

ICRS European Branch to East Germany

I have always enjoyed visiting the East Side of Germany, ever since our first visit. It's four years since we first visited Leipzig and I was looking forward to returning there. "Buzz" handled the first leg, we departed Standstead at 07:05 heading to Berlin. The flight was full, very full and the catering trolley had to be removed so we could actually make the take off weight! For this reason it was a good job that we had indulged in a full English start to the day, we, in this case being, Metal Mickey, The Standback Fusilier and Myself, the ex branch official.

The flight was smooth, and full of Germans, the landing was just as smooth, which caused the Germans to applaud, baggage reclaim and customs were painless and so at 10:30 we were loading ourselves into our hire car and heading off into the sunset. Our first call was the depot at Seddin and once again our written request for a visit had remained unanswered. The depot was found with no problems, but alas we received a "knock back" when we asked and had to be content with a view. This netted 28 numbers which included 345001, looking rather withdrawn and 204359 a member of a rapidly disappearing class.

The class 204 diesel locomotives are the latest of the old East German design locomotives that are being withdrawn by the now unified German Railways. We were hoping to see and photograph some of these along with the class 219 diesel and class 171 electric locomotives that are also on their last legs.

Driving further round the Berlin ring road we headed for Wustermark. We have visited this SP on more than one occasion and once again we were warmly welcomed, this time we managed to find the right way in. 14 locos were here on our visit, these included 5 class 232 diesels, 232122/272/472/492 & 613. The sun started to break through and we had to work out how to turn the air conditioning on in the car. We managed that, but the GPS system remained a mystery the entire trip. After booking into our first hotel, the Inter-city on Magdenburg HBF, we spent 2 hours and 25 minutes actually on the station. This is the first time we have spent any length of time on this station and it proved to be very interesting. The first surprise was to find electric loco 103220 stabled in the station, almost all of this class has been withdrawn, this one is a celebrity loco being painted in a "special" livery (it actually looks covered in graffiti!). Later in the session 219165 and 219197 were seen on passenger workings and 232491 passed with a freight. DMU 772128 worked out on a local service and was replaced in the platform by 772155+972755, it was a hard job to drag ourselves away, but we did and at 17:55 we arrived at Magdenburg Rothensee depot.

A full visit was granted here and 43 numbers found to be in residence. Rothensee still has an allocation of class 204's and 4 of these, 204203/445/513 & 774 were found on the depot. 204445 and 204513 still wear the old East German livery and we went to great pains to make sure these were photographed. We said our goodbyes and headed off down the line. At the end of the depot Headshunt, not accessible by road, we found 11 withdrawn shunters, only 10 of which we managed to identify, with binoculars over more than one field. This completed, we returned to the hotel, parked the car and went for a well earned feed. This came in the shape of pork in orange and tomato sauce, followed by white chocolate cake with cream. Bellies full, it was time to sleep.

Seddin {view} (11:15) 145027/047/067 152022 155087/189/194 204259 232109/425/486 290023/096 312135/137/233 345001/016/028/031/098/108 346075/834/928/946 363124. **Wustermark SP (12:30)** 140322/435 143096 155102/205/270 232122/272/472/492/613 298085 346921 364535. **Magdenburg HBF (15:05 – 17:30)** 101022/144 103220 112104/159/179 114004/006/015 120142 140249/404/499 140507 143002/005/074/155/156/190/220/256/273/349/850/857/923 145005/075 155057 218111/153 218187/282/432/433/436/448/450/466 219165/197 232491/518/628 335081/246 364385/597 425001 425003/009/010 628582/586/596 708310/324 772128/155 928582/586/596 972755 **Magdenburg Rothensee Depot (17:55)** 140067/227/388/403/539 143857 155008/142/190/249 204203/445/513/774 232077/167/168/230/238/277/301/350/378/508/518/531/533/564/592/628/632/676/680 298046/305 335092/209 345115/116/148 346815/854 364600. **Depot Headshunt (18:40)** 345053/085/101/150 346030/311/794/810/922/948.

