

RE-UNIFICATION EXPRESS

EXPLORING THE RAILWAYS OF VIỆT NAM

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October
2014





From the Editor's Desk

Welcome. Xin Chào!

This is the second edition of the 'Re-Unification Express', an electronic

publication dedicated to the railways of Vi t Nam.

As I said in the first issue the intention is to publish every three months, so this is the October issue.

Getting the first edition out close to the planned publication date was a bit of a rush, so apologies if there were any errors or omissions.

My intention to have all Vietnamese place names and other Vietnamese words written correctly using Vietnamese script didn't eventuate as I couldn't work out how to introduce non roman letters using the software I am using. I've figured it out now, so hopefully all place names should be spelt correctly.

Another technical problem which hopefully has been corrected for the second edition is the very large file size. In theory a smaller file size should mean a quicker download. As they say "the proof will be in the pudding".

You may notice there are four extra pages this issue. I think 30 pages will be about the limit for the time being, otherwise I'll run out of material too quickly, unless of course I get lots of contributions (hint, hint...).

In this issue I continue my trips to Vi t Nam and describe the second version of my Vi t Nam Railways layout.

As well there are articles about the fullsize railway, both historical and modern as well as models.

Something for everyone. I hope you enjoy the second issue

My apologies for the lateness of this issue. I've been suffering from a bout of pneumonia so everything has been on hold.

David Gurnett
Editor and Publisher

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<i>Cover: Freshly painted Chinese built built 141-158 (ZL Class) on a plinth outside Sai Gon Station, April 2014. Photo: David Gurnett</i>	



COMING UP IN ISSUE No. 3 OF RE-UNIFICATION EXPRESS*

1. Thap Cham Station
2. D9E Conversion in OO/HO
3. D13E Builders' Plan
4. The Ha noi Metro

Target Publishing Date: January 2015

MY APOLOGIES FOR THE LATENESS OF THIS ISSUE (No. 2) I've been suffering from the dreaded lurgie so everything was put on hold for a while.

*Content and publication dates subject to the editor's personal whims and interests (and prevailing illness) at the time!



We're Looking For Contributions To This Publication!!

In order to continue this publication any further than a hand full of issues, we're looking for contributions from anyone who has an interest in the railways of Vietnam, whether it be technical, model, historic, photographic or travel related.

If you have experienced railways in Việt Nam, or are interested in making models, or just have a fascination for locomotives and rolling stock, we'd love to hear from you.

You can write in English or Vietnamese. Vietnamese will be translated if necessary.

Please send any contributions to :

reunificationexpress@gmail.com

MODELS

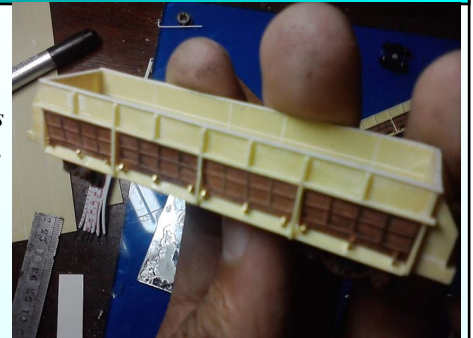
VIỆT NAM MODELLER

I was browsing the Vietnam Railways Forum recently and came across these photos of a Vietnamese modeller's work in N scale. The modeller goes by the handle of "Canadian Pacific" and clearly is an accomplished scratchbuilder, using both styrene and home made etches for his models.

Photos by the modeller.



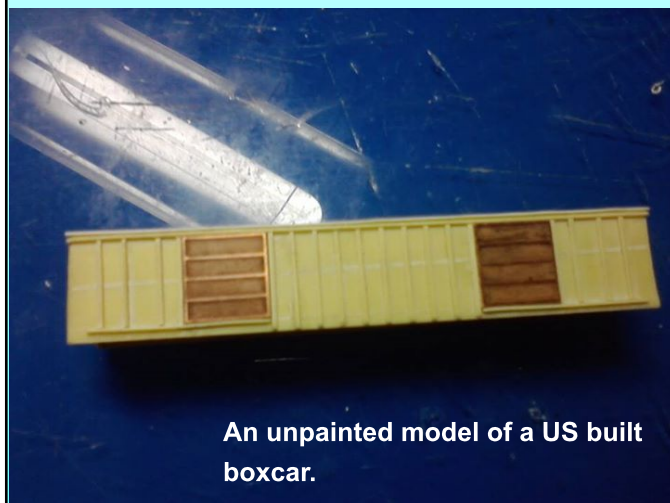
Even in N scale underbody detail is necessary.



Right: Another example of how this modeller effectively combines styrene and brass etches.



Painted open wagon. No markings as yet.



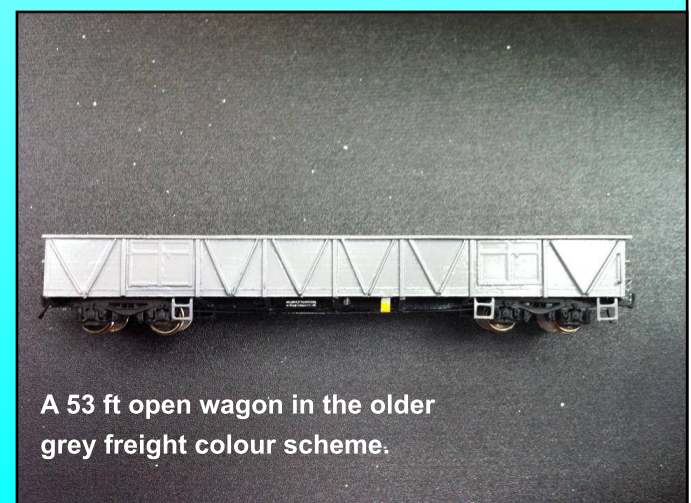
An unpainted model of a US built boxcar.



This delightful model is of a DSVN side discharge wagon.



An open wagon and an older covered van.



A 53 ft open wagon in the older grey freight colour scheme.

A Rail Museum for Việt Nam?

Because of the important part railways have played in the development of many countries, both in peacetime and when at war, many nations have established various museums to honour and acknowledge their rail history.

These museums are usually a combination of preserved locomotives, rolling stock and infrastructure and displays of historical photos and documents.

Many museums also perform a more academic role, researching and providing facilities for others to research the various rail systems of that country as well as publishing or assisting others in publishing historical texts.

China has a national rail museum, as do Thailand (though it is privately operated) and Malaysia. Most Western countries have a number, some government, and many volunteer operated.

Some museums are basically static collections in a couple of buildings (often historic themselves) while some operate small collections of locomotives, both steam and diesel, and some actually operate previously abandoned branchlines, returned to their former glory.

