

# S.T.A.R.S. INTERNATIONAL

## TOUR REPORT LILLE RAPIDE '08

**Report on S.T.A.R.S. visit of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17th February  
Report by Adam Daniels, sightings by Mark Foster.**

A friend and I decided to book on this tour having both not been on a STARS tour for a few months (too many in my case!), and it seemed like a good bet for a number of cops of class 75 diesels and other items. As it turned out, the "Lille Rapide" was to be STARS first exploration of the year, the Belgian Rapide that was due to be the first having been postponed because a rather key individual who does the driving had done his back in!

So, Les and I arrive at Dover Docks, park the car and await the arrival of Princess Victoria. We'd had an interesting time getting to the docks, as it seemed Kent Police wanted to talk to every lorry driver, and amusingly turn some around as well because they were driving in the outside lane! Was Adrian to also be caught up in this farce? Yes it seemed, but despite a 20 minute late arrival, our being stood outside in the bracing wind made it a welcome sight.

We proceeded to Seafrance check-in, which seemed to take Adrian an age. Was there a problem? It transpired that the ferry "Rodane" had been out of action for a week, but of course Seafrance hadn't bothered passing that information on to STARS. The lack of one ferry meant that they were running a "special" timetable, and we would now be on the 0015 sailing – so one hours delay to the tour before we even leave British shores! Despite Adrian's attempts to get us on P&O or Le Shuttle we were booked onto this sailing. The good news however (more about that later!) was to be that we were booked on the 16:45 sailing back from Calais – so arrival home might be a little earlier.... Onto the "Cezanne" we went just before midnight, and after a beer or two on a smooth sailing, arrival in Calais was at 03:08 French time.

After the usual fuelling stop we headed for St Omer, which as most participants by this point were asleep, we were sort of happy when Graham came back onto the coach telling us there was absolutely nothing there (it was quite cold!). Hazebrouk produced a handful of units, along with 16665 on a rake of stock, but whilst we were around 2 freights also passed through with 27092+27165 and 27100 at the front of them. There was also the usual share of attention from the solitary member of staff at the station who insisted we wanted the coach outside the front of the station, until we explained to him we weren't waiting for the Paris train but were English rail enthusiasts! En-route to Bethune, at Steenbeck, we came to a level crossing where the lights were red – and sure enough, 27076+27109 passed in front of us with a freight. On next to Bethune, where there were 3 Y's in the yard behind the station.

We then settled down for a bit of sleep during the longer drive to Amiens, Adrian driving into the Sernam yard and parking up to allow us a visit to the yard and the station. Amiens Sernam yard produced no less than 5 Y's and 16101 on a rake of stock, the sun was almost up by now so hopefully some good photographs were taken. A quick visit to the station

was made, producing 67451 and 67600 along with a few Z's and X's. One member of the tour was getting a little annoyed with the coffee machine here – it had given him no coffee but lots of water, coffee definitely being a required item at this time of the morning! We then moved on to our first depot visit of the tour, Amiens. We were given permission to go around, provided we kept to the piste. We were also allowed into the "atelier", which was a definite bonus. I counted 62 items on the depot, including no less than 11 class 75 diesels, all bar one of the 75s being cops for me.

We then moved on to Longueau. Adrian tried the speakeasy on the main gate, alas nobody answered, so entry via the "back gate" was in order. Longueau produced 44 items, including a solitary 75 (043) and a 16 and 2 27's passing. We got quite worried when a member of staff came in with his car, and approached us, but when he realised we were taking photographs and numbers he just ignored us and went about his business smiling (I'm sure that he was thinking "those English enthusiasts"...). We walked back to the coach and then on to Arras. There was little in the yard, so on to what would hopefully be the big one – Lens! Adrian applied his usual skill in getting us around here, without a sign even of the dog; apparently the "one man and his dog" now have to look after 4 locations, and we didn't see them at all! As in the past Adrian went for a sleep, and we were allowed unlimited access inside and outside the shed. This time around there was nothing present in the cutting area, but a line of 7 class 16's immediately outside the shed were, we were informed by a member of staff, awaiting collection to go off to the scrapyards. 94 items were counted in total on Lens, down on the usual number seen here. This included 17079, a member of a class not seen here before by most of the party even though Paris isn't that far away.