The breakfast at the Inter-City chain is well worth the effort and Standback was already fighting his second plate of bacon and eggs when we arrived in the breakfast room. The first call today was to be the locomotive works at Dessau. This was a pre arranged visit, we know the way by now and were expected. The same guide, Harold, as our previous two visits showed us round (by being on three European branch tours, Harold is now the proud owner of a European branch tour tee shirt!). The carcass of the long withdrawn class 171 has been cut up but 52 numbers were inside the works complex including 180001, an electric from the class shedded at Dresden. After saying our farewells,

and arranging our next visit, we headed off. It had begun to rain, which became slightly heavier as we passed through Gusten, where we were stopped to allow 218103 to cross our path. The depot at Halberstadt was our next call. We arrived here at 13:00, once again we were expected and a full visit found 53 numbers “on Shed”. These included, 335209 which we had seen the day before at Magdenburg Rothensee and a line of 14 stored class 219 locomotives, one of which 219122 was still in old livery making a fine photograph in front of the signalbox. The depot at Blankenburg came next, here we expected to find members of the 171 class electric locomotive and we did. Eight members were here during our visit. 171001 is now in original livery and numbered 251001, 171002 is “plinthed” in the rear of the RBF, from what we can gather preserved, although it does not look too preserved to us! In a vain attempt to find the remaining two members of the class we headed up the line to Rüberland. Here we found 171004 and 171013, which had just worked up from the depot, and 218118 which passed with a passenger working, beaten we headed for Leipzig. During this drive, Standback, who was behind the wheel, prised the lid of the swear jar, extracted three f***ing’s, one A***hole, one W****r and a T**t, then hurled them, not necessarily in that order, at the driver ahead. Metal Mickey tried, in vain, to get the lid back on however the odd word continued to escape, eventually forming a sticky ring on the seat round the jar. We were all glad when we reached the depot at Engelsdorf. This depot is the freight depot for the area, the locos here are constantly changing, and thus it is a very interesting depot. An ask produced a positive response and a walk round found 34 numbers, 8 of which was the very photographic class 155 electric lok. It was time to book in at the hotel now, once again we used the Ibis in Leipzig, we use this so often we get invited to the staff Christmas party. Once de loused we headed of to “Buffalo Bills” to meet up with some old friends. Later, an hour on the HBF produced 34 further numbers including preserved DMU 137225A+137225B and just one class 219 diesel, 219073 which was working train RE16219 the 22:28 Leipzig to Gera.

Dessau Works {full visit} (09:00) 101003/032 110123/169/272/330/387/451/470/472/478/496/501 110511 111006/008/009/013/061/081/107/108/113/137/155/174/217/223 113310 143035/043/103/111 143138/236/356/553/560/574/613/899/907/933/969 155054/242 180001 243906 403127 755025 Preserved E04-01 Seimens test lok ES64 U2 901. **Gusten (11:56)** 218103 **Halberstadt Depot (13:00)** 218104/107/110/157/242/426/453 219024/026/051/056/070/104/105/108/122/138/165/166/167/168 219185/191/197 232195/448 335209 346829 612010/018/510/518 771054 772128/129/136/138/145 772147/154/319/339/367 972608/728/729/736/738/745/747/754 steam 503708. **Blankenburg Depot (14:15)** 171001/002/003/004/005/008/009/013 218102/118/453 231165 232142/350/800/905 346806. **Rübeland (15:15)** 171004/013 218118. **Leipzig Englesdorf Depot (18:15)** 140021/078/260/261/401 140429/598 155066/086/103/104/113/118/175/190 232174/535/584/589/609 298100 345037/050/095 345122/139 365656 628319/587/588 642042 928319/587/588. **Leipzig HBF (21:55 – 22:55)** 101009/016 112104/123/154/162 143006/173/220/243/289/638/883/909 218183/213 219073 365206 411022/030 415004 628319/588/597 642040/157/540/657 772402 928319/588/597 Preserved DMU 137225A+137225B.