In Australia the 'Puffing Billy' line in Victoria is a classic example of a successful operation, and in the UK and Europe there are any number like this. The Swiss volunteer operated railway that 'rescued' several Dalat cog locomotives is a case in point.

However the development of such museums, whether static or active, is based on the survival of the necessary historical equipment, photos and documents to operate and display.

In Việt Nam war has caused major destruction of locomotives, rolling stock, and infrastructure.

The need to modernise has also seen the rapid removal and unfortunate destruction of older unwanted equipment, though not all.

Many of the earlier French locomotives, coaches and freight vehicles have disappeared. We will only ever know them through photos and perhaps film (though quite rare).

But some equipment, photos and documents, do exist, though widely scattered.

The fact that a handful of ZL class (141) locomotives still exist, either on plinths outside stations, for example 141-158 outside Saigon station, or stored at one of the workshops with an intention to revive them, is evidence of that.

Another example is the 131 class at Đà Lạt, and the small collection of steam locomotives at the Thai Nguyen Steelworks (if they still exist).

Perhaps Việt Nam could take a leaf out of Cambodia's book, where an Australian Company, Toll, has started running enthusiast/tourist specials hauled by a SACM 231-500 class which appears to be in excellent condition. The fact that all similar "Super Pacifics" have apparently gone from Việt Nam despite some still existing into the 1990's is unfortunate. That an example of the locomotive that hauled the first Re-Unification Express out of Hà Nội no longer exists is a real shame.

My personal feeling is that if Việt Nam is to establish a museum, it needs to be soon, before any more heritage items that still exist disappear.

Where would such a museum be located? Logically it should be located near or as part of an operating workshop. Gia Lâm in the north is a good example, or Đà Nẵng in the south.

But let me propose an alternative. How about Tháp Chàm? There's a workshop there, the original heritage buildings still seem to exist, and an attempt could be made to finally get the full Đà Lạt-Tháp Chàm cog railway running again. Wow! What a tourist attraction. A museum and an operating cog railway!

Others might argue that the museum should be located in the north because of the dual gauge there and they would have a point.

Wherever the museum is located it seems to me that these sorts of facilities work best when both government and enthusiasts are involved.

The Vietnamese Government is no stranger to establishing

and operating museums. The large number of military and social/history museums being a case in point. So the skills are there. Combining these skills with monetary support and the enthusiasm of enthusiasts would make for a winning combination.

There might even be the possibility of sponsorships, from some of the tourist companies for example, that would benefit from such a museum.

Where would the enthusiasts come from? Surprisingly there are quite a few railway 'buffs' in Vi t Nam. Many of them are young and they tend to frequent the "Vi t Nam Railways Forum" where they exchange information and photos.

To me the forum members would be a great place to start and could be the core of a "Vi t Nam Railway Historical Society" or similar.

My point is that wherever it is located and however it's organised the Vi t Nam Railway Museum needs to be a reality before there is nothing left to display.

Since it's recent cleaning and repainting 141-158 looks great outside Saigon Station.

Wouldn't it be even better if we could hear the sound of it's horn and the hiss of steam as it hauls an enthusiast/tourist special out of Saigon station heading for the museum at Tháp Chàm and then onto the special cog railway train to Dalat?

To borrow a popular Australian phrase, "I'd like to see that."

David Gurnett



Above: The 'old' station building at Tháp Chàm. Note it would read "Tourcham - Phan Rang" if all the letters were still extant. The lower line reads something like "Change here for Dalat". Tourcham is the French name for Tháp Chàm. History which should be looked after.

TRAVEL

North to Hà Nội

In 2011 I returned to Vi t Nam for another holiday with my new partner.

We planned to head north from Tháp Chàm, spending time in Hué and then heading north again to Hà Nội, all by train.

We travelled in a 'soft seat airconditioned' car on SE8, which on looking back may have been a mistake.

These cars are fine over shorter distances (the 6 hours from Tháp Chàm to Saigon for example), but become a bit uncomfortable on longer journeys.



A better option may have been to book spaces in a sleeping compartment.

Our train from Tháp Chàm was pulled by a D19E class and was made up of newer airconditioned stock and some vehicles not so new, most in the now standard red, white and blue colour scheme.

As it was, the timetable for SE8 had us arriving in Hué at something like 1.30 in the morning. We then had to get to our hotel. Luckily we were able to get a taxi, even at that late hour. The hotel concierge was not impressed because we were actually a day late! My wife had decided that we would travel a day later at the last minute, so while train tickets were correct I hadn't had time to change the booking for the hotel.

The station building at Hué was a rather attractive French style building and appeared to be well looked after.

It was interesting that the waiting room and ticket purchase area was in another building to one side of the main station,



Above: Cau Giat, one of the stations we didn't stop at.

so I'm not sure what the main building is used for apart from passengers exiting the station.

Interestingly comparing the current station with early photos shows not that much has changed despite the ravages of war and time.

We really enjoyed Hu , with the imperial palace complex and many other historical monuments, as well as the modern sections.

The trip from Hu to Hanoi was a bit of a nightmare. It poured with rain almost all the way, I had one of the worst sinus

headaches I have ever had, and the lady sitting in front of my wife decided to test just how far a seat could be layed back. Her head was almost in my wife's lap as it turned out. In the end another passenger told her to sit up. She wasn't happy! She couldn't understand why!

Waiting at night for our train to Hanoi we watched several German built D20E class moving around the Hue station, one of which became our train engine.

Unlike other DSVN stations I've been to, I was not allowed to go onto the platform to take photos, which was disappointing, even in the day time when the station was very quiet.

Because the train left Hu at 2.00 in the morning we completely missed seeing Hai Van Pass but did enjoy crossing and running beside the river which had formerly been part of the border between north and south during the war.

Viewing the winding river with small boats dotted on it's surface through the rain was very atmospheric.

My wife found the view as interesting as I did as she had

Below: The winding river through the rain.





never been to Hanoi or anywhere past Quang Tri Province, though the endless kilometres of rice paddies and small villages became less interesting as the journey progressed.

The villages and individual houses and hamlets definitely looked poorer than the ones we were used to in the south.

We passed a number of smaller stations as the SE trains don't stop at all of them. I presume these stations are served by other more 'local' trains.

We eventually reached the outskirts of Hanoi then headed towards Hanoi Station winding through the inner city, almost able to touch the houses and shake hands with the residents as we passed.

Finally we could see the imposing outline of Hanoi Station itself. Unlike the relatively modest station in Saigon, Hanoi was bustling, far surpassing any Vietnamese airport in its organised chaos.

As we pulled to a stop, other trains were arriving or departing, making it difficult to get to the exit, and almost impossible to take photos. Outside was just as chaotic. We looked for a taxi but had to compete with dozens of other passengers also

Below: Side discharge wagons in the rain.



looking for a taxi. There didn't seem to be any system or maybe we didn't understand the system. We eventually got one and feeling exhausted headed for our hotel for a long sleep.

