

Germany, March 2008

The usual pitch dark morning, that is associated with our first trip of the year, greeted me at 04:15 on the 29th February when I opened my front door to Metal Mickey. It was to be just us two on this trip, despite a late attempt by the exiled Brummie to 'gate crash'. The drive to Leeds / Bradford was never going to take the 2 hours Metal Mickey had insisted on, so at 05:25 we were in the airport. The Jet2 check-in was as empty as I have even known and despite the security taking an unnatural interest in my camera bag, we were still at the gate over 40mins prior to departure. The destination today was to be Amsterdam and Boeing 737-300, registration number G-CELB did this 07:00 departure. We were actually 10mins late getting airborne but expected this to make no difference to our arrival time, we did not plan on the fog. This slowed down arrivals at Amsterdam and after circling for a while our captain decided that we should put down at Rotterdam, a choice made easy by the fact we were running low on fuel! To cut a long story short we arrived over two hour late in Amsterdam, this caused a quick re-think of our schedule which resulted in us dropping the depot at Hengelo and the freight yard at Bad Bentheim and heading straight for Rheine.

We arrived at 14:15 and decided on an hour, come what may. It proved to be quite interesting, 4 freights passed in this time with SBB's 421378 and 6617 from ERS supplementing the DB electrics. Westfalen Bahn units were plentiful but my interest was in 110488, which arrived on an empty stock working and preserved electric 10008 which was stabled in the sidings during our visit. We had to leave in order to visit the depot at Osnabrück in the light. The foreman was happy to go along with our visit and 20 locos were at home, these included diesel 212075 and, more surprisingly passenger electric 101002, both of which found space in our cameras. With just the hotel at Minden to head for we used the last of the light to hunt down some of the ex DB locos that are plentiful in the Osnabrück area. Diesel shunter 322521 was found without much trouble at the Hellmann Worldwide Logistics depot, which also contained Nordwest Bahn DMU's VT511/517 & VT721/771, and, when we finally found it, steam loco 41052 and Köf diesel 4807 were found at the Osnabrück Dampfloks Frunden preservation site.

The drive to our hotel was totally un-eventful, the dinner was the same and that should have been that for the night, however loud and bright thunder storm found it's way into our hotel room around 3am requiring the use of the heavy duty ear plugs we all carry, just in-case we have to room with Standback!

Rheine Hbf (14:15 – 15:15) 110488 111081/145 112159 145078 146124 155099
Westfalen Bahn ET002/005/014/015/017/019 SBB 421378 ERS 6617 'preserved'
electric 10008 **Osnabrück Depot (16:00)** 101002 140388/600/673/682 145029
152010/152 155086/213 185168/278 212075 232453/455/480/528/575 290050/056
Hellmann Worldwide Logistics, Osnabrück (16:40) Nordwest Bahn DMU
VT511/17 VT721/71 ex DB 322521 **Osnabrück Dampfloks Frunden, preservation
site (17:00)** ex DB steam 41052 diesel Köf 4807.

A decent breakfast and easy checkout signalled the start to day two, although the 'sanding pads' were rather unappetising, we visited the SP at Minden, because it was there, it contained just 296023, the station was better with three electrics hiding in the bowels of it. We moved on to Lehrte, we suspected this would be busy with freight, but visited the SP first. This contained just 5 locos, big diesel 233536 being the most exciting. We moved to the station and were instantly rewarded with 151166+151119 heading a coal train. After 'checking out' the station we decided to camp ourselves, in the car, on a convenient road near the station throat, we stayed here for a little under 3 hours and were rewarded with plenty of action, both freight and passenger. Privately owned PBSV 18 (ex DB 202787) put in an appearance, as did both 139283 & 139558, all on freight trains. The lack of light made photos hard and at one time a passing motorist stopped, and asked if we were a speed trap! We will remember this place and no doubt call again during a later trip.