After breakfast on day three we did the short drive to Zeitz, the depot here is long abandoned but engines still stable in the yard and old depot area. Only 5 locos were present on this occasion but it was a start. We moved on to the depot at Gera and got somewhat of a shock when we arrived, it’s closed! Two years ago this was a thriving depot, today it stands totally empty and unused, the shed buildings are brand new so I find this amazing. Two years ago there were over 30 class 219/229’s stored here, now just 4 class 219’s and 4 class 229’s remain. The 219’s are behind the depot, totally overgrown and the 229 are in the holding sidings on the opposite side of the line. There was a Danish loco, V170 1125 stabled behind the signalbox and steam loco 52 8075 passed through with a special, otherwise it was depressing. Putting this behind us we headed off to Saalfeld, at least this depot is still open and, on this visit anyway, still full. Obviously the type of loco has changed, with all the class 202’s now withdrawn and the 219’s in the process of being, but a big influx of class 232’s has kept this depot busy. In all 52 numbers were found, 22 of which were class 232’s. A good scattering of 204’s littered the depot 6 being noted in all, two of which 204605 and 204860 were posing round the turntable and with long withdrawn 228767 also still there our spirits were now lifted. A chance sighting as we left located 312101 in the wagon sidings, with a much sort after (by Metal Mickey) ASF battery lok, things were going well.

The early cloud cover had now lifted and the temperature was rising quickly, at Zeulen a level crossing stopped us to allow DMU VT35 to cross our path, but otherwise the drive to Zwickau was uneventful. When we were last here the depot Forman was a lady, if that’s not a contradiction in terms, who we found in a rather compromising position in the inner office. She had grown a beard and developed a deep voice this year, we still secured a visit. The two half roundhouses contained 46 locos in all, among

them were 9 stored class 204's and Dresden allocated 156001, the fist of a class of just 4 members. We said our goodbye's and headed back to Leipzig. An easy drive in found us arrive at the West depot at 16:35, this is the main electric depot for the area, it is in two halves, either side of the main station approach line, which are joined by a tunnel. We were refused entry, because, would you believe it, the last party of English enthusiast's they let round crossed the main line instead of using the tunnel.

Whoever you are I hope you are reading this, you spoiled things in England, you are now doing it in Europe. I can think of words to describe you, but I could not put them in print!

A view of this depot, which would contain over 50 locos, identified just 17. We moved on to Leipzig Sud, the diesel depot for the area. No problems were experienced here and a full visit was granted netting 40 numbers. Included among these were 219005/036/048/078/091 & 092 all of which are withdrawn. After parking the car we did 40 mins on the HBF identifying 37 further numbers. It was time for a well earned shower and some food. "Buffalo Bills" again came up trumps, with large salmon steaks, plenty of minted potatoes and an endless supply of beer. The late night visit to the station was most enjoyable that evening and included 219159 with RE16219 the 22:28 Leipzig to Gera.

Zeitz (08:20) 323283/598/647 290335 364556. **Gera (09:05)** 219076/085/086/139 229128/170/186 229199 642025/525 steam 528075 Danish loco V1701125. **Saalfeld (11:15)** 140701 143879 204314/605/664/680/761/860 228767 232018/076/079/104/125/151/198/287/342/365/392/403/418/427 232469/487/623/626/644/648/672/689 290034/055/063 298324 310440/734 312050 344063 345076/107/975 346675/719/758/879/894 364401 365122/235 415504 642032. **Saalfeld Wagon Sidings (12:00)** 312101. **Zeulen (13:00)** VT35. **Zwickau Depot (14:20)** 140109/179 145050 155032/237 156001 204298/464/641/671/845/848/857/858/862 232334/414/539/612/678 290041 298044/048/058/069/080/122 312011 344764 345047/094/099/105/965 346790/793/852/935/939/995 364402/538/571/756 365191. **Leipzig West {view} (16:35)** 101082 112101/188/190 120126 143121/205/289/595/814/950 298316 346846/927 362921 363677 364566. **Leipzig Sud (16:55)** 143006/286 218208/209/212/410 219005/036/048/078/091/093 612015/116/515/616 628258/587/588 642135/138/145/635/638/645 708309 771056 772007/144/152/316/416 928258/587/588 972502/516 972607/719/744. **Leipzig HBF (18:05 – 18:45)** 101065/072/074 112133/157 114039 120110 143020/040/174/338/562/893/901/909 362412 365206 612069/070/110/113/569/570/610/613 642047 642110/157/547/610/611/623/657/675. **Leipzig HBF (20:55 – 22:35)** 101065/072/074 112128/148 112177/179/181 114004 143002/040/041/047/049/079/108/289/338/339/591/638/831/865/893 218183/213 219159 346846 364566 411003/004 612113/613 628608 642040/149/540/649 928608.

