

## France, Germany, Belgium - May 2009

It was around 23:30 that the party for our first tour of 2009 came together in Blyth. Loading into Standback's mini-bus were the exiled Brummie, Horizontal Harry, Metal Mickey (and his kitchen sink), the Standback Fusilier and myself. This trip was to be of four days (and the luggage we carried would easily last that long!) to 'test the water' in France and visit the steam preservation centre in Tuttlingen, Germany. As a bonus we would 'dip a toe' in Belgium and I had a chance of seeing my last class 101 electric, 101077. I took the wheel, as usual, and the drive to Dover took 3 hours 30 mins, as usual, which meant, as usual, by Newark the back of the bus was full of snoring people and we boarded an early ferry. It was almost empty, a full English breakfast was acquired (and eaten) and by the time we had washed it down with a hot chocolate (I know, but we are getting old now) it was time to get off. With Standback now at the wheel, I stayed awake long enough to see the back of French customs before the welcome darkness of sleep arrived.

I woke to find us parked at Amiens depot, it was just starting to get really light but, as we suspected, an ask got a polite, but firm refusal. We viewed the depot yard from where we were stood, then walked the length of the outside fence, this netted a total of 29 numbers for the first entry in our books. We did the short drive round to the 'Sernam' terminal, locating 3 Y's and allowing our first French photo for over 4 years in the shape of 63719. We were still one hour up and, although we had not planned to call, we were passing the entrance to Longueau depot, the gate was open, and so we gave it a try. When the foreman finally got off the phone a request for a visit was met with a firm handshake and a yes, we were staggered. He asked us not to enter the old roundhouse, as it was falling down, and not to cross the running line, but otherwise we could do what we pleased, so we did, 35 numbers were our reward, these included locma's 0055 & 0112, plus class 67XXX diesels in three different liveries, we worked our cameras overtime. Once we were sure we had everything we set off in the direction of Châlons – Sur- Marne. During the journey the catering trolley sprang into life and I received the news from home that an old friend had sadly passed away. Colin was a fellow enthusiast as well as a highly regarded work colleague, I spend hours with him looking at his magnificent photos of \Chinese steam, drinking beer and putting the world to rights, he will be sadly missed. The foreman at Châlons would not play ball, greeting us with the French version of 'bog off' his previous job must have been at Toton. I managed a decent shot of diesel 75059 arriving with a freight before we departed for Metz. Once again the entire back of the mini-bus lapsed into a coma, me among them, waking only upon arrival at Metz depot. We were met with a further no, but told the depot was holding an 'open day' the following day and we could return then if we wanted. We made do with a view of the depot and the nearby Sablon yard, which contained private diesel 99879182582-6, or ex DB 212344 if you want the easy version, this netted 27 numbers, then turned our noses into Germany.

The depot foreman at Karlsruhe was delighted to allow our visit, it was a real pity then that only 218343, 218476 & 218484 were at home! Down in the former DMU depot we had better luck with preserved DMU VT608801+VT908801 rubbing shoulders with 5 stored class 218 diesels and 212093. Our next call was the GBf, as usual there was no one here to ask, but, also as usual, all the stabled locomotives

were easily visible from the road over bridge, there were 7 here today. As we left 185305+185244 passed with a freight and led the way into the main station. We stayed an hour, in the pouring rain, and were rewarded with 39 numbers. Two further freights passed, hauled by 155251 and 140656, white liveried 110325 and duel voltage 181204 provided photos at either end of the station, MWB's V1353 (ex DB 213338) was stabled by platform 13, 101098 arrived with IC2360 the 17:34 Stuttgart to Karlsruhe but best of all was my final class 101 electric, 101077 which 'stared' on IC2272 the 18:54 Karlsruhe to Kassel, which just had to be photographed.

We used the Novotel tonight, just over 1Km from the station, which put paid to our usual late night visit, it provided an excellent dinner of roast lamb and a beer or two before we retired to bed.