Our stay in Hanoi was very enjoyable. I had been there a couple of years earlier, but it was my wife's first visit, so we paid our respects to Uncle Ho, visited the Temple of Literature and the ethnology museum as well as the excellent Airforce Museum (I'm also interested in Military History), had dinner with the parents of one of my wife's students,



Above: MiG 21 5121 on display at the Airforce Museum, Hanoi.

visited a market and generally had a great time.

And I forgot all about the trains! So no photos of trains in Hanoi! Oh well, next time!

To save time, we returned to Saigon courtesy of Vietnam Airlines, and a couple of days later I returned to Australia, to return the following year.

But that story will have to wait for another time.!

Below: Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum, Hanoi. Note long line of admirers waiting patiently.



Living in the Country

Many foreigners find Vietnam's houses quite fascinating, particularly the tall thin ones in Hanoi. But if you go into the country side you'll find the houses are just as interesting. Usually only one or two storeys and sometimes with a shop at the front. these photos all taken along Highway 1 between Ho Chi Minh City and Phan Rang and north of Phan Rang. For readers who want to build models these images may be of some assistance.



THE SECOND SAIGON STATION



Thung - Nguyen Xuan - Anh

One of the pleasures for me when I visit Ho Chi Minh City is to relax in the 23rd of September Park, opposite Ben Thanh Market, and watch life as it passes by. Whether it's Saigonese practicing their ballroom dancing skills in one of the rotunda, elderly Tai Chi exponents, school children learning badminton or a scene for a Vietnamese soapie being filmed, it's all fascinating.

But did you know that this lovely park was once the site of Saigons's main railway station?

The current Saigon Station (Ga Sai Gon) was preceded by two others, the first beside the Saigon River, and the second, located opposite Ben Thanh Market. This area is now the 23rd September Park, popular with Saigonese and tourists alike.



But for nearly 80 years it was the beginning and end of train journeys in and out of Saigon.

The two main buildings were modest in design, unlike the grand station to the north in Hanoi, but it formed the southern terminus of the Trans Indochina expresses which ran between Saigon and Hanoi from 1936, the year that the line



was finally completed, and it was still the main station when the first Re-Unification Express arrived from Hanoi 40 years later.

The only evidence of any station left is the office building opposite the station site. This building seems to have been



used by the old CFI, the VNHX and now the DSVN.

The station also had a small freight yard, though the main freight yard was to the west where the current station is situated.

Locomotives were not stored or serviced at the station but pretty much where they are now, a short distance to the west of the current station.

Interestingly, the new Ben Thanh Metro Station is being built right under the former Saigon Station site, sort of "what goes around comes around".

The station ceased to be used in the early 1980's when the line was truncated and the current station came into operation.!



To find out more, go to Tim Doling's excellent website at:

<http://www.historicvietnam.com/>



STEAM RETURNS TO VIETNAM

Late
News



For the first time in more than a decade mainline steam is running again in Viet Nam.

On 11-11-14 locomotive 141-190 emerged from the sheds at Di An under its own power.

After a long planning phase and a false start at the Gia Lâm workshop, near Hanoi, in 2010, work started on the restoration at Di An, near Saigon in May of this year.



The first fire was lit on 30 October and the locomotive was presented to the public on 11th of November, a remarkably short time.

141-190 and sister locomotive 141-165 were bought by Saigon based Indochina Rail Company in 2009 with the intention of restoring them and running tourist trains.

Much credit must go to retired Vietnamese rail engineer Mr Nguyen Van Hien, now 68, who provided the technical knowhow and the energy to get the project completed.

One of the major issues was to get many of the parts back from various locations, or find substitutes, not any easy task.

Initially Indochina Rail plans to run tourist trips between Da Nang and Hue.

If all goes well the company intends to restore 141-165 as well.

You can see the video at:

Although the locomotive looks fantastic with its polished



brass boiler bands, it would appear something is missing. Ah, the smoke deflectors! I do hope that they will be restored as well with the iconic yellow star attached. Until then it doesn't really look like a ZL class.

More information in the next issue.



OCTOBER GALLERY



Above The main platform at Nha Trang looking towards the station building with the usual refreshment concessions along the platform, typical of many Vietnamese stations.

Below: An class "soft seat airconditioned sleeping car" No. An 11927 This is actually a modified Indian built car with new windows and airconditioning. These cars appear to have been delivered at the same time as the first order for D13E locomotives also Indian built. The coaches were originally painted red with white stripes.



