

TWILIGHT OF THE
TRADITIONAL TRAMS
RAILFANNING AROUND
THE BRITISH ISLES
EAST GERMAN
TRACTION

HEADLIGHTS 2021



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**(Front Cover) Motor and trailer pair
ET54 No. 136 (LOWA-Gotha, 1955)
and EB54 No. 229 (LOWA-Gotha,
1956) are seen a little south of the
Straße der Republik stop in the center
of Gera. They are on the 2 route to
Zwötzen in this view looking northeast.**
Jeff Erlitz photo, July 11, 1990

**(Back Cover) TE64/2 (Rekowagen)
No. 217 290 (Raw Sw, 1968) has just
arrived at the Rahnsdorf terminal
of route 25 in East Berlin. It will
momentarily go around the loop to
return to Bahnhof-Schöneweide.**
Jeff Erlitz photo, May 8, 1987

(Right) Glasgow Subway car interior.
Ron Yee photo, July 30, 2019

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TWILIGHT OF THE TRADITIONAL TRAMS CLIVE FOSS

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RAILFANNING AROUND THE BRITISH ISLES RON YEE

30

EAST GERMAN TRACTION JEFF ERLITZ

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Yellow warning sign with text in a non-Latin script, likely a safety instruction.

5

MINI

TWILIGHT OF THE TRADITIONAL TRAMS IN BRITAIN AND FRANCE

CLIVE
FOSS

**(Right) Liverpool
'Green Goddess' 869,
stopping — perhaps
forever — at the Crich
Tramway Village,
home of the National
Tramway Museum.**

Fred Collins photo,
June 26, 2021

When I was a teenager, in 1955, I wrote off to all the tram systems I could locate world-wide, asking for information and a map and photographs. Virtually all of them in western Europe replied, often very generously. I received maps (some of them on a large scale with the tram lines entered by hand), high-quality company photographs, and often detailed information about operations.

All 11 surviving tram systems in Great Britain and 17 in France sent the materials that form the basis of the present discussion which is a conspectus of traditional tramways near the very end of their operations; most of them were gone by 1960.