**Amiens Depot [view] (08:10)** 15062 16601 27086/107 63632 65787 66227/450  
67406/415/423/450/522/533/602/614 69441  
75004/005/010/018/052/057/073/075/080  
75083/087 X76604 **Amiens 'Sernam' Terminal (08:35)** 63719 67602 Y7193 7225  
8328 **Longueau Depot (09:00)** 63409/673/707/746/766 66116/126/202/462  
67213/247/254/256/317/356/419/453/469/480/494/520/607 75012  
X72721/722/731/732 73595 73610 73766 76585 Y7147 7253 7733 8082 Locma  
0055 0112 **Châlons – Sur – Marne [view] (11:55)** 27006/138 67280 69428  
75059/098 Y7405 **Metz Depot [view] (14:00)** 37011/014 63665/695/988 64708/808  
67210/273 X4762/66/85 73815 73913/918/919 8556 8761/62/66 Y8115 Z24581  
27730/734 Private 99879182582-6 (Ex DB 212344) With TGV 505/09 passing  
**Karlsruhe Diesel Depot (17:05)** 218343/476/484 **Karlsruhe DMU Depot (17:15)**  
212093 218139/222/234/239/240 VT608801 908801 **Karlsruhe Gbf (17:30)** 140632  
151069 152046/110 155085 185340 294751 with 185244/305 passing **Karlsruhe  
Hbf (18:00 – 19:00)** 101071/077/087/098/136 110325 120142 140656 146233  
155251 181204 218343 363666 401078/082/578 403215 425118/203/254/310  
612004/553 628289 928289 SNCF TGV 4418 Private MWB V1353 (ex DB 213338)  
Light Rail 265 316 826/27/31/34/47/79/83/95 911/25.

Yesterdays rain had given way to bright sunshine, an expansive breakfast was enjoyed, Standback having just the two platefuls of bacon, egg & sausage (he's on a diet) before a painless checkout, while watching the passing 'light rail', was follow by an equally painless exit from the car park and a pleasant drive of just over an hour to Steinheim. With very little fuss we located our target, plinthed narrow gauge steam locomotive 99651, which is located outside the 'Vereinshaus' public house, which was unfortunately closed. We were now on our way to Futh-am-der-wald, but 'on the (long) way there, we called at Fichenberg, where in 'Schmidt – Schrott Gmbf (Smith's Scrap yard to you and me) ex DB diesel Kof 323125 now works. The scrap yard is not open at the weekends, but some European branch inventive loco spotting obtained a view, and photograph (of sorts) so honour was satisfied. We waited for 111088 to pass on a passenger working before we were on the way again. Now I'd like to tell you all to sit down, because you will not believe what happened next. A 'tractor pulling' competition was taking place in Seifesthofen, opposite the folk Museum, which, among other things, turned out to house ex DB steam locomotive 50 2613. Now this folk museum resembles 'Auntie Wainrights' second hand shop in the sit com 'last of the summer wine'. We asked if we could photograph the loco, to say they were surprised that five Englishmen wanted to photograph this locomotive

was an understatement, but the response 'yes, but wait while I move the goat' was totally unexpected! We left the goat where it was, but photographed the locomotive anyway. The museum is amazing, it contains everything from a complete helicopter to a First World War gas mask, there were cars of all descriptions, tractors, radio sets, television sets, children's toys and the last surviving dodo bird! We offered them the 'kitchen sink' Metal Mickey had brought along, but they declined. If you are ever in the area, pay the 4 Euros entry fee and have a look round, it's one of those 'must do before you die' experiences that you will never forget.

Next came an hour 'linesiding' at Fürth (Bay) Hbf, just outside Nuremberg, which, despite being a Saturday was very interesting. Freight passed at regular intervals, mainly electric hauled by either class 152XXX or class 185XXX, but 155203 appeared and the undoubted highlight was diesel 233594. Between the freights, passenger working kept our cameras busy; Locon 216 (ex DB 202806) shunted an engineers train into the station and V100 1200 (ex DB 211200) in dark red livery stabled just outside. We had to drag ourselves away for our pre arranged visit to Nuremberg Number 2 depot, the main freight depot for the area. It was well worth the effort, we were expected and allowed round without the aid of a safety net. Around 100 numbers made it into our books, the 'porch silver' liveried 182004 made a nice photo, along with PKP Inter-City locomotive 183602. Inside the shed was blue and grey liveried 189700, but, for me, it was 217003 that I was delighted to photograph, withdrawn on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2007 from Mühlendorf, I thought it had evaded my photograph collection for ever! After say thanks and giving the foreman a bottle of wine, it was a two hour drive to the preservation centre / private operator site at Neuoffingen. During this drive, Harry nodded off (again) and we had an encounter with our first 'umlitung' (diversion) when the road authorities dug up 200yds of road and cause a detour of just under 4 miles. Standback also managed to miss the entry road, he was going too fast for Clara, (warp factor four in a warp factor two limit) and one of the catering department's hot water flasks committed suicide. Despite this we were warmly welcomed and although not 'bursting at the seams' the small depot contained steam locomotive 52 8087, DB DMU 650120 and two privately operated class 66 diesels DE64 & DE673. There were further items of ex DB stock in the holding sidings and we obtained some decent photographs.