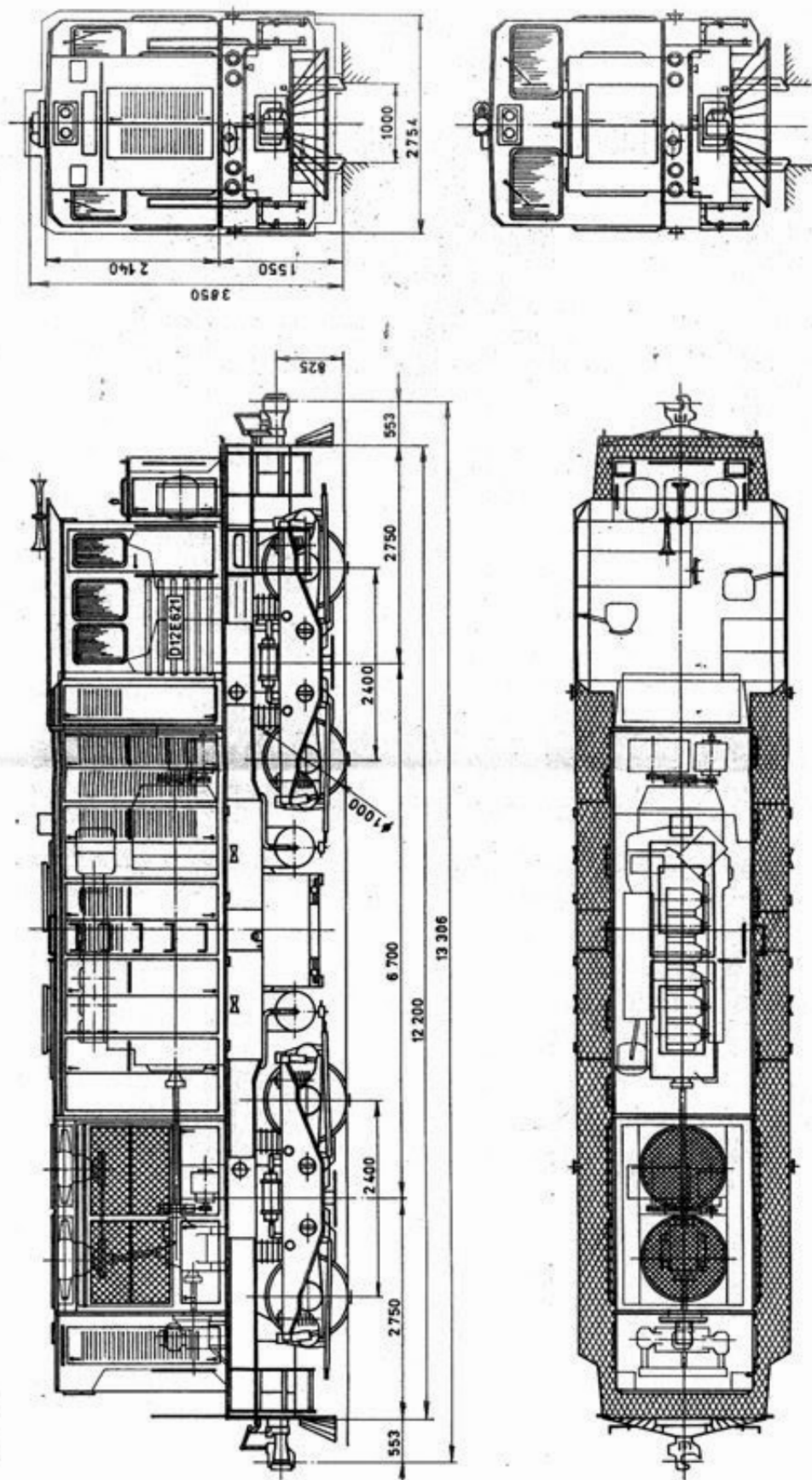


Above: D9E-245 in the backroad at Thap Cham facing towards Sai Gon, with brake van XT3732 immediately behind. I imagine the red flag means the same as in my country, "train not to be moved".
Below: Ancient brakevan XT1571 at the end of another Sai Gon bound freight. Also at Thap Cham.





1000 - Bó Bó - DEV 736



Stella 1128

3-02-9090-280-1

MODERN LOCOMOTIVES

DSVN D12E Class



Above: D12E-625 with unusual red number boards and VNR logo on long hood. Image retrieved from internet.

These useful 1200 hp/736 kW BO-BO diesel electric locomotives were manufactured in Praha in the then Czechoslovakia (now Czech Republic) by CKD (Ceskomoravska-Kolben-Danek) as their model DEV 736 during the 1980's.

They (along with the Cambodian machines) are the only metre gauge locomotives built by this company.

Forty locomotives were delivered from 1985-1990. They all seem to be still in service despite having been involved in numerous "accidents".

The locomotives are numbered from 621 to 660.

A small number (4) of almost identical locomotives were delivered to Cambodia painted in a light blue and yellow colour scheme between 1991 and 1994 and classified as BB1000 class.

The D12Es are now used almost exclusively in the north and are used on a wide variety of train types.

Before the D19E were introduced the D12Es were often used

on re-unification expresses as well as freight and other passenger services.

When originally delivered they seem to have been painted in a red-brown colour scheme with yellow lining (similar to the D11H class), but at some point have been repainted in red with white lining, presumably to match the D13E and D18E colour schemes.

Surprisingly the bogie sideframes seem to be almost identical to those used on the BB901 class more than 20 years earlier.

Some locomotives have had the original pipe pilot changed to a solid metal one.

Some have also had the DSVN/VNR





logo painted on the long hood.

The builder, CKD, was one of the largest engineering companies in Czechoslovakia (today's Czech Republic) and had been building locomotives and trams since the company was founded in 1927.

The D12E's were amongst the last locomotives built by the state owned CKD which was privatised (not very successfully) in 1994. In 2004 parts of CKD were absorbed into the German company Siemens, who by co-incidence built the 16 D20E locomotives for the VNR a couple of years later.



Above: D12E-641 and 622 display the two different styles of 'cow catchers'.

Middle: Side view of D12E class. Note bogie side frames very similar to the old BB901 class.

Below: Builder's photo of D12E class in the original brown and yellow colour scheme.



IN BRIEF

Class:	D12E
Gauge:	1000 mm
No. in Class:	40
Road nos:	621-660
Wheels :	Bo-Bo
Builder:	CKD
Engine:	1200 hp
Length:	13.3 m
Model:	DEV -736
Weight:	56 tonne

If you want to find out more and see more images, see the [Railways in Vietnam website](#).

REVIEWS

TIMECAST 10mm resin buildings Various Prices.

Timecast is a UK based producer of resin model military buildings and accessories mainly for gaming.

These 10 mm scale buildings represent rural and small town buildings in southern Viet Nam during the American War.

They are intended for use by wargamers but the scale is near enough to N to make them a very useful addition to any layout which depicts Viet Nam.

The models are unpainted but the Timecast website gives examples of how they can be painted. You can also order them painted, but you have to wait a while for delivery as presumably they are hand painted and they cost a lot more.

The buildings come in sets , usually of three, depicting a particular scene, such as shops or rural buildings.

The sets include more permanent structures as well as 'thatched' buildings for use on farms.

The models are mainly one piece solid castings but the roof is separate on some larger buildings. There is virtually no flash evident so a very quick clean up is all that's needed before painting.

I would suggest washing the models in soapy water before painting.

Timecast also produces similar models in larger scales as well as retailing scenery products.

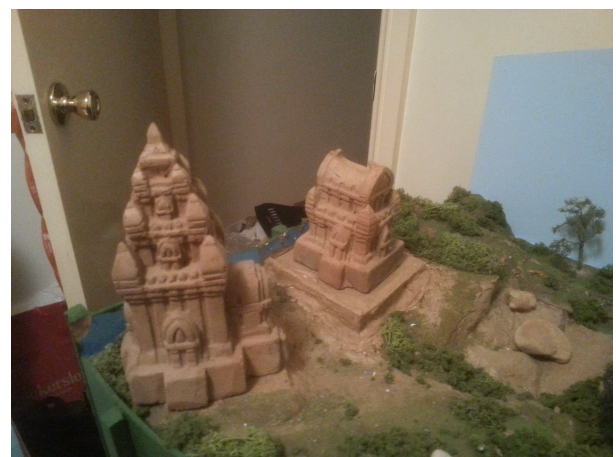


Some of the models are quite heavy and seem to be cast in something which is not the standard polyurethane casting resin. The material has a sort of 'plaster' feel but much stronger. Whatever it is, the detail on the models is very clear and sharp, a credit to the maker of the original masters.

Modellers in HO could use these buildings successfully as 'background' models, the buildings appearing to be further away than they really are because they are half scale.

The models can be purchased online from:

www.timecastmodels.co.uk



MODEL CHAM RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS

These miniature Cham religious buildings were purchased at the Tourist/information centre at the Poklong Garai complex, Thap Cham.