We started the 28th, after breakfast, by visiting Englesdorf depot again. Once again a full visit was allowed and in the bright morning sun 39 numbers were entered into our books. We drove on to Riesa, the depot here is closed but locos are still stabled in the old depot area and the station. As before we had to cross the main line and as before a full visit was allowed netting 21 numbers in all. The temperature outside began it's climb and the antics of the driver in front prised the lid off the swear jar again. Our visit to Dresden Cotta depot had been pre-arranged, but we were too early, so we went to the yard at Friedrichstadt. This is the yard where all the freight crossing the boarder changes engines, as it was Sunday freight was scarce, we did however identify all the shunters. Stabled behind the signal box were three class 204 diesel loks, it was quite annoying that we could not see the numbers on these. It was time now to visit the depot, we were expected and made to feel welcome. Our guide, Peter, was also a bit of an enthusiast and made sure we saw everything we wanted. He was quite happy to open the shed doors, switch on lights and move things around for us. When we came upon 312018 he explained that this was his locomotive, he had bought it and the depot let him keep it there. He was very happy to pose by the lok for photos. Once we had completed our visit, we asked him if he knew the numbers of the class 204's in the yard, alas he did not. He asked us to wait and went to the phone, we thought he maybe asking someone else but when he came back did we get a surprise! He asked us if we wanted to go down to the yard on his loco, yes that's right, do we want to ride down to the yard on his locomotive. Did we!

We all climbed into the cab, he started the engine and moved forward onto the traverser, after lining up with a line that went outside the main shed building we set off. With the aid of the signaller we arrived in the yard, on the line at the side of the class 204's. There was a good reason we could not ID them before, they carried no numbers. We were allowed to get off the loco and photograph the withdrawn engines, at the same time noting there painted out identities to be 204448/482 & 838. We were more than happy, but Peter had not finished. He chatted with the signalman, who set a different route, we went to the left of the depot, dropped down under the main line, swung right and ended up in the sidings of a diesel refinery, here were 12 withdrawn locomotives. We retraced our steps to the yard, reversed back into the depot and finished exactly where we started, knowing no one would believe us.

We said a big thank you and received an offer to return again, which we will no doubt take up. In a dream we drove on to Senftenberg, where, after finally finding the car park, a visit was allowed and a further 9 numbers, which include 2 more class 204 diesels, 204257/485. Our next call was to be Hoyerswerda, the last time we were here we found a gaggle of stored shunters and we were hoping they would still be here. After finally finding the way in we secured a full visit, not only were the shunters still there, many more locos had been added. A grand total of 88 numbers were identified, only 26 of which were serviceable.

It was still quite early, so we drove straight to the depot at Cottbus. Here the only person left in the building granted our request for a visit, adding we should turn the lights out when we left. A German with a sense of humour, what next? Just 18 numbers were found "on shed" but at least it provided us with a spanking photo of 219096 which was in the sun by the turntable. We decided to circumnavigate the works, which with the aid of the road we located two years ago, produced 50 numbers. Happy, but knackered, we found our hotel, the Holiday Inn and booked in. With no intention of returning to the HBF it was hard to resist the call of the big beds, hunger eventually got the better of us and we indulged. Mushroom and Crayfish soup, large mixed grills and a red fruit pudding washed down with the obligatory large beers. Our German hosts really looked after us, I can recommend this place strongly.