The freight slowed considerably after midday and at 12:50 we decided to move on, the depot at Brunswick was to be our next call. The whole depot has been ringed with a security fence since our last visit and, despite the foreman being a very nice man, access was denied, apparently he had no one to act as guide and was a bit afraid of the high winds. There was no changing his mind, so we retraced our steps to Hannover and tried our luck at Seelze depot. The Foreman here had no one to guide us and it was just as windy, but he allowed our visit anyway! The depot was about half full, which made for some excellent photos, it contained 54 electric and 25 diesel locos, which is not bad. Stored 140042/107/185/197/238/383 are all still here and these were supplemented with no fewer than 12 class 155's a superbly photographic class in my opinion. Also here was a diesel shunting loco numbered V60.01, it appears to be owned by EVU HSE Logisticks and looks like a former DB class 345, as yet I have been unable to identify it, so if you know please let me in on the secret.

With light to spare now we visited the passenger depot at Hannover, only to find it long abandoned, electric 120147 was parked in the headshunt and 146132 passed while we were there, but that was the lot. We tried to find a parking spot near the Hbf, but gave in after 40mins and made our way to the hotel. After depositing our luggage we walked to the Hbf, a full 10mins away. We were surprised by the fact it still has three shunter duties here with 362574, 363114 & 363650 performing tonight. As the light faded and it got cold we began to loose interest, 120127 arrived at the head of IC2045 the 15:13 ex Köln, 101056 passed with IC2370 the 09:38 Konstanz to Hamburg Altona then 101120 passed on IC2034 the 15:42 Leipzig to Oldenburg but finally the cold got too much and we headed back to the hotel.

Despite a steakhouse being at the side of the hotel, Metal Mickey did not want to step outside again so the hotel fed us again, it was nice, without being outstanding, and filled a gap. Staying awake for the bare naked ladies German television always provides was not an option and the sound of snoring soon filled our room, yes Peter, yours!!! (come back Standback, all is forgiven).

Minden SP & Stn (08:20) 110400 145016/038 296023 **Lehrte SP (09:40)** 145075
152151 155218 185312 233535 **Lehrte Stn (10:00 – 12:50)**
101011/040/063/081/125 111092/123/131/139 112129/131 120132 139283/558
140643/649 143063/351/352/916 145016/018/038/067 146124 151119/166

152015/026 155032/234 182001 185248/519 189043
402001/002/003/008/020/022/023/038/042/043 424022/027/028/032
424522/532/538 425509 711109 PBSV 18 (202787) and plinthed steam loco 052
8015 **Seelze Depot (15:20)** 115383 139163/250/283/558
140042/107/185/197/238/383/590

140621/643/644/668/779/806/855/868 145013/056 151110/153/157
152015/026/050/059

152061/073/144 155006/017/029/057/101/158/178/179/195/198/210/234
185150/183/192/198/236/258/260/281/287 189042 232438/524 233249
294074/159/172/187/761/795/805 296028/029/030/041/044/047/048/054/058
335213/227/238 363111/820 private owner V60.01 **Hannover Depot [Closed]**
(17:00) 120147 146132 **Hannover Hbf (18:05 – 18:45)** 101056/075/120 111131
120127/145 143351 218470/474/836 362574 363114/650 401085/585 402015/018
424520 Metronome electric's ME146-12/13

Breakfast was better here, with a full array of quality items available including the proverbial bacon & eggs. We were perhaps a tad too quick with the checkout in an attempt to get the early start we needed today, but the roads to Hamm proved clear. Despite being a closed depot (and the depot building is boarded off) locos still stable here, the large yard still sees plenty of action and it's a good place to see a hatful of class 294 diesels. Today 27 locomotives were here, the obvious highlight being 202271 and the obvious lowlight being having to walk the entire holding sidings for a pair of class 140 electrics after discovering that Metal Mickey had left his binoculars in the hotel at Hannover! After a prolonged conversation to said hotel (binoculars being a word that does not translate easily) we headed off to Wanne-Eickel.