About an hour away is Ulm, this was to be our base for the night and provide our last depot call of the day, Ulm Diesel Depot. When we finally found someone to ask we 'got the nod' and a full visit netted 56 numbers, with plenty of both stored and active class 218 diesels, including 218156/161/163/165/166/193 Also here were no fewer than 8 of the old 798/996/998 DMU's' some of which were in excellent condition. We headed for our hotel after this, we used the 'Inter-City' on Ulm Hbf, where, after a quick de-louse, we spent a further 20mins, noting original liveried diesel shunter 364858 (which evaded our attempts to photograph it) and ageing electric 110426 before walking into the town centre for dinner. We used a restaurant by the river and enjoyed traditional Swabian food in the shape of Pork & Turkey steaks with cheese noodles and fried onions followed by apple and cinnamon fritters, delicious! A last beer in the hotel and we (at least in our room) opened the window and fell asleep to the sounds of passing trains.

**Karlsruhe Novotel (06:50 – 07:15) Light Rail 208/11/53 919/21 The old  
Vereinshaus Bahnhof, Steinheim (08:40) ex DB narrow gauge steam 99 651**

**Schmidt Schrott Gmbf, Fichtenberg (09:35)** ex DB 323125 with 111088 passing **Seifsthofen Folk Museum (10:10)** ex DB Steam 50 2613 **Fürth (Bay) Hbf (12:10 – 13:30)** 101088/116 111208 112169 143077/318/826/866 146242/243 152076/078 155203 185057/163/273/311 233594 401005/006/078/505/506/578 402002/022 403006/024/027/510 411009/056/071/525 648306/311/321/806/811/821 Private operator 203142 (ex DB 202806) V100 1200 (ex DB 211200) **Nuremberg NN2 Depot (14:00)** 139163 140117/537/611 151017/034/047/051/055/066/069/073/077/086/089/114/136/154/155/156 152009/016/034/039/041/082/083/084/104/112/114/143/147/160/252 155082/091/203/213/235 182004/006/010/019 185015/046/047/076/083/161/209/233/254/263/265/273/279/307/308/320/358/364 189039/041/055/150/700/907 217003 225804 232255/269/347/413/472/561/589/668/669 233040/076/176/562/709 294599/612/660/716/717/745/747 333658/662 335154 362502/849 363170/177/651 365822 **Neuoffingen (17:10)** DB 650120 ex DB steam 52 8087 diesel 323714/771 Private operator HGK DE64 DE673 Rent – a – Rail VT402 V140.01 with DB 152133 passing **Ulm Diesel Depot (18:20)** 151033 185214/232/237/368 218156/161/163/165/166/193/194/241/351/389/406/409/431/432/436/456/459/487/4 91/495/496 225004/007/017/086/802 232535 294704/729/811/824/833/851/863/869 322298/641 332022 365143 650109/110 798652/653 996225/257/300 998069/131/137/896 **Ulm Hbf (19:30)** 101016/115 110426 11076 146216/219 218260/427 364858 425143/149 440512/517 611519/542 612075/683 650104/111/314