Leipzig Englesdorf Depot (07:50) 140078/629 145020/066/068/070 152075 155089/103/118/124/126 155130/143/163/195 232156/354/365/427/535/550/584/593/650/670 298100/313/326/333 345021/037 345095/104/139/159 365207/656. **Riesa (09:10)** 112159 140378/385/796/843 143884/967/973 145072 151158 232096/189/280/281 345049/052/082/091 364506 365113. **Dresden Friedrichstadt Yard (10:40 – 11:30)** 143038 155017 232456 290026/066 345040 345128 364517/612 365212. **Dresden Cotta Depot (11:45)** 140097/116/184/535/544/547/601/625/689/797/799 143003/327 145001/011/075 152001/101 155016/040/045/052/075/091/111/117/120/125/127/133/157/179/180/194/207/231/235 155236/267/156002/003/004 180002/003/004/005/006/007/009/012/013/014/015/017/018/019 204698/710/805 232014/053/061/117/137/218/221/229/268/313/374/376/524/542/602/655/663/682 232688/700/704 290025/026/036/049/059/066 298047/050/051/311/323 312018 335061 345046/088 346862/883/982 364378/763/768/909 365106/121/642 Preserved E7710 130002. **Friedrichstadt Yard (12:55)** 204448/482/838 **Dresden Diesel Haven (13:05)** 140230 228650 232042/071 345044 346658/738/775/799/824/850/889/963. **Senftenberg (14:50)** 155101 204257/485 232206/241/462/481 233306 362388. **Hoyerswerda (15:55)** 140062/192/383 143033/960 145036 155017/020/085/110/202 155223 204401/760 232043/091/127/128/136/141/282/291/300/428/434/464/596/625/627/661/666/669 232683/695/699/708 233232/452/525 240403 312142/168/197/199/221/224 344071/681/682/905 345003/017/029/048/065/075/153/966 346306/611/616/680/691/693/709/714/721/726/744/748/765 346785/797/801/849/851/853/867/890/896/909/926/931/934/936/969 642044/544. **Cottbus Depot (17:35)** 112126 114004/017/026/031 143821/874 219096/103/141/157 346828 624624/667 924403 Preserved Diesel 100846 Steam 03204 231019. **Cottbus Works {view} (17:55)** 110141 140019/055 140060/069/278/452 142337 155003/005/021/022/050/051/100/151/155/164/165/166/169 219057/063 219155/198 231043/062 232003/132/179/249/286/373/412/478/572/662 233176/367 240339/628 241697 290009 298074/163 310882 704002/004 972752 "Preserved" diesel 142006.

Monday was our final day, the hotel rounded off our stay with an excellent breakfast and a painless checkout. We did just over an hour at the HBF, spotting 31 numbers. These included 219038 with RE38535 the 08:32 Cottbus to Hoyerswerda and 219096 with RB39711 the 08:33 Cottbus to Forst, probably the last time we will see these locos hauling scheduled passenger workings. We headed out to the GBF at Merzdorf, it was closed, 232660 passed with a freight and we found at least two ex DR shunting locos that had no identifiable numbers on them, but the amount of greenery growing through the lines tell the real story. After this failure we set off for the boarder city of Frankfurt der Oder, at 10:35 the temperature hit 32 degrees centigrade. Sun is something you don't associate with East Germany, snow yes, but the heat here was almost at the same level as the south of France! A slow moving lorry convoy allowed Standback to shake the last words out of the swear jar and Metal Mickey to locate his shorts (I wish he had found his legs at the same time).

We arrived in Frankfurt der Oder at about 11:10, we could see the station high above us but we really struggled to find our way too it. We eventually managed to locate the entrance only to discover that the station is undergoing a massive facelift, with the platforms nearest the shed out of use. A stay of just over an hour produced 32 numbers, one of which was a Polish diesel, 5045.069 (Polish stock book now required Bryan). We were slightly disappointed with the lack of freight, being a boarder town we had expected more. All too soon it was time to leave, we checked out the yards either side of the station, finding one shunter in each, and headed back to Berlin. We experienced no problems with returning the

car, checking in or the flight, all of which added up to a on time arrival back in England, another trip over.

Cottbus HBF (08:20 – 09:35) 112102/178 140218 143061/110/566/576/849/863/875 155032/096/104 155212 218409 219038/096 232206/494 234144/551 333673 346706 363821 364751/757 624673/680 924430 Private owner AHG 01. **Cottbus Merzdorf (10:10)** 232660. **Frankfurt der Oder (11:50 – 13:00)** 114002/007/024 140139/514/784 143631/843 144009 145025/034/039/069 155030/034/090 155189/258/264 232488 298091/102/139/155 335196 346843/945 364943 628652 928652 Steam 64317 Polish Diesel 5045 069. **Klingetal Rangierbahnhof (13:25)** 364525. **Oderbrücke Yard (13:45)** 298129 708322.