Departure from Lens was via the roundabout which hosted 12032 (as Adrian mentioned, he would try and see how long it was before we visited Lens and we didn't see a croc!). On we went to Douai, with the station producing 2 units, TGV no 83 departing for Paris, Y8369 and 3 other locos. The adjacent yard was also fairly busy – with ETF 65505 and a couple of ETF V211s amongst others. On to Somain, where from a view in the yard on the other side of the line we saw 21 locomotives of assorted classes, missing maybe one or two only. The internal Eurostar that passed just as we were leaving on the coach evaded us though. By now we were a couple of hours late, but Adrian being the good chap he is just carried on. Our final stop of the day at Valenciennes produced a few items with no security problems as seen in previous years. On then to the hotel, the Ibis within a few minutes walk of Flandres station. The party went their separate ways, some staying in the hotel, some seeing what was on around the station and some (I may have been one of them!) taking a short trip to Hazebrouk (hadn't we been there before earlier in the day?) in the hope of some locomotive haulage but failing dismally. I think in most cases a beer or two rounded off a very productive day.

Sunday morning saw a few minutes late start on the revised 08:00 departure. The day started with a short drive from the hotel to the top of the ramp at Lille Fives, but alas no success in getting in. 5 or 6 locos and a handful of units could be seen with bins, along with some of the TGVs on the adjacent stabling point. On we moved to La Delivrance, where Adrian jumped down from the coach to go and obtain permission from the chef. It transpired that the chef on duty was a Man Utd supporter, so there was never going to be anything other than success at this depot this morning, 21 locomotives being seen.

On to the long drive up to Dunkerque. Grand Synthe saw our first EWS (sorry, ECR!) class 66 of the trip (038), along with 2 MRCE 185's (552 and 554). 36021 also passed on a steel freight whilst we were there, an unusual sight for a Sunday morning (for us anyway, being

used to British freight patterns). The West end of the yard saw 4 SNCF class 66s. Cite Triage brought us 16 locomotives, including another 5 class 75's and an Arcelor steel shunter, no 56. By the time we got back to the coach we were 1 and a half hours early, so Adrian announced an extra stop – and on we went to Gravelines to see and photograph all 3 CFTA locomotives present, 2 x BB4801 and 1 x BB 4500. Off then to Boulogne, where the coach was parked in the Sernam yard. This provoked some interest from the bored member of station staff, who started remonstrating and left the station confines to confront us – so off we went, having seen Y7001, 3 class 67s and a handful of units. We retraced our steps to Calais Frethun, where 8 SNCF locomotives were seen, but no less than 5 ECR/EWS class 66's, a class 91 and at least 2 shuttle locomotives, so the French nearly outspotted by the British! A quick visit to Calais CS was then made (with a skilful piece of guiding and driving between a lorry and cars by Mark / Adrian) for the now predictable Y and a handful of X's, and then off to the port. A more than usual farce ensued with immigration, we only having a few minutes left to close of boarding and they insisting on full passport checks and checking every coach in a long line, but somehow we made it onto the 16:45 sailing – we were the last vehicle onto the Berlioz.

My colleague and I left the party again at Dover Docks. All in all, a 100% success for depots visited against those attempted (i.e. no refusals – I won't count Lille Fives, that was never attempted!), a good count of sightings (I haven't counted my cops yet, but there were many) including I think a number of 75's for all on board. A thoroughly enjoyable tour with a good bunch of people.