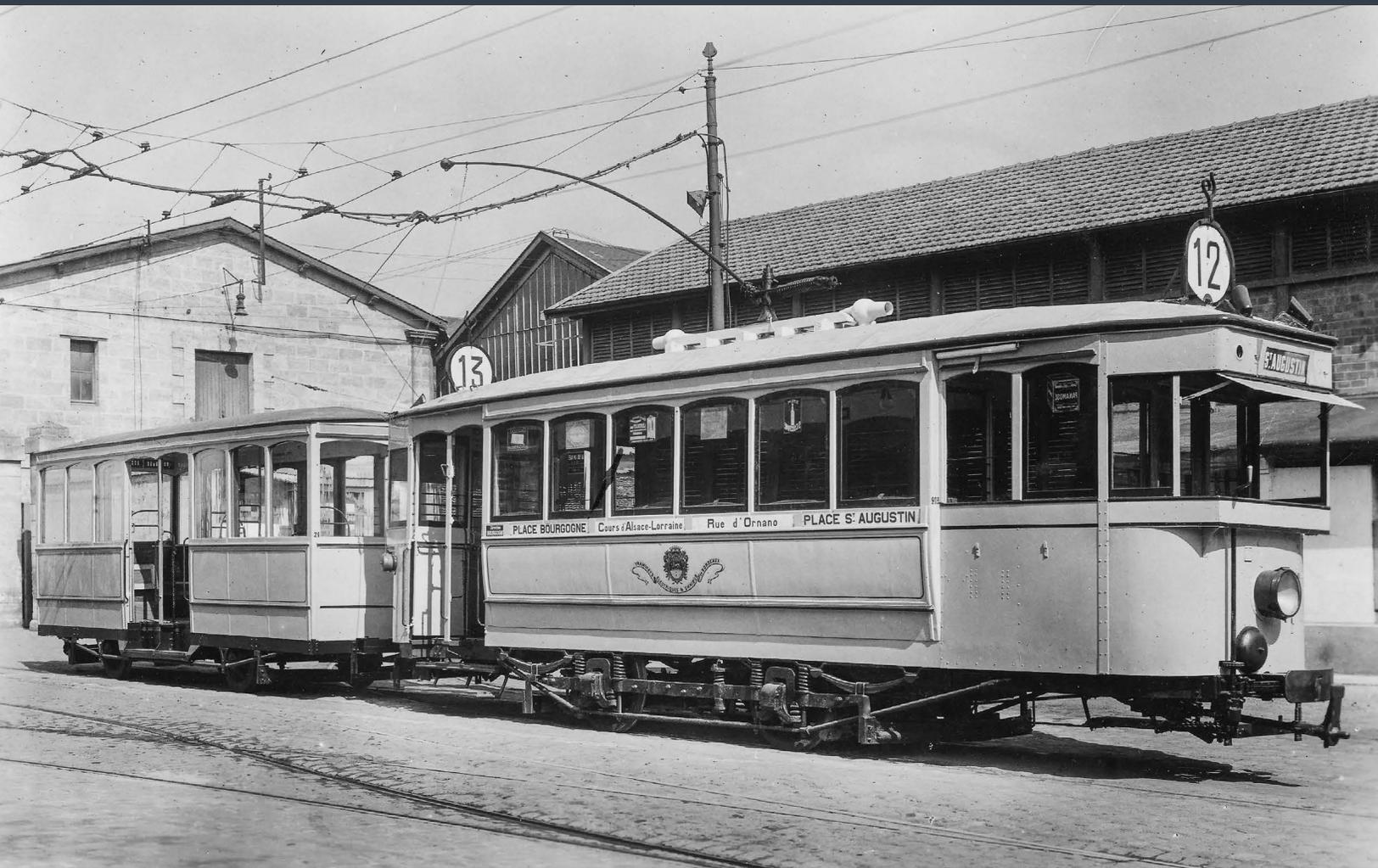
44A

PIER HEAD

DALE STREET

869
B

ALL CARS INWARD
STOP
HERE



(Above) Bordeaux car 903 and trailer 79 at rest before departing for Place St. Augustin. Compagnie Générale Française de Transports et d'Entreprises photo

(Right) Typical 1930s Clermont-Ferrand car on its way to the station in 1954. Compagnie des Tramways de Clermont-Ferrand photo



France

Bordeaux

The metropolis of southwest France (population 257,946), Bordeaux is a major Atlantic seaport famed for wine, gastronomy, and its historic monuments. It had one of the largest tramway networks in France with 38 urban and suburban lines operating on 120 miles of track. In 1949, it still had 507 trams (as opposed to 22 trolleybuses and 31 diesel). But by 1955, less than half the network survived.



Unfortunately, from 1947–1995 Bordeaux had an all-powerful mayor, Jacques Chaban-Delmas — a rising politician who served as French prime minister under then-President Georges Pompidou from 1969–1972 — who disliked trams, which he considered inflexible and old-fashioned. The last Bordeaux trams were built in 1948; the system was closed on December 8, 1958.

Clermont-Ferrand

Clermont-Ferrand operated a meter-gauge tram system in the city of 113,391 in the center of France, which prospered from the Michelin tire factory and various light industries.

Through the 1920s the company strove to keep the system modern with new cars and new lines. In 1932 it had 33 motor cars and 24 trailers. In 1955, the system still operated five lines on 13 miles of track, but the municipality had shifted its favor to the motorbus as part of a program of ‘traffic improvement’. The tram lines, seen as getting in the way of progress, were closed on March 17, 1956.

Colmar

A city of Alsace in eastern France, famed for its traditional architecture, had a population of 47,305. Its small metre-gauge system had two city lines with three miles of track between them and a suburban line of three miles. They were served by 13 motors and four trailers.

The last city line was closed on March 17, 1957 and the suburban line on January 31, 1960.

Dijon

Dijon, the main city of Burgundy (population 112,844), is famed for its mustard but also has an impressive assemblage of medieval and renaissance buildings.

It operated a small system, with 15 motors and 12 trailers operating on the three lines that remained after post-war abandonments. The last lines were closed on December 1, 1961.

Hagondange

Hagondange, a small city of 9,238 in northeastern France was a center of heavy industry, with six blast furnaces opened or planned before WW1. It was the center of a complex of industrial towns that produced 600,000 tons of steel or more until the 1960s.