They appear to be cast in some kind of "terracotta" like material, so have a real brick feel. They are also quite heavy.

They come in a variety of sizes, some quite big and others vaguely N scale, though I don't think they are scale models.

They certainly look the part.

I chose the "N scale" ones, and once I got them home I was eager to place them on my layout. I was concerned that they may have been damaged in my luggage but I nedn't have worried.

For those who are not aware, the Cham people are an ethnic minority in the south east of Viet Nam. They once controlled large parts of southern Viet Nam and Cambodia but were displaced by the Ethnic Viet people as they moved down from the north in the 17th century. The Cham people still practice their Hindu based religion, speak their language and follow their ancient customs. Their religious buildings are quite distinct, having more to do with an Indian tradition rather than the Chinese inspired Viet culture. Besides Phan Rang-Thap Cham other places of Cham culture include Nha Trang and Phan Thiet.

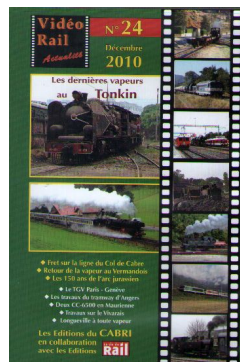
The models are a natural brick/earthenware colour so don't need painting.

Before I placed my buildings on the layout I constructed two flat bases and coloured them a similar colour to the models.

When I went to place the buildings I discovered that the bases of the models weren't completely flat so had to 'blend' them into the bases with scenery plaster and then paint the plaster.

My aim is to have a set of steps going up to the complex from the road below similar to Poklong Garai but this is yet to happen.

Below: the 'real thing' at Poklong Garai (Thap Cham)



FRENCH STEAM VIDEO

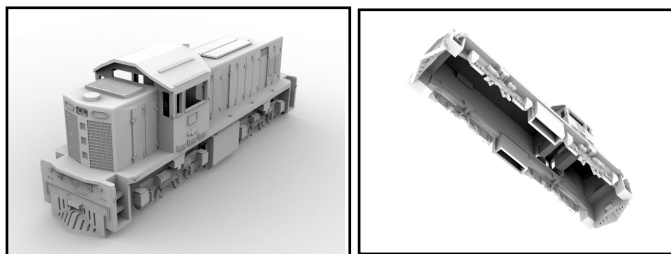
French rail video producer "Editions du Cabri" has released a compilation DVD which includes a segment showing Hanoi 141 class steam in the 1990's as well as shots around Thai Nguyen steel works.

Despite containing other segments which may be of less interest the DVD is definitely worth the euros it costs, particularly for people like me who never got to see a 141 class operating 'in the flesh' so to speak.

A highlight of the segment is a look inside the cab of a 141 as the driver pulls out of Hanoi Station.

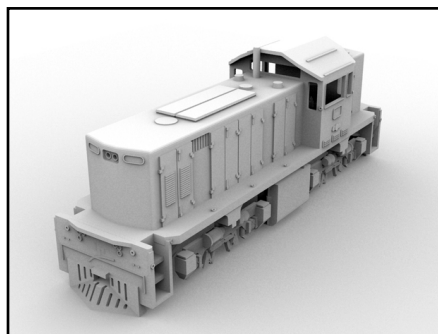
Available from: "Editions du Cabri" at www.cabri.fr

QR/DSVN DH/D5H Class



The 3D printing company Shapeways has this Queensland (Australia) DH class that you can order. It costs about A\$60.00 and is in Sn3 1/2 scale I believe. Of course 15 DH class migrated to Vietnam some years ago. Pity it isn't available in HO or N scales.

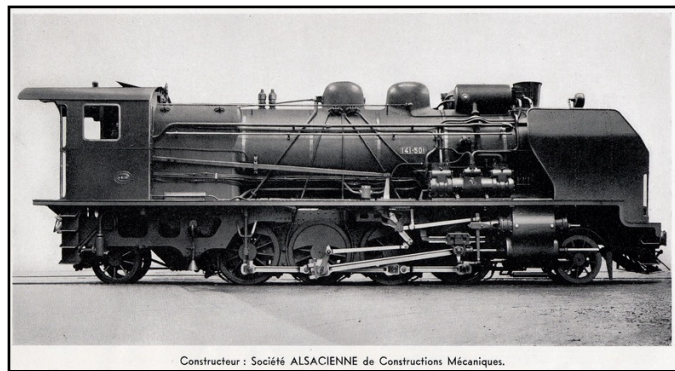
www.shapeways.com



SACM: Locomotive Builder to IndoChina

The Soci t  Alsacienne de Construction M caniques (SACM) was a French engineering company based in Alsace, which built many metre gauge steam locomotives for the Chemin de Fer de L'Indochine (CFI) as well as the French colonies in Africa, and for the French rail system itself.

In Viet Nam SACM is probably most famous for the final Indochina metre gauge locomotives of the 141 and 231 types but it was involved in the construction of other locomotives



Above: Builder's photo of 141-501, the 'ultimate' Indochina metre gauge steam locomotive.

as well.

Of course the later Chinese built ZL class, represented by the recently restored 141-190, were an almost direct copy of the SACM 1-4-1s as well.



The company's headquarters were in Mulhouse, Alsace, France (and occasionally in Germany) where it produced locomotives, textile and printing machinery, diesel engines, boilers, firearms and mining equipment.

The company was founded in 1826 as a textile machinery

manufacturer. In 1839 locomotive production began at Mullhouse in Alsace. In 1872 the company merged with a Grafenstaden based engineering company to form SACM.

Before World War I locomotives were built in Mullhouse and Grafenstaden (which were then in Germany) for Germany, and Belfort for French production.

After WWI Mullhouse and Grafenstaden built steam locomotives and electric locomotives were built at Belfort.



Above: SACM built 231 class being used on tours in Cambodia.

During WWII a number of BR44 and BR50-52 locomotives were built for Germany.

From 1952 the company also built a range of Diesel engines including the MGO (MAREP Grosshans Ollier) type as used in the BB901 class locomotives in southern Viet Nam.

From the 1980's onwards the original SACM was broken up into various different entities, with the factory at Mullhouse being closed in 1989.

Apart from building thousands of locomotives, SACM also produced printing equipment, textile machinery, compressors, mining equipment and firearms.



Above: SACM built 2-6-2 on display in Phnom Penh

RECENT NEWS

Travel time for North-South passenger trains to change from September

VietNamNet Bridge – The Vietnam Railway Corporation has announced a change in the travel time on the Hanoi-HCM City route from September 4.

Mr. Nguyen Van Binh, Deputy Director of of the Hanoi Railway Passenger Transport Company, said to reduce traffic congestion in big cities during peak hours, the railway sector will adjust the travel time of north-south trains.

