clara lost the plot slightly during our trip to the nearby RBF causing the intervention of the Manually Accessed Positioning System (MAPS for short) to complete the journey. It was worth the effort as 12 locos were stabled in the freight yard. We stopped off at Rastatt next, here the expansive yard was surprisingly empty, however departmental 701032, oblivious to it's withdrawn status, was moving around in the station area and 203305 passed with a short freight to break up the almost constant stream of passenger trains passing through the station. We had to drag ourselves away to continue our journey. Offenburg depot was our next stop, again a full visit was secured with no problems, 290001 was among the 22 numbers at home and some excellent photos were possible in the bright sunlight. We spent the next hour on the main station at Offenburg which allowed us to enjoy our lunch, you get the feeling that this station is far busier at times, but we had very little movement to enjoy, with just one freight, hauled by BLS 485004, and the local passenger workings, in the hands of class 110 electrics, providing any interest. Lunch over we drove on to Freiburg, the massively overgrown GBF was hiding 5 locos, including shunter 365126 then a full depot visit produced 18 further numbers, including preserved steam loco 85 007.

Tired we crossed the boarder into France and made our way to the Ibis at Mulhouse. After scrubbing of the dirt we walked to the main station where we found 24 numbers stabled, including electric locos 20202/06/10 the first members of this class we have ever seen. As darkness arrived we found a small restaurant, enjoyed garlic snails and large steaks, not to mention a beer or two, before retiring to bed, knackered!

Karlsruhe Depot (10:40) 110350/467 143886/925
218207/220/238/289/294/297/299/302/306/393/479 290065 333671 363445/685 365101
425709 612503 628267/294 928267/294 **Karlsruhe DMU Depot (11:00)** 628229/292/308
928229/292/308 with 403503 and 406052 passing **Karlsruhe RBF (11:25)**
140381/627/646/768/772/779 143314/804/886 152047 185075/112 **Rastatt BHF (12:05)**
101020/067 110466 120160 151099 181224 203305 294233 401052/552 701032 **Offenburg
Depot (13:25)** 110467 139315 140122/421/525/766/826/828 152004 185002 290001
294073/088 333668 335007/030/177 365646 701004 712002 998045 private owner VT519
Offenburg HBF (14:00 – 15:00) 101091 110352/383/448/471 111061 140154 185056
294110 401073/087/573/587 Private Owner VT511/12/16/17/20/22/23/24/26 SNCF DMU
X73911 BLS 485004 **Freiburg GBF (16:20)** 140232/401/607/634 365126 **Freiburg Depot
(16:45)** 110458/462/463/470/481 111060/064 143007/308/312/317/332/350/972 335105/107
Steam 85007 **Mulhouse Station (21:00 – 21:20)** 15007 20202/06/10 22232/40 25125/153
26144/156/160/167/219/221 67425/469 72121/145/163 SNCB 1323/38/40 SBB 560001/003

After a welcome nights sleep, we all enjoyed our breakfast then loaded ourselves into the car for the next leg of this trip. Running out of Mulhouse along the railway, electric locos 16671/722/725 were all identified at the head of passenger stock before we found the right road to Belfort. At the main station we found Y8170 performing shunting duties and bought a town map to locate the stabling point. Well aware of the recent terrorist troubles, we were somewhat surprised at the warmth of our welcome and that we were allowed to visit without a guide! 17 numbers were our reward for the trip round this compact little SP, 72044 provided me with an excellent photo and Metal Mickey developed a limp. (A limp what? I hear you ask.) Round at the Alstom works 37008 and 36237 were both on display before we headed off towards Besaçon.

In need of fuel and a town centre map, we pulled into a petrol station, what a top decision this turned out to be. It was situated on the top of a hill overlooking the main station! We used this opportunity to view the stabled locos and backed up by a visit to the station identified 13 numbers. In our attempts to find the depot, Y7883 was located in Trépillot yard and a long, drawn out, complicated piece of navigation was rewarded with our only refusal of the whole tour, once we eventually located it. A useful overbridge provided us with a good viewing point and enabled us to identify 8 further numbers. We were now heading for Switzerland. The route Clara provided for us was, well, "scenic" to say the least and even the boarder guard, who was sat in a little wooded sentry box, was so surprised by our crossing he saluted as we passed.