As you will have already guessed an early walk on to the station preceded breakfast, still the original liveried shunting locomotive refused to be photographed! A good breakfast was followed by a speedy checkout and a bit of 'seat of the pant' navigation found a new depot for us, Ulm DMU depot. The foreman was happy to allow our visit and the small, 4 line, shed contained 12 numbers, with a further few outside, both at the front and back, making it was well worth the effort to find it! We moved on to the old Electric depot, it's long since closed but things still stable outside, here today were 101103 & 110437, plus two locomotives of the HZL. Visible across the running line was 365683 and this became our last number from this fascinating railway city before we moved on to the preservation site at Tuttlingen. We arrived here at the same time as a coach load of French enthusiasts, who's main aim seemed to be to drink all the beer, which was slightly off putting to the German who was selling the entry tickets. There are 23 ex DB steam locomotives here, all of them are rusting hulks, there are also the (slightly less) rusting hulks of diesel locomotives 228617, 310102/789/798, some are housed in the dilapidated old roundhouse and some just have trees growing through them, I think they will need a lot more 2 Euro 50 Cent entries before any restoration work can start here! The steam locomotives at our next call, Rottweil, were in a far better state, and made good photographs, it's a pity there were only 3. On the way to Freiburg, we passed 143308 at Himmereich before arrival at Freiburg depot found it all locked up. We had to dodge the squatters to obtain a view and this netted just 10 numbers. To compensate we found Freiburg Gbf, somewhere we have never been, shunting was a locomotive carrying the NVR number 92801203153-2, which was slightly confusing as the front number showed 203406 (ex DB202406) and stabled up were SBB locomotives 421386/390/395 so it was worth the call.

It was time to play 'spot the Kof' and we won the game, finding the plinthed 323823 at Rust, just by Germany's version of Disney land, under the shadow of the 'Blue Fire' mega-coaster, which stands 38 meters tall at its tallest point, giving an acceleration of 0 to 100Kph in 2.5 seconds and pulling 3.8G's in force, alas Metals Mickey felt sick just looking at it and the rest of the party would not wait for me to go on it! It was another plinthed locomotive next, this time a steam loco, 18 323 at Offenburg Fachhochschule. SBB's 421396 tried to hide under a bridge, but failed as we made our way to Offenburg depot. The only person we could find here was a fellow enthusiast, who gave us permission to visit and a walk round produced 24 further numbers and some excellent photos. We now planned to return to France for a short while and try the depot at Strasbourg. The bright sun shine gave way to torrential rain, thunder and lightning, as soon as we put our wheels into France, and this was a prelude to the mood of the depot foreman, We had to make do with an hour on the station, security was everywhere and us taking photos was not on their 'can do list', so we did not. In all we managed to identify 33 numbers and get soaking wet in the process. Once the hour was over we headed back into Germany.

The rain followed, but had eased nicely by the time we arrived at Saarbrücken depot, there is no depot engineer here at the weekends, so the 'driver leader' gave us permission to have a look round. The depot is a mere shadow of its former self, with its main work being to service the light rail (trams to me) sets that serve the area, to that end there was nothing inside the depot but 'light rail' units. Outside was different with 30 real engines stabled for the evening, these included ECR diesels 272602/603, SNCF electrics 37010/014/019/028 and a rather nice looking 181210 which was captured for posterity. As the 'Mercure' we normally use here had doubled its prices, we used the one on the outskirts of town, which supplied us with a very nice dinner of local sausage, followed by lemon tart, all washed down with many a glass of local brew. We managed to ignore the coach load of English tourists that had also made camp there and instead watched the cat drink from the swimming pool, I wondered what went through its mind at the time, maybe something like 'I hope the dog doesn't come back while I'm drinking from its bowl'. As usual we were all tired at the end of the trip, the exiled Brummie was actually asleep before we got to the room and after hitting the light switch I was asleep before the room went dark.

**Ulm Hbf (06:50)** 146220 218439/443/462 425649 611017/047/517 **Ulm DMU Depot (08:00)** 111075 143924  
611003/005/012/025/034/045/050/503/505/512/525/534/545/550 628338 629340  
650100/103/203/318/319/320 928338 **Ulm Electric Depot (08:30)** 101103 110437  
365683 611040/048/049/540/548/549 650027 Private HZL V119/151 **Mengen (09:30)** 650025 **Tuttlingen Preservation Centre (10:30)** Ex DB Diesel 228617  
310102/789/798 Steam 25167 42226 43121 78192 503540/3554/3603/3604/3657  
528019/8020/8043/8051/8057/8069/8111/8125/8130/8138/8169/8176/8191/8198  
**Rottweil (11:55)** Ex DB steam 01519 50245 58111 with 146222 passing  
**Himmereich (13:08)** 143308 **Freiburg Depot [view] (13:30)** 111050/060  
143331/810/972 146234 335090/122 335164 ex DB steam 85007 **Freiburg Gbf (13:55)** 203406 (202406) SBB 421386/390/395 **Rust (14:30)** ex DB 323823  
**Offenburg Fachhochschule (14:58)** Ex DB steam 18323 **Offenburg Hbf (15:10)**  
SBB 421396 **Offenburg Depot (15:20)** 111048 140450 143640 151076/118 152085  
185124/133/136/296/314/347 294613/622/705/786/885 333534/668 335105/118/121