Accordingly, the SE1 train will depart from the Hanoi railway station at 19:30 instead of 1900 and the SE7 will depart from 6am instead of 6:15am.

In addition, some trains will stop at additional stations in the south.

According to the new schedule, for the Hanoi - Saigon route, the SE1 train will depart at 19:30 and arrive in Saigon at 4h39; the SE3 train will depart at 2200 and arrive at 5h20; the SE5 train will depart at 9am and arrive at 20h03; the SE7 train will depart at 6am and arrive at 16h05; and the TN1 train will depart at 13h10 and arrive at 2h30.

For the Saigon – Hanoi route, the SE2 train will depart at 19:30 and arrive in Hanoi at 4h50; the SE4 train at 22 pm and 5:30 am; the SE6 train at 9am and 19h58; the SE8 train at 6am and 15h33; and the TN2 train at 13h10 and 3:30 pm

Free wifi services available at railway stations and on trains

VietNamNet Bridge - The Vietnam Railway Corporation has announced that it will provide free Internet services at seven railways stations and then on trains.

Mr. Nguyen Van Binh, Deputy General Director of the Hanoi Railway Passenger Transportation Company, says that the service will be offered by Viettel Telecom Company in the next one to three months.

At first, the service will be available on trains SE1/2 on the

Hanoi - HCM City route. After learning from experience, the service will be implemented on other trains.

At the same time, Binh says, the railway sector is installing wireless Internet networks in seven major stations across the country to serve passengers.

The railway sector is trying to change services as well as improve business performance since the Japanese ODA-related scandal at a railway project was uncovered several months ago.

Minister of Transport Dinh La Thang asked the sector to improve the service, particularly the attitude of railway staff towards passengers.

Xuan Chung

VNRC proposes north-south track

VietNamNet Bridge – The Viet Nam Railways Corporation has proposed the Ministry of Transport build a separate track to the current railway from Ha Noi to HCM City, to meet increasing demand for transport.

In a proposal that was sent to the ministry, the corporation said the country's railway infrastructure was in poor condition.

The current North-South railway, with a width of 1 metre, runs a total length of more than 1,720 kilometres. It was built after the French colonisation.

The track's current maximum limit is only 25 trains per day, or 18 trains per day on some routes.

The construction of a track of the same width and running parallel to the current track would resolve the current problem, the proposal said.

Currently, railway transport accounts for only 0.5 percent of the total passenger transport market and 1 percent of total freight transport.

The sector plans to raise this to a target of 13 percent of

passenger transport and 14 percent of freight transport by 2020.

Tran Ngoc Thanh, Chairman of Viet Nam Railways Corporation said the current track would be used for the next 36 years until the North-South high-speed railway was completed in 2050.

In the meantime, transport demand has surged, with road transport expanding faster than infrastructure has developed. Thanh said another track would help accommodate more than 100 trains per day compared with the status quo of 25.

If the project is approved, the railway sector could build the track itself without the assistance of foreign experts, he added.

The project would be funded from the State budget.

Source: VNS

Railway sector slashes fares to woo passengers

VietNamNet Bridge – Vietnam Railway Corporation will knock up to 50% off the fares for passengers buying tickets two months ahead of departure and increase stops of certain north-south trains from next month to offer more conveniences to passengers

The fares will be discounted by 6-12% on average for the

north-south trains departing from September 4 to December 31 this year. However, customers who buy tickets for the trips of over 1,300 kilometers and two months before departure will enjoy a 50% discount while those booking the tickets from 30 to 59 days ahead of departure will be entitled to a 30% discount.

Passengers will be provided with more choices for stops on the north-south line from September 4.

Accordingly, trains SE1 and SE2 will stop at the extra stations of Tuy Hoa, Bong Son, Huong Pho, Yen Trung and Cho Sy, while trains SE3 and SE4 will stop at Bien Hoa, Thap Cham, Tam Ky, Huong Pho, Yen Trung, Thanh Hoa, Ninh Binh, Nam Dinh and Phu Ly. Trains SE7 and SE8 will add Tam Ky, Yen Trung and Cho Sy stations to the itinerary.

The additional stops of north-south Train TN1 will be Phu Cang, Duc Pho, Ninh Hoa and Ma Lam stations, while those of Train TN2 will be Ma Lam, Ninh Hoa, Gia, Duc Pho and Phu Cang station. Trains SE21 and SE22 will have more five stops including Ma Lam, Nga Ba, Song Mao, Gia, and La Hai.

Earlier this year, Minister of Transport Dinh La Thang urged the railway sector to improve services and lower fares to make it affordable for more passengers as many fares of the north-south trains are higher than those offered by local low-cost airlines.

SGT/VNN

NEXT ISSUE:

We take a look at a typical Vietnamese station, Tháp Chàm, which has had a long involvement in the story of railways in Việt Nam.



The Colour Red



At some point in the history of railways in Vi t Nam, possibly in the 1980's someone decided that red with white stripes would be a good colour scheme for locomotives and coaches. The



coaches as well, instead of the then standard green with yellow stripe. The red coaches didn't seem to last for long though, yet the three locomotive classes are still in their red and white colours. There is also a photo of a D9E in red and white and I have seen another one in a 1980/90's Vietnamese TV series set in Sài Gon.



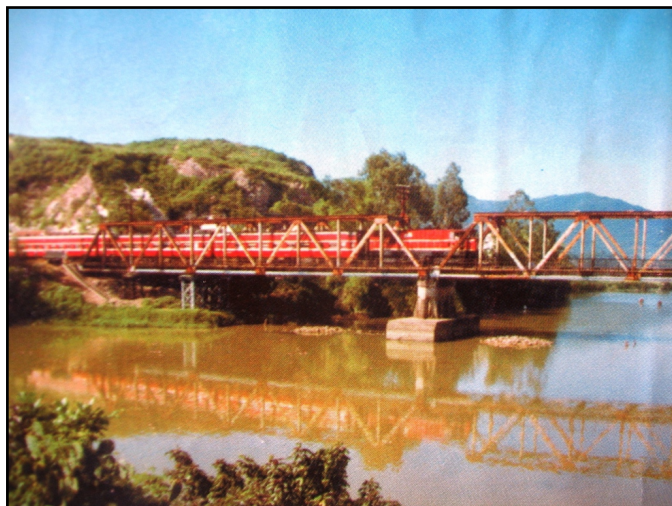
D12E, D13E and D18E classes were all painted red and the Indian built coaches that came with the first batch of D13E's were also delivered in bright red with white lining.

There also appears to have been an attempt to paint other



Also note that the coaches in the photo below only have one white stripe quite low down.

If anyone knows more about this colour scheme and if it was used on other locomotives or rolling stock please let me know.



MODELLING: Ga Hồng Há Version II

When my wife suggested that the garage would be a good place for our car and the spare room a good place for the model railway I was a little sceptical.