Our first Swiss depot was somewhat of an accident, we were passing through Saignelégier, on the way to Biel, when we noticed a narrow gauge line, leading to a station with a EMU stabled in it. Upon exploration we found that by this station were two depots belonging to the "Chemins de fer du Jura". Our obvious interest brought the station supervisor out of his office, his excellent English soon established our intentions and he gave us the keys to the depot inviting us to help ourselves, well you cannot turn that sort of invitation down, can you? A tour of both the depots found 23 numbers at home, however an inspection of the excellent ICRS Austrian / Swiss number book found that these numbers were not included. The problem was solved when our friendly station master provided us with a stock list. It is a real pity that time did not allow us to travel on this line, it is something we will have to put right at a later date. We eventually moved on to Biel, the main station provided us with 8 numbers and a driver gave us directions to the depot. On the way there withdrawn 77003 was noted in the Gutterbahnhof and an ask at the depot was met with a positive response for a visit. A steady walk round found in the region of 50 numbers "on shed" including withdrawn 11402 and the unique 12504. After saying our goodbyes we headed of to Olten and booked into our hotel, the Ibis, before making our way to the station. This was empty, so we moved on to the main yard, identifying 9 numbers, then the depot. Here we were again welcomed warmly and allowed access to every area. A full visit produced 33 numbers and many interesting photos, before we retired to the hotel, de-loused and enjoyed a beer or two with our evening meal. Augustus began to tell us stories of his youth hostelling days, Metal Mickey instantly fell asleep, Toby poked his own eyes out with a hot skewer and the Exiled Brummie and myself stuffed Brie in our ears, bed was a blessing this night.

Mulhouse Station Yard (07:45) 16671/722/725 X73555 Z11510 **Belfort Station (08:40)** Y8170 **Belfort SP (08:55)** 16668/740 22329 25682 26142/152/166 63703 64074 66445 67466 72044 X73515/519/744/745/747 **Belfort Fauborg des Vosges Yard (09:25)** 36237 37008 **Besaçon de la Votte Station (10:35)** 25634/641/656/682 XR6203/211/246 Y7662 Y8451/52 Z9517 Z99582 **Besaçon Trépillot Yard (11:05)** Y7883 **Besaçon Depot [view] (11:35)** 66421 X73612/746/50/52/54/55/56 **Saignelégier (13:25) [2x Depots and Station]** Chemins de fer du Jura narrow gauge 70 402/11 504 603/08/12/13/21/32/42 704/12/13/21/22/51 - 56/63 **Biel Station (14:45)** SBB 778 9501 16383 234074 460037/091 560026/065 **Biel GBF (15:10)** 77003 **Biel Depot (15:50)** 812 923 1404 11160 11279/290 11402/419/434/458/468/476/491 11516 11635/675 12504 16388/395 16424/455/456 16801/813/814 18411/413/434 18508 18810 460050/097 560018/020/062 620042 Tem94 Tem162/75 Tem295/98 Tem332/40/49 Tm231900 Tm456/67/97 Tm614 Tm9674 **Olten Yard (18:00)** 11137 11242/244/254 16443 16820 460005/035/082 **Olten Depot (18:30)** 10001 10439 11175 11234/240 11338 11414/421/427/432/454/462/465/472/495 11512/514 11628

16449 18439/451 18502 18817/839 234056/065 235008 841017 Tm422/79 Tm699 Tm768
Tm9563

Day three was a Sunday, a good breakfast started the day well, this was followed by a steady drive to Zürich and three hours on the main station. Perched on the end of platform 6, we made good use of the “facilities” while the constant train movements provided plenty of action and the comment “it’s a good job we came on a Sunday, I’ve almost run out of film.” As you would expect for a main line terminus, all the action was passenger, many trains were loco hauled and the Swiss liking for different liveries provided a colourful interlude. Eventually we dragged ourselves away and after finding 7 numbers in the yard at Muttenz, made our way to the main depot at Basel Wolf. Once again we received a warm welcome, well at least from the only person we could actually find in the entire depot, and were allowed to make our own way around. Over 90 numbers were at home at 12:30 on this Sunday, once again the many different liveries provided plenty of colour and the many different classes of loco provided plenty of interest. Among the locos at home were preserved 14305, hire lok ES64 U2 102 and rare 10030/32/34, SNCF’s 20203 passed us and a unidentified ex DB class 142 electric tantalised us, sat far out in the depot yard.