### SIGHTINGS

#### **Saturday 16th February 2008.**

St. Omer	NIL
Hazebrouck	16665 <sub>4</sub> , 27092 <sub>4</sub> , 27100 <sub>4</sub> /65 <sub>4</sub> , X2700, Z23518.
Steenbecque	27076 <sub>4</sub> , 27109 <sub>4</sub> .
Bethune	Y7161, Y7297, Y8282, Z24665/66, Z241665.
Amiens Sernam	Y7483, Y7501, Y8086, Y8328/37.
Amiens CS	16101, Z27611/12/31/32, Z271611/31.
Amiens Stn	15053 <sub>1</sub> , 16103 <sub>5</sub> , 16739 <sub>5</sub> , 67600 <sub>5</sub> , X72731/32, X721731, X73611, X73722, X76501/02, X761501, Z24553/54, Z241553, Z26547/48/55/56, Z261547, Z262547/48/55/56.
Amiens Depot	16055 <sub>1</sub> , 16594, 16739, 63632, 63707/66/73, 63815, 66037, 66196 <sub>4</sub> , 66218 <sub>4</sub> /49 <sub>4</sub> /69 <sub>4</sub> , 66303, 66429 <sub>4</sub> /55 <sub>5</sub> /88 <sub>4</sub> , 67247 <sub>1</sub> /48 <sub>1</sub> /54 <sub>1</sub> /76 <sub>6</sub> /78 <sub>6</sub> /79 <sub>6</sub> , 67314 <sub>4</sub> , 67413 <sub>2</sub> /23 <sub>5</sub> /30 <sub>5</sub> , 67533 <sub>5</sub> /63 <sub>4</sub> /87 <sub>5</sub> , 67600 <sub>5</sub> /02 <sub>5</sub> /32 <sub>5</sub> , 69414 <sub>4</sub> /40 <sub>4</sub> /48 <sub>4</sub> , 75004 <sub>4</sub> /09 <sub>4</sub> /12 <sub>4</sub> /16 <sub>4</sub> /24 <sub>4</sub> /26 <sub>4</sub> /30 <sub>4</sub> /33 <sub>4</sub> /42 <sub>4</sub> /46 <sub>4</sub> /61 <sub>4</sub> , X4517/68/89, X4603/19/42/66, X4716/41, X8323/84/89, X8409, X8618/54/63, X8713 /38, X72725/26/31/32, X721725/31, X73595, X73723/48/59, X76525/53/95/96, X76617/18/27/28/37/38, X761525/95, X761617/27/37, Passing 16103.
Amiens Yard	16020 <sub>1</sub> , 67570 <sub>5</sub> .
Longueau Yard	TSO V211.182.571/574.
Longueau Depot	63407, 63631, 63746, 63800, 66459 <sub>5</sub> /62 <sub>5</sub> , 67271 <sub>6</sub> /74 <sub>6</sub> /75 <sub>6</sub> /77 <sub>6</sub> , 67322 <sub>5</sub> , 67469 <sub>4</sub> /71 <sub>4</sub> , 67559 <sub>4</sub> /86 <sub>4</sub> , 75043 <sub>4</sub> , X4534/64/84, X4602/26, X8375, X8402/08, X8537/48, X8630, X72729/30, X721729, X73610, X73766/69, X76579/80, X761579, Y7147/50,

Y7225/53/98/99, Y7456, Y7511/14/51, Y7608, Y7733/52, Y8223, Y8300, Locma 0055, Locma 0098 (Y5119), Locma 0112, Passing 27069<sub>4</sub>/764, 27109<sub>4</sub>.

Arras 16665, X73749, Z23574, Z92053/54.

Lens Depot 16535<sub>4</sub>/47<sub>5</sub>/52<sub>5</sub>/55<sub>5</sub>/75<sub>5</sub>, 16603<sub>5</sub>/17<sub>5</sub>/20<sub>4</sub>/31<sub>4</sub>/42<sub>4</sub>/49<sub>4</sub>/51<sub>4</sub>/55<sub>4</sub>/78<sub>5</sub>, 16711<sub>5</sub>/35<sub>5</sub>/41<sub>4</sub>/735/86<sub>5</sub>/91<sub>4</sub>, 17079<sub>8</sub>, 22210<sub>4</sub>/32<sub>4</sub>/40/49<sub>4</sub>/52<sub>4</sub>/55<sub>4</sub>/58<sub>1</sub>/65<sub>4</sub>/70/84/96, 22304/05/69<sub>4</sub>, 27002<sub>4</sub>/80<sub>4</sub>, 27137<sub>4</sub>/59<sub>4</sub>/76<sub>4</sub>/77<sub>4</sub>/78<sub>4</sub>, 63502<sub>4</sub>/21, 63684, 63727/30/41, 63876<sub>4</sub>/77<sub>4</sub>/78, 66116<sub>4</sub>, 66202<sub>4</sub>/32<sub>4</sub>, 66704/31<sub>4</sub>, 67326<sub>5</sub>, 67591<sub>5</sub>, 75038<sub>4</sub>, Y7107/22, Y7207/17/37/83, Y7500/07/38/58, Y7606/56, Y7726, Y7818, Y8070/87/91, Y8222/67/90, Y8345, Y8416/20/26/81.