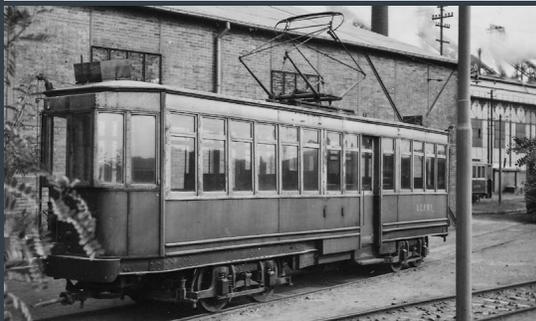
The tramway consisted of two short lines of two miles each to connect the steel mill with neighboring towns. In 1955 it had five motors and nine trailers, some of them bought second hand from Paris and Lyon. It was closed on January 31, 1964.

(Left) Bordeaux's latest tram of 1948. Compagnie Générale Française de Transports et d'Entreprises photo

(Below, top to bottom) Colmar car 6 at rest. Compagnie des Tramways Electriques de Dijon photo

Dijon car 26 at rest. Compagnie des Tramways Electriques de Dijon photo

Long car of 1920 at Hagondange steel mill. E. Hagen photo







MONS-en-BARAEUL

BAR DE L'EUROPE

HOTEL RESTAURANT



RAILFANNING AROUND THE BRITISH ISLES BY CRUISE SHIP

RON YEE

Irish Rail 2600 Class
DMU at Cobh Terminal
with Crown Princess.
All photos by Ron Yee

I returned from a three-week trip to the United Kingdom in July 2019 during which my wife, Lily, and I visited Manchester, York and London, then sailed on a 12-day cruise (July 16 thru August 4) around the UK (Guernsey, Scotland, Ireland and Le Havre, France) with four of my cousins and their families on a sea-going family reunion.

Following our usual habit, we arrived in the UK at least a couple of days ahead of the cruise ship departure time in order to reduce to a minimal level the risk of missing the ship due to an airline issue. In this case we arrived in the UK eight days before the sailing date so we could visit Manchester, York and London with a ZERO percent chance of missing the ship.

A Note from the Editor:

Ron originally posted this article in August 2019 as a series of 10 'railfan e-blog writings' with the subject line "Ron Yee's UK and Ireland Railfan Ventures." Last August, when I asked Ron if he would like to turn the series into an article for the next issue of *Headlights*, he agreed and said he would like to reframe it as a personal travelogue with expanded technical details. He was all set to start writing the article when the unthinkable happened. On Monday, October 18, he was admitted to Weill Cornell Medical Center for heart and blood pressure issues. He called me the next day and asked if I could use his emails as text because he didn't have access to a computer, but he would put something together the following weekend when he expected to return home. But later scans revealed numerous nodules around his liver and spleen. They were cancerous and, tragically, inoperable. Ron's condition worsened rapidly. His wife Lily summoned some friends to pay him a final visit, so I stopped by on Friday, October 29. Ever the professional, Ron apologized for not being able to finish the article. "Just make it look good," he said to me, then added matter-of-factly, "You might need to add room for a memorial." Ron passed away an hour later. — SANDY CAMPBELL, EDITOR & DESIGN DIRECTOR



Manchester and York

(Top left) Manchester Metrolink M5000 Flexity LRV outbound at St. Peter's Square.

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(Bottom Left) 4-2-2 steam locomotive and classic station overpass in the National Railway Museum at York.

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(Bottom right) Grand Central Railways and Class 185 DMU at York.

Since my last visit to the York railway station in 2002, the station's train shed was essentially unchanged except for some new train types and new paint schemes. I also visited the extensive train collection at the adjacent National Railway Museum. The museum has an observation deck providing great views of the north interlocking and track leads into the station, and of passing trains arriving and departing. Lily and I stayed at the Park Inn by Radisson at York City Centre along the river, a mere 15-minute walk from both the railway museum and railway station as well as the Castle Museum across the river.

The primary reason for our visit to Manchester was to ride the 62-mile, 93-station Metrolink LRT — the UK's largest light rail system, which opened its first line on April 6, 1992 — as well as photograph the intercity and local trains at Manchester Piccadilly station.

We stayed at the Mercure Manchester adjacent to the Piccadilly Gardens Metrolink station, one stop from the main railway station. The 120-car Metrolink fleet (with 27 additional cars of the same type on

order) is made up of M5000 Flexity Swift-class cars built by Bombardier starting in 2009. The original cars from 1992, classes T-68 and T-68A, were all retired by 2014 after just 22 years of service. They were completely replaced by the M5000 cars, a move probably aimed at fleet uniformity with the goal of simplified maintenance, parts inventory and crew qualification and training purposes. I observed three T-68 cars in the maintenance yard, all probably assigned to work service. The Manchester Museum of Transport has an extensive bus collection, one trolleycoach and a T-68 mock-up which was used to introduce the citizens of Manchester to the LRT system in the early 1990s.