Visit over we headed for Basel Bad Bhf, this German station is in Switzerland and, no doubt, during the week sees plenty of passing freight action, this though was a Sunday. Five of the old BLS electrics were stabled here, 161/70/79/80/90 and a good smattering of German rolling stock made the call well worth while. After negotiating the customs (oh no, not the rubber glove again), we made a stop at Weilham Rhein yard to identify the shunting locs, before making our way to the depot at Haltingen. This was a new depot for me and I, for one, was pleased when a full visit was allowed. Apparently the depot was quite full with 35 numbers (and a turtle) in total, being identified. These included BLS electric locs 465007/008/012 – 015/018 and preserved EMU 488251. The turtle carried no number, but was in all over green livery, any help in identification should be sent to Toby, who now owns a German turtle stock book! Now we headed back into France and made our next stop at Mulhouse Nord SP. A request for a visit was granted and in bright sun a walk round the SP produced 18 locos. After checking into the hotel we did the short walk to Mulhouse station, here we spent a pleasant 40mins photographing the abundant locos stabled in and around it. Mission over we located a fantastic 1st floor restaurant and indulged in the finest food that France can offer, and I mean that!

Walking back to the hotel, reflecting on an excellent day, we were disturbed by my phone ringing, unusual for to reasons, one it was 9.30 in the evening in England and two, it’s normally switched off. It was my wife, “did you fly out with Duo?” she asked, once I had said yes, she started to laugh, “do you know that they have gone bust?” After confirming this was not a joke, I shared my new found knowledge with the other members of the trip, the effect was instant. We were now stuck in France at 9.45pm on a Sunday, with the next day a Bank Holiday and no way to get home. S**T!! For all those who failed to make the connection at the start of this report, you know now.

Zurich HBF (08:30 – 11:30) 1404 11109/111/117/121/128/145/147/148/152/191/94/97
11203/20611212/237/245/249/257/260/268/271/286
421397450004/006/010/012/014/020/023/027/031/032/033450034/035/040/044/050/053/056/
057/062/067/074/075/081/083/087/090/094/096/104/107/114
460007/008/012/019/025/038/039/043/048/061/065/067/074/078/079/083/084/090/091/093/1
02 500032/100/109/110/114/119/130/131 **Muttenz Yard [view] (12:15)** 11177 11688 18840
841009 843003 Tm9517 DB 711112 **Basel Wolf Depot (12:30)** 1406 10030/032/034
11105/110/165/168/18211183/187/278/316/319/321/334/351/352/413/426/440/474/478/504/5
13/604/629/630/632/636/64411651/659/672 14305 16392/512/513/516 17006
18401/429/430/431/435/446/501/503/822 234067 421373/389
460062/103/104/108/109/111/114/116/117/118 481001/002/004
482004/010/011/012/016482019/020/022/026/027/028/029 562002 620060/061 841031
Tem355 Tm493 905 8755 9504/40 9677 SNCF 20203 hire lok ES64U2102 **Basel Bad Bhf
(14:10 – 14:40)** DB 101040/091/115 110208/468 111048 143145 401007/061/507/561
611004/035/046/504/546 641002/005/011/012/016 BLS 161 170/79 180 190 SBB 561000

Weilam Rhein (15:15) 111064 294-81/118/135/230 403015 406003 SBB 561004 hire lok
ES64U2097 **Haltingen Depot (15:45)** 111050 140534/783 155007/230
185015/091/097/114/127 218397 294123 335144 611030/530 628234/236/701
641006/008/014/017 928234/236/701 BLS 465007/008/012/013/014/015/018 preserved DB
488251 798565 825015 **Mulhouse Nord SP (17:10)** SNCF 20213 25157/158/674/680
26177/190 36001 61012/015 63607/728 64074 66706/707 67471 Y8112/16 **Mulhouse
Station (18:55)** 15003/007/012/044 16722 20204/207/210/211/212 22234
25125/256/164/622/692 26078/126/136/145/152/162/167/197/221 67422/473 72147
X73521/554 Y8006 SNCF 1302/29/39/52 CFL 3002 SBB 562001