This is another 'closed' depot (the old depot building here now repairs luggage trolleys) but, as at Hamm, you still get plenty of stabled locomotives, there were 17 here today including 225021 (a cop, at last!!!!) and a further 20 in the Hbf holding sidings including 5 Oberhausen allocated shunting locos, 362766 363122/128/206/649 the most we have ever seen here. The lack of binos caused us to miss a further two electrics, so we headed to the large depot at Oberhausen. As is usual here we had to wake the Foreman, despite this he allowed our visit, unescorted, to go ahead. Although primarily a diesel depot there were 21 electrics among the total of 70 available today. Highlights were the two blue liveried shunters 364762 & 364890, NS diesels 6464/65/92 and 11 class 225 diesels. The nearby yard was full of track workers relaying it, so we left well alone and did the short drive to Oberhausen West. The old roundhouse has now been demolished and we had to negotiate with a signaller for a walk round, it proved little problem to our now fluid German (oh, look at that flying pig). Oblivious to its withdrawn status 232109 was 'ticking over' and looking smart in a new coat of paint, 140442 provided a further 'cop' and 232534 passed with a long scrap train. The old semaphore signalling in the area provides further interest and I think it's only a matter of time before we have to return here for a photography session.

Clara (short for Clara von co-pilot), our GPS, took us another different way to Gremburg Depot but we arrived without mishap and a full visit was granted. Dresden allocated 362390 caused major camera action, as, along with OBB 1016032, it

provided variation from the usual Köln based freight locomotives on show, a total of 71 being here today. We called in at the main SP for the yard and a further 5 shunters were spotted, along with a passing 145072 and then made our way to an overbridge, by a pub, Metal Mickey had 'Google Earthed', I have to report (for the exiled Brummie's information) it was c**p!! The pub is long abandoned and the bridge provided very little in the way of views, so we moved to the nearby Portz (Rheine) station. We saw out the last of the light here, it was quite entertaining, 140866+140861 and 140871+140856 passed on a coal trains, 115327 with an 'autozug' working and ES64F4 091 (189991) with a freightliner, throw in the passenger action and you can see it gave us a good hour.

When it was too dark to get decent photos we headed to the hotel, I must say Metal Mickey has 'played a blinder' here, it was situated right alongside Köln Kalk freight yard (not that we could see anything in the dark), in easy walking distance of some excellent restaurants. They were expecting our arrival and the receptionist spoke excellent English (despite this we still attempted to check in using our fluid German). We chose a nearby Greek restaurant, I learnt German for stuffed vine leaves and we had beer in the smallest glasses I have ever seen (don't worry guys, we have put them right with regard to us English now). The meal was the best we had on this trip and 'waddling' back to the hotel was all we could manage. We had a further beer, or three, with the receptionist, nothing at all to do with the fact she was blond, about 24 and was interested in different types of Brandy, (Pete would like to marry her and have her babies), before bed called.

Hamm SP (10:15) 139172 140369/544/547/671/681/771/784/792 145020/047
146017 151076 152048/054 202271 232403/494

294671/723/731/744/800/813/850/866/874 **Wanne-Eickel SP (11:45)** 140299/595
155181 225021 232156 294156/173/227/667/700

294782/827/857/860/881 RAG 804/08 **Wanne-Eickel Hbf Holding Sidings (12:00)**
139559 140184/789/848 151149 155028/107/115 185215 225008/071/075/094
232083 294852 362766 363122/128/206/649 **Oberhausen Depot (12:35)**
140613/682/785/788

140791/807/816/824/828/829/831/834/845/865 151006/016/057/063/161 185212
189078 225001/004/005/015/016/032/084/117/120/131/134
232055/129/201/260/283/298/330

232357/371/505/509/543/567/589/901/903/905 241803/804 290569
294630/674/789/891 333679 335082/152 363191/210/823 364511/520/611/762/890
365838 NS 6464/65/92 **Oberhausen West SP (13:45)** 140390/442/500/651/798
151012/127 152081 185064/237 189073/079 232011/109/534/598
294769/791/830/855/861/890/897 **Köln Gremberg Depot (15:00)** 139311/314/557
140044/186/394/435/504/506/601/637/640/765/806/811

140830/835/843/850/853/855/864/872 151003/005/096/103/137/162
155036/046/080/089/122/187/197/232 185067/189/211/217/241/247/259/303/315
189047/066/074/080/089 225020/040/053/060 290567 294175/726/777 296042/052
335125/133/218/236 362390/582/915 363675 365203 **Gremberg Yard (15:50)**
145072 294845/893 296040/050/059 **Portz (Rheine) S-Bahn Stn (16:20 – 17:15)**