But as usual she was proved right. So from her innocent suggestion Hong Ha Station/Ga H ng Há version II was born.

In order to save time my plan called for the two 'end' modules from the layout in the garage with two new modules added to the middle. And because the layout would be standing against a wall there would be no rear 'fiddle yard, but I was still able to fit in a storage siding at the back.



The left most module provided a return loop with a river and several bridges and a pagoda on top of a mountain looking down on the river valley.

I was never completely satisfied with the pagoda part, and then on my trip to Viet Nam this year I visited the Poklong Garai religious complex near Thap Cham station and discovered, to my delight, models of Cham buildings available in several sizes, in the gift shop.

I bought several, in a size which I thought looked near enough to N scale and brought them home. The pagoda disappeared, to be replaced by my purchase. I think they look great, and certainly identify the layout as somewhere in the Cham area of Viet Nam. "We're not in Kansas any more, Toto".

The loop module at the other end is what I call the 'rice

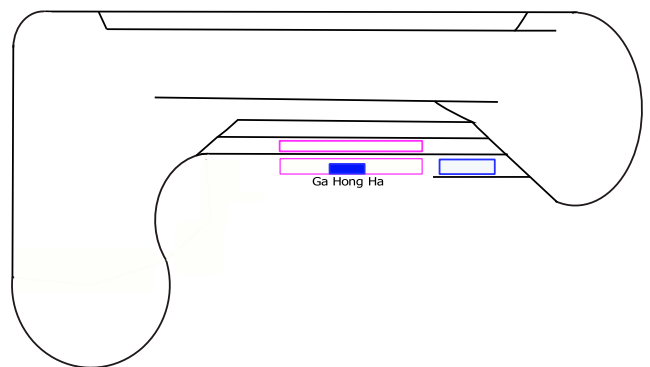
module' as it depicts, among other things several rice paddies.

I suppose the big change between I and II is that the layout is now 'L' shaped, rather than long and straight. this was so that the layout would fit in the space that had been allocated to me by management.

There are four baseboards all constructed using the traditional pine frame and plywood top system joined with bolts and wing nuts standing on square pine legs. I'm not the world's greatest carpenter so a couple of errors in measurement are covered up by scenery.

As it turned out the layout is more interesting with track winding around over the river anyway.

Hong Ha City/Thành Ph H ng Há is still in the middle as is the station, which still depicts a typical DSVN station and yard, though the sidings are shorter than the old layout so trains need to be shorter too. I'm not alone in this, as the full size DSVN has the same problem.



Currently the station building is a temporary one, a cardboard model of a French station building. Many of the older Vietnamese stations were of a French style, but newer stations are much more 'Vietnamese'. My aim is to replace the card station with a scratchbuilt model of the station at Tháp Chàm, though maybe a little smaller (Modeller's Licence) and add a slightly smaller version of the freight

depot as well.

The other difference is that this layout has a proper control panel and the layout is divided into sections.

I'm using the 'cab control' system of control, under DC. I decided not to go with DCC as this newer control system is 1) expensive and 2) more problematic in N scale.

The track is all PECO N scale code 80 track, some fixed and some flexible, with insulfrog points, most small radius points to give a 'narrow' gauge feel.

I am currently building models of the two larger covered vans (boxcars) with the aim of the models being used as masters for resin copies. Adding these to the wagons I've already kitbashed should give me a freight train which looks Vietnamese.

I have two green with yellow stripe passenger cars and will probably add some red, white and blue ones as well. They are the right length and resemble a slightly older type of coach.

They are not scale models of DSVN carriages but until I build scale models they will have to do.

If you look carefully at the photos you will see a number of US style freight vehicles. Because of the limited number of 'Vietnamese' outline vehicles I have, I also run a freight train



Above: Temporary 'French' station building and the centre of Thanh Pho Hong Ha. Still a lot of work to do!

using US wagons, to test the layout and keep the rails clean.

Another job which I keep putting off is a backdrop of mountains/hills. This will be added to the pale blue 'sky' boards, either hand painted or by using photos. I may add some building 'flats' immediately behind TP Hong Ha as well to make the city appear a bit bigger.

Still a long way to go!

Below: The view from the hill. The river and TP Hong ha in the background. The "white" hill on the left still needs to be painted and "scenicked"



TRAINS MAGAZINE

"Rails Through Viet Nam"

In March 1969, the American Railfan magazine "Trains" ran the first of a two part series on the Railways of Vietnam, with the second article in the April issue.

The articles were written by Jerry A. Pinkepank with technical information supplied by Paul S. Stephanus, who I believe was serving in South Vietnam at the time and several Vietnamese informants,

The articles make fascinating reading, with a rundown of the state of railways in the south, a brief history of rail up to 1968 in Viet Nam, and listings of locomotive types and their location.

There is also a look into the future, which as these sorts of predictions tend to go, is totally wrong and that makes it even more interesting.

There are also some very interesting photographs scattered throughout the articles as well.



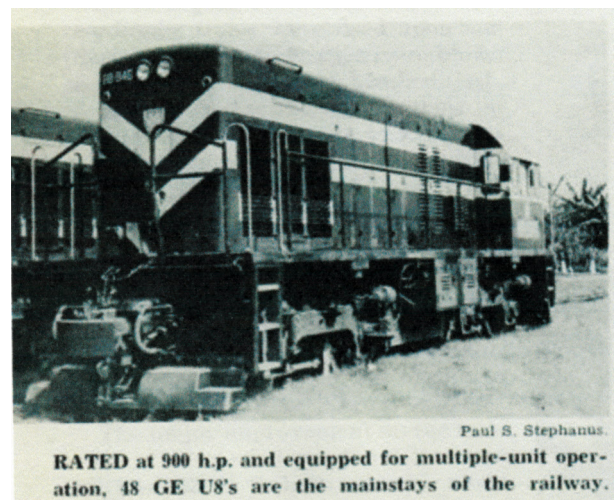
The first article subtitled "The conveyance which runs by fire" provides a potted history of rail in Viet Nam, some information about steam locomotives and their current (1968) location.

The second article is subtitled "Railroading where the competition is a war" and deals with the American war and how it is affecting the rail system in the south. There is also a

review of diesel motive power in the south and a brief discussion of the rail system in the north, remembering that very limited information about the north would have been available to the author.

Probably the most interesting parts of the articles from a railbuff point of view are the two charts showing steam and diesel motive power, what condition they are in and where they are located.

For example the diesel chart classifies the BB907 class locomotives (D9E) as two classes, BB907 and BB930, the only difference being the years built (1964 and 1965). Other data I have available casts some doubt on the build years, but I wonder whether this was a real classification or just something that the author decided.