After a very quiet breakfast, we loaded ourselves into the car and headed back into Switzerland. I "sweet talked" Clara while Pete sat in the back making phone call after phone call attempting to find us a flight home on Tuesday. The Swiss customs were massively interested in a German registered car, full of Englishmen, coming from France, photographing trains (don't even try to think about it). They eventually let us pass and we eventually arrived at Pratteln Station. At around the same time we secured flights home, alas they were from Nurnberg to Standsted and not Stuttgart to Birmingham, but at least we could get back to England. We spent 10mins short of three hours at Pratteln. After a slow start freight trains began to pass at regular intervals, which, along with a few loco hauled passenger workings, kept our cameras busy. During this time Europcar kindly allowed us to return our hire car to Nurnberg and then took a one way booking from Standstead to Birmingham, with all this in the bag our mood visibly lifted. After the passage of 11611+11116+11640+11297 on a short freight we had to leave Pratteln. If anyone is thinking of visiting this area this is one place you should visit, especially during the week.

The small depot at Winterthur was our next port of call, there is a small Electric shunter here numbered Ee2/2 No1, judging by the state of it, it's preserved. I have so far failed to find out anything about this loco, so if anyone knows anything about it, let me know please. As well as this 12 other numbers were identified, but most of the depot was locked up or fenced off, with plenty more visible inside, so, after many minutes of frustration, we moved on. We did the short drive to St Gallen, two shunters 234009/118 were noted in the GBF before we eventually found somewhere to park and spent an hour on the HBF. Despite not being over busy, this place is most interesting, with a narrow gauge line at on side of the station and the standard gauge line at the other. This, obviously, necessitated plenty of dashing about for the best photographs, sustained by massive hot dogs and plenty of water allowing us chance to spend our Swiss francs. As time was getting on we had to head off. After crossing the boarder into Austria we visited Bregenz station which provided two EMU's and 1144281, before we headed into Germany (well I did say it was "a little bit of Austria" in the title!). Despite going the wrong way down a one way street, we arrived at our final hotel, the inter-city on Ulm station (literally) in one piece, where we spent a pleasant 50mins spotting from our bedroom windows and scrubbing up for dinner.

The short walk to the town centre was rewarded with dinner, taken by the river, of traditional Swabian food washed down with many a bottle of local brew, these last nights are always a good "blow out" and this was no exception, sleep came easy this night.

Pratteln Station (09:00 – 11:50)

11122/136/166/188/297/303/315/318/447/467/468/478/483/499/51911611/633/636/640/689
234057 460003/036/042/062/076/099/100/105/114 482004/008/010/020
560010/029/031/034/035/037/038/042 562001/003/004/005 841020 Tm9581 BLS
465006/015 DB 185091/107/111/126/147 **Winterthur Depot (13:55)** 160 1643 11197/346
16363 450019 540073 560071 Te206 Tm263 BLS 206 "preserved" Ee2/2 No1 **St Gallen Gbf
(14:55)** 11211 234009/118 **St Gallen Hbf (15:15 – 16:20)** 11127/257/334/496/520 16364
456091/094 460083 500005/018/707/717 526687 540037 560032/121/126 566072 576052
Appenzeller Bahnen (narrow gauge) 12 13 14 15 **Rheineck (16:50)** Tm460 **St Margrethen
(16:55)** Tm362 Tm755 **Hard (17:05)** OBB 1116108 passing **Bregenz (17:35)** 1144281
4020115/117 **Ulm Hbf (19:10 – 20:00)** [from hotel window] 101015 111023/082 140497/840
143860 218340/410 364533 365681 612087/587 650101/107 Ex DB class 202 150.01
Private owner lok V1001003