Lens Works 22217<sub>4</sub>/43<sub>4</sub>, 27074<sub>4</sub>, 27178<sub>4</sub>, 66725<sub>4</sub>/334, Y7252/85, Y8015, Y8477.

Mericourt 12032.

Douai 16630<sub>5</sub>, 16760, 22390<sub>4</sub>, 63409, 63835, TGV83, Y8369, Z23542/43, Z24545/46, Z92055/56/57/58, ETF 99.87.9.182.512-3, 99.87.9.481.513-9 (65505), 99.87.9.182.517-7, 99.87.9.182.527-1.

Somain SP 22253<sub>4</sub>/63<sub>4</sub>, 22390<sub>4</sub>, 27098<sub>4</sub>/99<sub>4</sub>, 27111<sub>4</sub>/42<sub>4</sub>, 36003/04/07/13/16/18/28, 63783, 66270<sub>4</sub>, 66734<sub>4</sub>, 68507<sub>6</sub>/23<sub>6</sub>, Y7296, Y7636, Y7836.

Valenciennes 64039, 66205<sub>4</sub>, Y8280, Y8331, Tram 05/06.

Lille Stn free time ES3311/12, TGV10/90, Y8268, Z24517/18/29/30/57/58, Z24651/52, Z241529/57, Z241651, Z26503/04.

### Sunday 17th February 2008.

Lille Stn free time 26073<sub>1</sub>, Y8268, Z23517, Z26503/04, Z92053/54.

Lille CS 16759<sub>4</sub>, X76513, Z23558/71/72, Y8548.

Lille Fives SP 16644, 67252<sub>1</sub>/55/80<sub>6</sub>, 67318<sub>5</sub>/48<sub>5</sub>, 67415, 67596<sub>5</sub>, Z23569/76, Passing 26073, ES3301/02, TGV23/98, Z23502, SNCB 481.

Lille TGV CS ES3203, TGV78, TGV210, TGV4513.

Lille La Delivrance 22228<sub>4</sub>/78<sub>4</sub>, 22384, 27077<sub>4</sub>, 27122<sub>4</sub>/53<sub>4</sub>/74<sub>4</sub>, 36001/28, 63525, 63711, 63952, 67537<sub>4</sub>/83<sub>4</sub>/92<sub>4</sub>/94<sub>4</sub>/97<sub>4</sub>/98<sub>4</sub>, 67629<sub>4</sub>, Y8075, Y8414.

Dunkerque Grand Synthe 36021, 66715/164/244/264, EWS 92.70.0.066038-5 (66038), MRC 185.552-7, 185.554-3.

Dunkerque Stn 16614<sub>5</sub>, 16771<sub>5</sub>, TGV42/81, Z23568, Z92053/54.

Dunkerque Cite Triage 22302, 27068<sub>4</sub>/70<sub>4</sub>/94<sub>4</sub>, 27100<sub>4</sub>/09<sub>4</sub>/51<sub>4</sub>/67<sub>4</sub>, 36024/25, 66197<sub>4</sub>, 66220<sub>4</sub>, 75006<sub>4</sub>/23<sub>4</sub>/31<sub>4</sub>/41<sub>4</sub>/54<sub>4</sub>, Steel Works 56 (AT3.LL.528).

Gravelines 66727<sub>4</sub>, CFTA BB4501, BB4801/02.

Boulogne 67413<sub>2</sub>, 67587<sub>5</sub>, 67608<sub>5</sub>, X73764/68/70, X76589/90, X761589, Y7001, Z92051/52.

Frethun SP 27098<sub>4</sub>, 27134<sub>4</sub>/79<sub>4</sub>, 63829<sub>4</sub>, 66225, 67414<sub>5</sub>, 67590<sub>5</sub>/93<sub>5</sub>, X73762, Y7475, CT9703, 9802/08, EWS 92009/13, 92.70.0.066026-0 (66026), 66028, 92.70.0.066072-4 (66072), 92.70.0.066190-4 (66190), Passing Z92051/52.

Calais CS X76505/06/29/30/46, X761505, Y8456, Passing Z92051/52.

Tioxide Y6508.