364779 Private OSB 510/522/527 **Strasbourg Station / Depot [view] (16:15 – 17:15)** 15008/020/021 25596 26040/141/148/165 61009/010 63915  
67411/433/464/510/513/517/519/521/569/571 X73902/915 Y7580 7796/97 7876  
8176/84 8204 8536 TGV 511 DB 181222 Saarbrücken Depot (19:00) 110231  
139555 140682 151107 155006/007 181210  
185024/025/034/036/154/158/251/260/281/342/363/367 232359 294651/954/959  
363117 Light Rail 1001/05/07/09/23/28 SNCF 37010/014/019/028 Private ECR  
272602/603

The final morning started with a well laid out breakfast, which we all fully indulged in. Last night's rain had stopped and the one hour drive to Lossheim, and the small museum got quite warm. The museum was open, and the two ex DB Köf diesel shunters we had come to see, 323185/726, were both parked in the sun. It was then a 90min drive to Arlon, the catering department sprang into action and morning coffee, with sticky buns, was served. Passing Bettomburge yard, CFL locomotives 1182 and 4002 were both visible and this set us up for the 10 numbers stabled at Arlon. While we were there electric 2003 arrived heading EC91 the 07:33 Brussels Midi to Chur, which was duly photographed. Next came the depot at Stockem, our request for a visit caused an international incident and a guide was provided. We soon found out why as CFL diesel 1603, preserved Belgium diesel 202020 plus working Belgium steam locomotive 64.169 were all 'on shed' returning from the recent open day at Luxembourg. We were much more interested in the 'working' Nohab diesels, and there were more here today than we have seen collected together for a long time. We understand that these are now out of use, but there were six examples in the 32 numbers we found on depot. A further 90mins saw us passing Namur station on our way to view Salzinnes Works, which proved disappointing with just six numbers visible, these did include further Nohad diesel 5204, a long time Ronet resident. It was Ronet that we visited next, the depot engineer agreeing to our visit and also acting a guide (you could just see the same happening at Toton, couldn't you?). He was happy to explain all about the locomotives and spoke good English, the sun was just right and of the 20 numbers available, over half were photographed.

A long haul back to Calais followed, as usual we visited the 'cheep beer' depot and filled every available space in the mini bus and then did a quick view of Fréthun depot, which held more 'English' locomotives than French, before boarding our ferry home. We had a smooth, but delayed crossing and an easy drive home, so it's thanks to Pete and Malc for the excellent itinerary and organisation, I can not wait for the next one!

**Eisenbahnmuseum Lossheim (08:35)** Ex DB 323185/726 **Bettembourg Yard [from A13] (09:35)** 1182 4002 **Arlon Station (10:10)** 250 636 744 975 2003  
2313/14/33/49/79 ES404 **Stockem Depot (10:40)** 154/55/79 506/07 695  
2002/04/05/12/18 2201 2315/50 4154/57 4406 4510 5201/12 5305/18 5403/07  
6216/51 9135/53 202020 CFL Diesel 1603 Belgium Steam 64 169 **Namur Station (12:20)** 432 624 **Salzinnes Works [view] (12:30)** 2632 5204 5510/30 8242 9147  
**Ronet Depot (12:45)** 1302/05/10/17 2016 2355/67 2605/22/29 5172 6215/55/57  
6319 7765 8221/23 CFL 3013 **Dunkerque Grand-Synthe yard (15:05)** 66726  
**Calais Fréthun Depot [view] (15:40)** 22318 25647/670 66232 DB Schenker (ex EWS) 66028/038 92001 (plus 4 further un-identified ones) Private ECR 77012