After the traditional German breakfast of bacon, eggs, beans and fried bread that the Inter – City hotels always offer, it was time to start our final day. Ignoring the nearby Ulm depots, we opted instead for an hour on the station. As this was the morning rush, 68 numbers were logged in all, there is still a bit of diesel haulage to be had with six trains headed by class 218 diesels either departing or arriving in the time we spent there. Alas only one freight train passed, 294164 doing the honours with a short trip working. After being “withered by the red cap” who wanted to know what we were doing, we left the station and headed off to the freight yard at München Nord. A request for a visit was met with a positive and a guided tour found over 40 locos stabled. Our guide allowed us inside the cabs of various electric locos and even allowed Augustus to start up a class 232 diesel (yes, he did wet himself)! After saying our thanks we moved on to the depot at Ingolstadt. The bus stop still isn't there John, but we found the entrance anyway and as usual a warm welcome was extended to us. A full visit here produced 40 further numbers including green liveried 151003 and no fewer than 6 class 139 electric locos.

As our departure airport had been changed, we now decided to try for a visit to Nürnberg NN2 depot. Toby, who complained that the locos were not lined up in numerical order the last time we visited here, became visibly excited, not at the prospect of visiting the depot, at the thought of seeing more Nürnberg trams. Once again a warm welcome was extended to us and a driver was summoned to show us round. Now, this driver had just arrived from Hambourg and did not know the depot layout at Nürnberg, so we ended up showing him round. We did not quite make the magic 100 numbers today, but it was Tuesday so we settled for the 97 in residence. We spent our final 50mins perched on the end of platform 4 at Furth Bhf, we only picked this because it was close to the airport, being entertained by almost constant freight movements. All too soon we had to leave, Nürnberg airport is well laid out and very easy to use. Air Berlin had us away on time, and Europcar were as good as their word at Standstead, so good in fact that we arrived in Birmingham only 20mins later than we would have done with Duo. A massive thanks is due to Pete for everything he did against the overwhelming odds and, as always, a big thanks to Warwick for the driving.

We are off to Germany again in June, with a visit to the locomotive works at Bremmen on the cards, keep an eye open for our next report.

Ulm Hbf (07:20 – 08:30) 101015/086 111017/042/080/184 112122/188 151151
218165/166/214/231218406/410 294164/364 364533 401002/014/056/502/514/556
611008/014/021/022/028/040/042/043611047/049/508/521/522/528/540/542/543/547/549
612076/079/081/150/576/579/581/650 628341/348 642084
650004/013/018/102/103/112/116/203/209 701069 928341/344/348 OBB 1116123 **München Nord Rbf (10:20)** 139556 140178/218/396/399/528/578/594/795/825/826/834
151015/034/078/167 152053/111/160 155131 182524 185001 189029/901 232129/445
290177 332601 335167 360007/161/208/221/252/307 362528 OBB 1016009/025 1044077
1116051/052/076/149 1144205/237/273 **Ingolstadt Depot (12:10)** 110233
139135/145/213/309/555/561 140018/117/186140438/506/612/802 151003/022/082
152079/080/119 185081/130 290190/198/326/705/708/778 322646 335074/089/114/122/141
363180/661 364882 365129 701117 OBB 1116017 **Nürnberg NN2 Depot (14:20)** 139553
140041/046/179/317/459/709/721/725/797/847151024/036/041/043/071/119151134/159/163/
168152002/005/011/012/017/020/039/068/081/086/103/132/140/152 182011/017/020182025
189001/006/007/024/029/032/035/036/037/040/042 212034/248
232003/005/030/131/154/209/238/349/368/409/416/427/480/543/553/581/587/632/634/670/6
75/686 233176/289/596 290062/183/514/679 294750 333570/662 335073 362564 363177
364881 365198 701043/066 702129 OBB 1116074 1144255 Hire loks ES64U2036/082 **Fürth (Bay) Hbf (15:50 – 16:40)** 101007 111166/167/174/180/211/219 140797
143131/148/165/887 151042 152031/902 189007/029 294402/799 401019/519 403001
614010/035/036/037/038/083/084 914019/035 934442 hire lok ES64U2041.