Lily and I rode a Virgin Trains Alstom Class 390 from London Euston to Manchester Piccadilly, then rode a four-car First Transpennine Express Class 185 DMU from Manchester Piccadilly to York (the train continued onward to Newcastle). For the third leg we rode a London North Eastern Railway Class 43 InterCity 125 from York to London King's Cross. Two adult fares were £216 (approximately \$290 in 2021), not bad at all for what was literally a "walk-up fare."





All Glasgow Subway stations are configured either as having a center island platform or, at heavily patronized stations, having twin platforms to handle the crowds.

(Above) Govan is the only station configured with side platforms.

(Right) Buchanan Street station features twin platforms separated by a glass partition, with one track running between the two platforms.



Glasgow



Our ship arrived in the port city of Greenock at 7 a.m. and departed at 6 p.m. Glasgow was just 20 minutes away and accessible by ScotRail commuter train. Service was quite adequate, with half-hourly headways. After spending a half hour photographing trains in Greenock, I rode ScotRail to Glasgow. I also took advantage of Greenock Central station in the town adjacent to where the ship had docked for the day.

Glasgow is the most populous city in Scotland. Our first order of business was to ride the Glasgow Subway, otherwise known as “Clockwork Orange.” Opened on December 14, 1896, it is the third-oldest subway system in the world after the London and Budapest subways. Glasgow’s subway is a circular two-track system 6.5 miles in circumference (crossing under the River Clyde twice) with 15 stations. It is operated by the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) and offers two loop services: the Outer Circle (orange) operates clockwise, while the Inner Circle (black) operates counterclockwise. The line is equipped with a third rail, electrified at 600 V DC.

Glasgow’s subway fleet consists of 36 second-generation cars operating over a unique four-foot track gauge. These cars were built by Metro-Cammell and entered service in 1980 and were due to be replaced in 2020 by a new fleet of automated four-car trains built by Stadler Rail of Switzerland. The first of these third-generation cars arrived for testing in May 2019, but as of 2022 they had not yet entered service.

Glasgow subway cars appear to be just a bit smaller in profile than London’s Underground Tube stock. Glasgow’s original 1896 subway cars were all retired in 1977 when the system was closed for a three-year-long modernization program.

All stations are configured either as having a center island platform (such as at the St. George’s Cross and Cowcaddens stations) or, at heavily patronized stations, having twin platforms to handle the crowds. These stations have one track running between the two platforms which is separated by a glass partition (much like the Toronto subway station at Union Station) to serve the trains going in the opposite direction (Buchanan Street).

After riding all the way around on the outer Orange Line loop, I determined that Govan was the only station configured with side platforms. Here I was able to take photos of subways unobstructed by platforms and other trackside equipment. It appears that this station is also a crew change point, and crews can be seen relieving one another for duty



(Above) At the Glasgow Subway’s Broomloan Depot, a set of 1980s-era second generation rolling stock is joined by its successor, the third generation of new trains being delivered by Stadler Rail. The first test train was initially delivered in May 2019, but some teething issues and the pandemic’s effects have delayed the entry of new trains into revenue service, which had been planned to begin in 2020. In December 2021, a set was moved from the depot onto the main line for the start of overnight testing. SPT photo, September 13, 2019

breaks as each train comes into the station.

I got off the system at Partick, an intermodal station serving local buses as well as ScotRail’s regional rail services. It was also the closest station to the Glasgow Museum of Transportation where I was able to see and inspect static displays of trains, trams, locomotives, steamships sailing ships, plus automobiles, motorcycles, and buses. Lily and I also visited Buchanan Street, Glasgow’s main shopping street turned pedestrian mall, near Central Station.

ScotRail operates diesel multiple unit (DMU)

trains as well as electric multiple unit (EMU) trains with operations centered on Glasgow’s two main railway stations, Central and Queen Street. Queen Street was undergoing a major renovation, so I chose to focus my attention on Central Station during our limited time in Glasgow. Besides, Central is the more impressive station, Glasgow’s equivalent of New York’s Grand Central Terminal with stub-end terminal tracks on the upper level serving commuter as well as intercity trains such as Virgin Trains to London. Through services are located underground on the lower level.



