

Network Rail's new high output ballast cleaning system for the UK - update

Plasser UK's Mark Simmons reports on the latest progress with the system's different elements and machines.

The assembly halls at Plasser & Theurer in Linz are not small. I know this, apart from physically having been there, because it is currently the assembly location for some elements of Network Rail's fifth High Output Ballast Cleaning System (HOBCS5) and it is necessary to arrange multiple inspections.

Progress

When I say some elements - at the time of the update in the last issue - the first 09-3X Dynamic, shown in primer, was in Works 1. Since then it has been joined by the 09-2X/CM and the two 09-2X Dynamic machines. Speaking of the latter pair of machines, reminds me to mention that the tamping element of the original order has been slightly amended from two 09-3X and one 09-2X machines to one 09-3X and two 09-2X.

Back to Linz, there is also a USP 6000 outside, knocking at the door, waiting for some other non-UK machines to move out. Unfortunately, I have spent so much of my time around those machines that had already claimed their place in the works, I did not have a chance to get a photo of the USP 6000 frame - hopefully, I can use that to tempt



Pictured on this page are various elements of the 09-2X/CM machine.

New Equipment

The 09-3X Dynamic (below left and right) and one of the 09-2X Dynamic (bottom left and right) tamping machines under construction.



you back for the update in the next issue!

In addition to that, the RM 900 is still under assembly, partly at the Robel factory in Freilassing and partly in Works 3 in Linz, along with the power wagons and USP 5000. The MFS wagons are also still coming together at great pace in Liezen. The batch pictured in the last issue has joined the first in Carlisle (there are now 24 MFS-D there). Even the MFS-SB wagons are now in full production - the first will be ready for painting during April.

Progress

In three paragraphs, I have just listed every machine type comprising HOBCS5 - yes, at least one of every type of machine in the system is under production as I write, which makes it a perfect time for some meetings in Linz. The ninth project progress meeting took place in early April, along with a good deal of time set aside for Network Rail to inspect the progress that has been made and the quality of the work.

In case my colleagues in the assembly hall were feeling like they needed a break, SNC-Lavalin, the NoBo/DeBo for this project, was also in town for meetings and inspections. I am sure the assembly hall personnel can count on many more visitors before the machines finally travel to the UK this summer!

Of course, each of these visits is a perfect excuse to obtain some photographs for the *Rail Infrastructure* updates!