111007/011 115327 140856/861/866/871 143194/833
403010/018/033/036/060/061/556 423042/044/054/191/537/693 Private Owner
ES64F4 091 (189991) ERS 6614

So the last day arrived and this provided me with the best chance of the tour to see my last class 101 electric, 101077. Breakfast was very good, this hotel has a lot going for it, we left the car in the hotel car park, noted 155181 passing with a freight during this process, and caught the U-Bahn into Köln. We chose Köln Deutz instead of the main (Hbf) station, mainly because it's easier for photos. We expected constant action and that's what we got, no freight uses this station but passenger train are never ending. There is still plenty of loco haulage to be had, but the use of DVT means some are pushed. Representatives of class 101, 111, 112, 120, 143, 146, 189 & 218 all graced our cameras. We punctuated our three hour stay with a walk, over the Rhine, into the Hbf, for Metal Mickey to buy Standback a German stock book (despite the fact we are returning in April, Standback could not wait), then returned to the hotel, collected the car and headed off to Köln West.

We like Köln West, both passenger and freight use this station and, as if to prove the point 140834+140865 passed on a coal train the moment we reached the platform. Diesel 218206 then stopped with a service from Trier, teasingly 101076 & 101079 both passed with a long distance passenger workings, the DB Netz owned 203309 (ex DB 202384) trundled passed on a permanent way train and 202271 put in a second appearance of the trip. We did two and a half hours here, freight was not constant, but there was always something to keep our interest, as the sun moved round, making photographs impossible, we moved on.

The last time we had visited Krefeld it had a working depot, this is now the headquarters of more than one privately run railway company and we thought we may see one or two of these private locos here. It was no real surprise then when HGK owned 145-CL-014 was stabled in platform one. Once again we were not over-run with traffic, 110210 passed with an ICE3 in tow, I would like to have quoted it's number too, but substantial damage to the cab prevented us recording it, and black liveried MRCE operated 185564 allowed a good photo during our 40min stay. We were fighting time again now, so returned the car to Europcar at Dusseldorf airport and caught the mono-rail out to the airport station. We stayed here until it was time to check in, 120155 providing the only real excitement during this time.

Check in and security were painless and Jet2 provided Boeing 737-300 G-CELC for our return to Leeds / Bradford. We experienced no fog delay coming home, but had to de-ice the car in order to leave the car park. So, our first trip of 2008 is over and we are already looking forward to our second, watch this space.

Köln Deutz (08:45 – 11:45) 101005/026/033/066/089/097/103/107/112/124/139
110374 111007/015/121/124/167 112159/163/164 120109/140
143054/073/194/262/288/584/593
143611/619/637/643/660 146006/011/012/017/018/019/023/030/031 189932
218136/217 402023/024/030/037/041
403007/016/018/019/020/022/029/033/034/052/057/510/516
403518/520/534/562 406010/052/084/085/501/584
423035/038/042/043/048/052/054

423056/057/185/186/192/193/195/196/197/199/245/247/249/254/259/262/263/290/
294
423299/534/535/537/544/547/549/569/638/697/746/747/750/751/757/758/791/792/
797
423798/799/893
425028/030/038/040/063/064/066/068/070/096/097/098/101/106/108
425533/554/573/595/599/605 628513/527 643208/209/218/219
644006/007/009/010/016
644018/027/028/046/052/060/509/516/518/521/528/530/536/544/547/550/552/554
928513/527 Thylis 4303/42 **Köln West (12:40 – 15:10)**
101004/015/028/076/079/116/118/127 120131 139315 140767/834/865/873
146015/016/018/023/025 151002/105/165 185172 202271 203309 (202384)
218206/216 402024/029 423112
425028/030/038/054/064/066/068/070/091/092/093/094/097/099
425103/108/599 644013/016/030/037/043/044/047/048/060/544 SBB 482045
Private Owner DE72/75/76 **Krefeld Hbf (16:35 – 17:15)** 110210 112160 146002
185284 425036/071 628500/504/538/669/670/704 643050/053 701084
928500/504/538/669/670/704 HGK 146-CL-014 MRCE 185564 **Dusseldorf
Flughafen (18:30 – 19:00)** 112158 120155 143003/015/258/329/600 146020
426017/026