EAST GERMAN TRACTION EIGHT MONTHS AFTER THE BERLIN WALL FELL

JEFFREY
ERLITZ

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Articulated KT4D No. 315 (ČKD Tatra, 1983) on route 2, destined for Straße der Republik in the center of Gera (see page 68). It is coming off the Ruckdeschelstraße bridge over the White Elster River and is about to turn west into Zoitzbergstraße. The turning loop where this trip originated is just out of view beyond the bridge. Jeff Erlitz photo, July 11, 1990



In July 1990, after the ERA's tour of Austria, fellow ERA members Noah Caplin, James Mattina and I rented a car and toured through Eastern Germany (the former German Democratic Republic, or GDR) to see many of the tramway systems that were still operating. The fall of the Berlin Wall, on November 9, 1989, had occurred only eight months previous, so we were able to document these systems before any drastic changes had occurred, especially regarding the equipment operated and the paint schemes they wore.

At this early date after reunification, none of the tramway systems we visited had procured second-hand vehicles yet from cities in western Europe who had surplus equipment. As you will see, most of the cities were still operating single-truck motor cars with, or without, single-truck trailers.





Plauen

Plauener Straßenbahn GmbH, meter gauge, July 11, 1990

Plauen is the fifth-largest city in the State of Saxony and the second largest, after Gera, in the Vogtland district of Saxony. It had six tram routes covering about 10 route-miles. One of those routes, the 2, was discontinued sometime after our visit.

(Left) Two-year-old Type KT4D No. 231 (ČKD Tatra, 1988) is turning off Pausaer Straße and onto Bahnhofstraße at the Oberer Bahnhof. It is bound for Reusa, 12 stops away on the

southeast side of the city. This car was modernized in 1995, becoming a Type KT4DM. Two years later it was again modified to Type KT4DMC, presumably with chopper control, hence the “C.”



(Above) Type T57 No. 62 (Gotha, 1957) is seen laying over between runs at the Unterer Bahnhof stop on the now-discontinued 2 route. It will soon depart for the Bus Bahnhof stop near the Oberer Bahnhof.

This car was retired in 1994. The 2 route was on a branch that went a little past the tram depot on Wiesenstraße. That trackage is still in use but only for put-ins and lay-ups.





Naumburg

Straßenbahn Naumburg, meter gauge, July 16, 1990

Naumburg is home to the smallest tramway system in all of Germany, both western and eastern, and is one of the smallest in the world. Before the system was reduced in size from its full loop, it was only about three miles long! When the little system was threatened with closure in 1990, a citizens' initiative for the preservation of the tram was founded, Naumburger Verkehrsfreunde (Friends of Naumburg Transport), and took over control on June 18, 1991. After various maintenance attempts, the tramway was again taken out of service on August 18, 1991. The line finally reopened in 2006, mostly as a tourist line, but only on the eastern portion of the original "Ring" route.

(Top) A lineup at the Betriebshof (depot) on Poststraße at Thomas-Müntzer-Straße. T59E No. 32 (Gotha, 1960), T2 No. 17 (Lindner, 1928) and ET54 No. 23 (LOWA-Gotha, 1956) are nicely lined up for our photographing pleasure. The ET54 is another example of a LOWA car built at Gotha. Number 32 started out in Halle as

their No. 530, was sold to Plauen in 1968 as their No. 88 and then to Naumburg in 1988. It was scrapped in 1994. Number 17 also started out in Halle, as their No. 183. It was renumbered 643 in 1967 and arrived in Naumburg in 1977. In 1982 it was taken out of revenue service and put into work service. It was restored between 1992

and 2016, a long time in the making, and is now in tour tram service. Number 23 started out in Klingenthal as their ET 198 04. After that short railway ended service in April 1964, it went to Plauen where it received the number 71. It arrived in Naumburg on December 29, 1981 and in 1997 it went into private ownership.



(Bottom) Looking west on the Wenzelsring, just west of Bürgergartenstraße, ET54 motor No. 26 (LOWA-Gotha, 1956) and B57E trailer No. 12 (Gotha, 1960) have just left the Salztor stop on their counterclock-

wise trip to the Hauptbahnhof. The motor is another example of a LOWA car built at the Gotha factory. Number 26 came from Gera in 1983 and was their No. 135. In Gera the car was originally

No. 18 and had been renumbered in 1959. It was scrapped in 1991. Number 12 came from Plauen in 1987, where it was No. 1. Plauen had converted the car from a Type B57 in 1975. It was scrapped in 1994.

