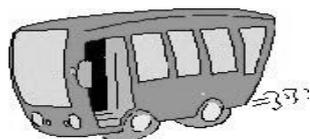


# **THE NORMANDIE Rapide TOUR**

*(A THREE-DAY, WEEKEND TOUR, IN A SMALL EURO-COACH / MINIBUS)*

Friday 22nd to Sunday 24th March 2019



*An outstanding STARS 'Annual Short Tour'  
at an all-inclusive fare of only £182.00*

*If this Tour is upgraded to a Large Euro Coach, a Fare Supplement of £45.00 will be payable*

*Hotel Single Room Supplement £25 (optional)*

**A minimum deposit of £45.00 will secure your seat on this tour,  
and the balance must be paid by 8th February, 2019.**

It has to be said that the Normandie *Rapide* has been one of our most popular and successful tours over the last few years and although we always advertise it as a small coach tour, it has for the last seven occasions run in a large coach.

Acting on members' suggestions the tour has run in late March on the last two occasions. We agreed that it would be so much better to enjoy more daylight during the early stages, and that timing remains this year. However, the disadvantage of running at this time places the tour into the hotels' high season, adding to the cost of accommodation. This year however we mitigate those extra costs by a change of hotel. We were disappointed that the standards of the hotel we had used for over 10 years had fallen well short of our expectations, whilst the rates continued to climb!

Some may be curious as to why one of our more popular 'leading' tours, which always runs in a large coach is still advertised as running in a small one. Simple – we believe that all the *Rapides* should be advertised in the way they are intended and then, if required, be reassessed in the light of bookings received. Don't worry, we'll be delighted to run this tour in a large coach yet again!

As far as our French tours are concerned the enthusiasm for this one is exceptional largely due to the successes we enjoy on most runs. It is not just the unrestricted access to the installations but also the friendly hospitality which seems to set it apart from the rest of France. Of course, the highlight will always be 'The Recession Store' which has turned De Gros Yard at Rouen into probably the biggest repository for redundant locomotives anywhere in Europe. To call it a Loco 'Dump' would be inaccurate! We have built a wonderful rapport with the SNCF staff at both De Gros and Sotteville Depot that the reception and hospitality could not be better, and at De Gros we have only been declined once in the previous 9 visits.

Rouen is now a unique centre where you should identify an amazing total of around 700 items in just one day! The steady accumulation and 'turn around' of locos suggest this location will be a 'must visit' for many years to come.

***This is a Tour with an Upgrade Option.***

***Whilst this tour is scheduled to run in a minibus/coach, it will be upgraded to a Large Euro Coach in the event of the small vehicle becoming Fully Booked. This option will bring with it all the usual facilities available on large coach tours (double seat, hot drinks, toilet etc). It is imperative that you book without any delay in order that we can make early arrangements with the hotel, coach company and Eurotunnel.***

## **ITINERARY**

### **Days One & Two - Friday 22nd / Saturday 23rd March**

After leaving Calais, we make the 3-hour journey to our first location at **Gravenchon**, where we found 2 locotractors last time. We continue to **Le Havre Boieldieu Yard** where we can capture at least another two locotractors. We then take a break at **Le Havre gare**. **Rogerville Fasceau Alluvionnaire Stabling Point** follows where the loco count should climb into double figures and VFLI and NRS (Normandie Rail Services) locos will be found stabled here. We progress to **Alizay** for those Ex BR Class 58s and ERS Class 66s. Then it's into Rouen where the next few hours will be quite spectacular (and pass so quickly!)

We begin with **Sotteville Station**, and **Sotteville CS**, where many units will be stabled. We follow with a good view of **Quatre Mares Works** - unfortunately, we cannot secure a Works visit at the weekend, but we can view much from public places. From here we seek to obtain a view of **Mouquet Yard**, where ERS Class 66s, Class 186s, and withdrawn

'Ys' are all possibilities. Next is a view of **Sotteville Infrastructure Yard**, and a couple of 'Ys'. Then, the 'big prize' - **De Gros Yard** (the '**Recession Store**'). Assuming you still have energy left, we conclude at **Sotteville Depot** and the adjacent **Yards**. We then whisk you off to our hotel for the night. However, you may not be finished yet! There is always the lure of the station and the hotel is just a five-minute tram ride away. The hotel does not have a restaurant but there are many to choose from in the City centre.

### Overnight - Hotel Ibis Rouen Centre Rive Gauche St. Sever

#### **Day Three - Sunday 24th March**

Compared with yesterday, this will be a very light and somewhat relaxing day, but not without interest! We have time to 'mop up' any locations in Rouen (such as **Rouen Docks** if required), which proved difficult or there was inadequate time yesterday. When all is covered we will begin our return journey to Calais.

On route we will call at **Dieppe**. **Le Treport** would normally be our next call, but extensive engineering work has resulted in closure of the line requiring in the dreaded 'Bustitution!' - we will include it again in 2020. We next make a brief call at **Abbeville gare**. We then run over to **Boulogne gare & Boulogne SP**. We return to Calais via **Caffiers Faisceau d'Exchanges** and **Caffiers Gare**, finally taking in views of **Calais Fréthun depot & yard** (where classes 66, 77 and 186 should be scattered around) and, last of all, **Calais Carriage Depot**.