

Belgium, Luxembourg & a little bit of France : June 2010

This was an extended weekend trip to Belgium as I hadn't done a rail run-around of the country since June 2006 apart from a few passing through "winter breaks". I had planned it early in 2010 and it coincided fortuitously with a PFT open day event. I'm not giving a blow by blow account of each day, more a what's changed from my own viewpoint and items of general interest. I noticed the Florida Hotel in Antwerp is now the Leonardo Hotel - has it had a make-over?

http://www.leonardo-hotels.com/Leonardo_Hotel_Antwerpen

Belgium

Most noticeable change from loco viewpoint was the scarcity of old style shunters i.e. 7300, 8200's etc with Class 7700 dominating all previous locations where they could be found - even Brussel Midi station had two allocated viz 7740 and 7859. The increase in through freight working eg Koln Gremberg to Antwerpen Noord has decimated previously busy yards - Hasselt was derelict apart from a few rakes of coaching stock. Stockem ditto with not a single electric loco stabled in Arlon station area. P/way stabling points also seemed reduced, the 52/53 class seem to have been replaced by class 5500 for p/w duties.

Liege Guillemins is now a superb station and blends very well into the hillside on the west side whilst on the east side steps lead down from the platforms onto a grassy square and the bus station. All shops and ticket facilities are at lower level. It looks brilliant and should win loads of awards but it'll be roasting in summer and freezing in winter.

Berchem Loco Sightings

2801/02/03/32/33/35/36/38/39/40/42 and 186.119 were all to be found on Brussels to Amsterdam services

2805/06/07/08/09/10/13/14/15/18/19/22/23/24/27/29/30/31/37 and 2843 were all seen on freight service, generally Aachen / Koln Gremberg to Antwerpen Noord services.

Private operators seen were - Captrain 6602, 6607, 6608, , Rurtalbahn V204 [5001753], V206 [5001760], 653-05, Crossrail PB02, PB03, PB19, DE6302, DE6307, DE6607, ECR 186-174,

There is definitely more loco variety here and provided you can cope with the constant procession of China Shipping / CMA:CGM shuttle "ship catcher" container services from Zeebrugge to Antwerpen and vice versa, Berchem is still a good place for freight. Average is about 9 / 10 freights per hour and 17:30 to 20:00 seemed a fairly busy period.

On Thursday 24th I caught a train to Luxembourg and Thionville hoping to do a bit of freight watching at Thionville but as usual the French were on strike [in France they give out long service awards when you've completed 25 years of strike days - all cheminots qualify for this award]. After taking a run out to Rodange, took a train to Thionville and walked to Florange depot to pass the time as not a single SNCF freight was running.

Thursday 24th June 2010

Jemelle 7751, 7764, ES511
Libramont 6251, 6305, 5507/5518 plus 5503
Stockem Depot Line of 7300 shunters plus 5200's / 5300's stored here

Luxembourg

Hollerich 851, 905, 906, 858, 857, 912 stored plus derelict 3600? behind
Esch-sur-Alzette 1506 (red), 1581 (blue), 1586 (black), #317
Belval Universite = former Belval Usines = basic halt to large brand new station
#304. #312, #318
Petange 1507 (red) on 9 Tanoos hopper wagons [0691-063/0 series]
Rodange #308 thence back to Luxembourg
Petange A glimpse of yellow in wagon shops caught my attention and
there it was **#101** [its taken me six years to get this one]
Bettembourg Caught a TGV to Thionville due strike action so not much seen

France

Thionville Depot Circa 30+ 27000 and 37000 series locos on but I ignored them
69409, 69413, 69428, 69494. Unit Z27809
Veolia red / grey G1206 No 1729 [5001729] plus 61011/61013

The good news was the only freight that ran was the one I was interested in, the Dugny to Dillingen limestone train which went north behind MRCE black 5001730 [11 hoppers]

Florange Depot

#1001, #1416, #1452, #1454, blue & white small industrial plus inside the shops there was an un/id grey loco with red lining. It was either a 63 or a 71 - my initial gut feeling was it's a 71000 but I could be wrong, so it's probably a 63. This could be the same one I saw at Holcim, Cimenterie d'Ebange a year or two ago which is adjacent to steel works.

Thionville North Yard (opposite Wagon Works)

Row 1 = 16715, 16709, 16726, 16661, 16762
Row 2 = 16770, 16754, 16738, 16744, 16703, 16643

Saturday 26th June 2010

Went to PFT at St Ghislain via Salzinnes Works, PFT visit then Kortrijk/Zeebrugge

Salzinnes 6312, 2632, 5204 with 2 * 8200 shunters at back of works
I guess new locos plus recession are putting paid to a lot of work

St Ghislain

Main Yard adjacent to station

654, 978, 253, 598. 101.012 [old electric ex 2900? class], 027 [old electric m/unit], coach 52516, 2351, plus EMU 380 in a far superior livery to existing units, square yellow panel on front end, lighter shade of grey on body etc
5941, old 1805, 1504, blue 5001, red diesel CFL 1603, 202.020, unit 548
5515, 5212, 2201, 6106, 8263, 2115, 2713
5183, 5166, 5404, 6077, 6242
2606, 1202, 2350, 7824

Inside Shed

5128, old steam tank engine #? , steam 26.101, 5149, 7331, 7324, 7325, 4001 = part unit
6289, 5926, unit 4605

Shed Yard

Unit 4506, unit 4403, unit 732.10 , unit 4333, 6266, Orenstein&Koppel shunter ex DR #?
8524, 8061, Sncb unit 4120, Sncb 7829, steam 64.169, 7322, 8320, 8428, 270.005, 9209

The following link shows photos of the event and an explanation as to why some of the missing loco classes did not appear :-

<http://www.trainsfrancais.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=19&t=33555>

Kortrijk Yard	2901 stabled with container train just south of depot
Brugge	6228 stabled in old depot area but no locos in station
Zwankendamme	2375, 2341, 2607, 2364, 2360, 2320, 2319 2021, 2011, 2025, 2008, 2018, 2014. 7793, 7796, 7798 / 7809, 7799, 7800

Sunday 27th June 2010

On the Sunday went to Kinkempois - it was a longer walk than I remembered! and took 25 minutes. Number 25 bus to Ougree takes you (alight Maison Blanche) and return service destination is Opera. Bus stop is in square at front of station = Quai B

Had a quick “walk through” with only new 1809 and NS 6505/6516 of interest. Returned to Brussels via Charleroi, Mons and Grammont alighting Auvelais and Grammont for fairs.

Auvelais	11 St Gobain Uais special wagons for carrying glass = series 9922
Charleroi Sud SP	Vossloh SNCB - 5701.