There are also several images of BB901 class, built by Alsthom in the 1950's. According to the chart they were all operating in 1969 (They were only about 10 years old) so it would be interesting to know what happened to them between 1969 and 1975, and after, if they survived that long. They appear to never have been allocated a class after 1975 (they would hve been D8E presumably) so where did they go?

The information on steam locomotives is even more interesting with 7 220 class (4-4-0 tender locomotives), some over 60 years old still available for service. Again what happened to them after 1969 seems to be a bit of a mystery.

There are a number of locomotives classified as either 'unserviceable' or 'junk'. It would be interesting to know the difference.

Six 231-A-001 Class are listed but no 141-A-001's, which means that all were presumably in the north.

All steam locomotives are listed as either wood or oil burners, I would imagine because there is a significant lack of quality coal in the south, unlike the north.

Other interesting steam motive power which still seemed to exist in 1968 (though their condition is questionable) were three 140 class 2-8-0s built by Borsig, listed as either unserviceable or junk, and 6 150 class 2-10-0s built by Hanomag, two listed as serviceable and the rest either junk or unserviceable. I think the 2-10-0s are the ones 'borrowed' from Cambodia before WWII.

Again, it would be fascinating to know what became of all these 'prewar' locomotives, my suspicion being that they were turned into scrap.

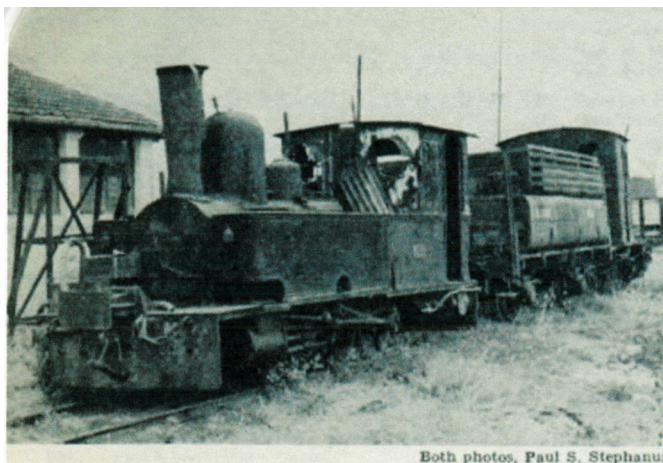
Several other rolling stock types made interesting reading. One was the 'Wickhams' and the other the various 'Rail Trucks' being used by the southern rail system in 1968.

The 'Wickhams' were British built armoured rail motors which had been imported from Malaysia in 1962.

Apparently they were initially used ahead of trains to clear track but later followed trains to provide reinforcements in case trains were attacked.

The article lists some 12 60 hp units and 18 80 hp units having been delivered but doesn't state whether they were all still in service.

The article also lists a number of 'rail trucks' which were



Both photos, Paul S. Stephanus

Above: The "double-Fairlie" referred to in the text.

built in 1940 with 60 hp GMC truck engines, presumably what we would now call 'Hi-rail'. There were apparently 10 of them built. They were called "Camions rail" but only one was in operation in 1968. They were designed to be used over 'light' or badly damaged lines. Four similar vehicles called "Drasire" cars were built in 1946 with passenger accommodation, but were not in operation when the article was being written.

The other unusual locomotive described in the article is a 'double Fairlie' made of two 0-6-0 tank locomotives 30-001 and 30-021, with a common tender. It was in storage at Di An. It produced a very modest 8000 tractive effort.

The author foresees a bright future for the southern rail



Rails through Viet Nam — 2

Railroading where the competi

Every Viet Cong attack on it is an indirect compliment to the line

I FOR FOUR YEARS after the end of the French war in 1954, the transportation system of Viet Nam below the 17th Parallel lay in ruins under the rubble of the two wars which had swept over it. Both the railway and the road system were fragmented by blown bridges and torn-up track and pavement. In the comparable period in Europe (1946-

1950), transportation and the local economies recovered almost entirely from even more complete destruction with proportionally less American aid than Viet Nam had available; but Viet Nam marked time. The reasons for this go deep into the roots of the present conflict, and several more years must pass before the emotional and political dynamite surrounding Viet

and American policy in that era is disarmed so that a cool appraisal is possible. While a political climate as complex as 16th century Italy raged overhead, the railway, like a French bureau which grinds on through the rise and fall of parties and governments, held itself together. In Viet Nam it is the policy to maintain a fixed work force regardless of traffic, and

36 April 1969

system. Unfortunately he was wrong, with the VNHX being virtually at a standstill by the time Viet Nam was re-united in 1975.

Overall a very interesting article particularly as it's written by someone 'on the spot' so to speak.

If you are interested in reading the full articles, they are available as part of the Trains Magazine Collection on DVD, or as a photocopy for a price, through the publisher Kalmbach at:

<http://www.kalmbach.com>

SNIPPETS

An Australian railfan magazine recently published a photo of two coaches being delivered to the Australian Government to be given as a gift to Cambodia in the 1960's. Apparently a number were delivered under the Colombo Plan. The coaches were built in Australia by Commonwealth Engineering. I believe 10 similar coaches were delivered to South Viet Nam as part of the same scheme. The photo was originally published in a contemporary magazine "Railway Transportation" which unfortunately ceased publication many years ago. I wonder if any of them still exist, or have they all gone to the great carriage shed in the sky?



Readers interested in seeing what ZL/141 Class were really like when they were "in steam" should go to the Youtube website and have a look at the Japanese video there.

The film was shot in 1998 and shows some wonderful views of 141 class steam locomotives in action on a tourist train. As well as there is a second video of 131 (C12 class) and other classes at the Thái Nguyên Steelworks. **The links to get you there are:**

<http://youtu.be/-5m3ByvZPI>

<http://youtu.be/QeU-v20efF0>



M. Frederic Hulot, the publisher of the book "Les Chemins de Fer de la France D'Outre-Mer" in the late 1990's has published an article on 231 and 141 class locomotives in issue no. 365 of the French magazine "Chemins de Fer Régionaux et Tramways".

The article includes photos and details of the two classes which were delivered to Vietnam before and after WWII. The article of course is in French.

You can get your copy from "www.Journaux.fr" if you can work out their strange ordering system.



The Australian company Toll, in the guise of Royal Cambodian Railways, has started running it's 'Super Pacific' 231-501 on tours.

Toll is restoring the Cambodian rail system after it almost ceased to exist before 2010.

Not sure how many have been run so far and how successful they (it) were (was). The locomotive was used to haul former Royal coaches from Pnom Penh.

231-501 looks in good condition and seems to steam well (see below).





RE-UNIFICATION EXPRESS



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<http://www.railwaysinvietnam.com>

Our aim is to provide a forum to disseminate news, historical information, technical and travel information about the Railways of Vietnam in English.

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