

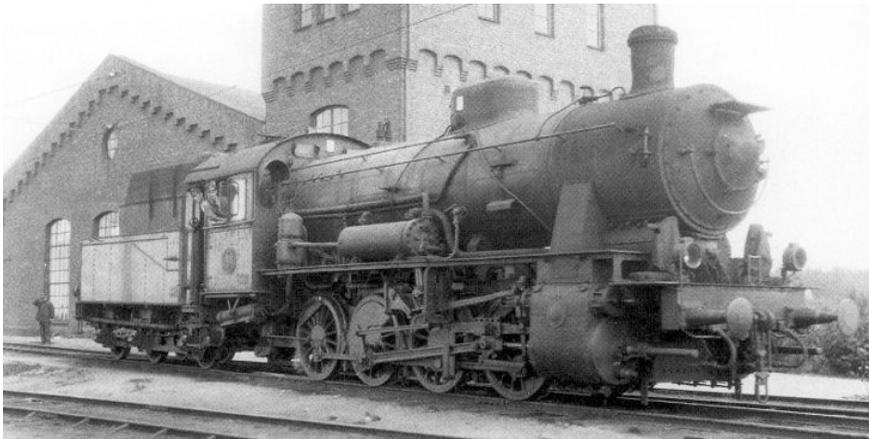
SJ's German G Locos:

by Rory Wilson

During the Great War goods-traffic in Sweden increased dramatically and SJ tried to acquire more locos from Swedish builders, but found itself faced with high prices and long delivery times. It turned to Germany and in 1916 ordered twenty 0-8-0 from Linke-Hofmann-Werke in Breslau.

The locos were to be identical in all but a few details, such as cab-controls, to the Prussian G8.1, with 1.350 metre diameter driving-wheels, an 18.29 metre length over buffers and a weight in working order of 115 tonnes. When the locos belatedly arrived in 1918 they had so many defects that they had to be shopped before entering service.

It seems odd that SJ should have chosen to buy from one of the combatants at a time when NSB was ordering from Baldwin, while DSB bought from SLM in Switzerland, as did the Troidhede-Kolding-Vejen Jernbane.



SJ Ga 1426 at Alvesta in 1933

The locos were numbered 1408 to 1427 and given Littera G, but this was changed to Ga in 1919. Fifteen similar locos, but with standard Swedish boiler and tender, were built in Sweden as Littera Gb in 1920 to 1923; as late as 1942 two almost identical locos were delivered to TGOJ.

The Ga settled down to work slow goods-trains on main-lines, to which they were restricted due to their high axle-load and the effect on the track of having no pony-truck. Within a few years SJ replaced their steel fireboxes with copper ones, and between 1929 and 1932 sixteen were given standard Swedish BG boilers.

The new boilers radically altered the locos' appearance: they lost the two square sand-domes fore and aft of the steam-dome as the new boiler had a combined steam- and sand-dome, and they gained a Swedish conical smokebox-door.

The locos that were given a new boiler became Littera Ga2. The four locos that retained the old boiler lost the rear sand-dome and also gained a conical smokebox-door. At some point they were given enclosed cabs.

The electrifications of the early 1930s meant that the locos became surplus and were stored due to the difficulty of finding work for locos with such a limited route-availability. In 1935 Ga2 1419 and 1423 were sold to the Dutch Staatsmijnen: in Holland they became 51 and 52, being withdrawn in 1953 and 1949. By 1936 all but Ga 1413, and Ga2 1417, 1420 and 1427 were stored at Örebro.

In 1937 four Ga2 were sold to TGOJ, becoming G3 64 to 67, with 68 to 70 following in 1939; their new owners later fitted them with turbo-electric lighting and a top front light. In 1937 the Bergslagens Järnvägar (BJ) hired five Ga2 and, after 1425 had been exchanged for 1427, bought them in 1940: they became G3 122 to 126.

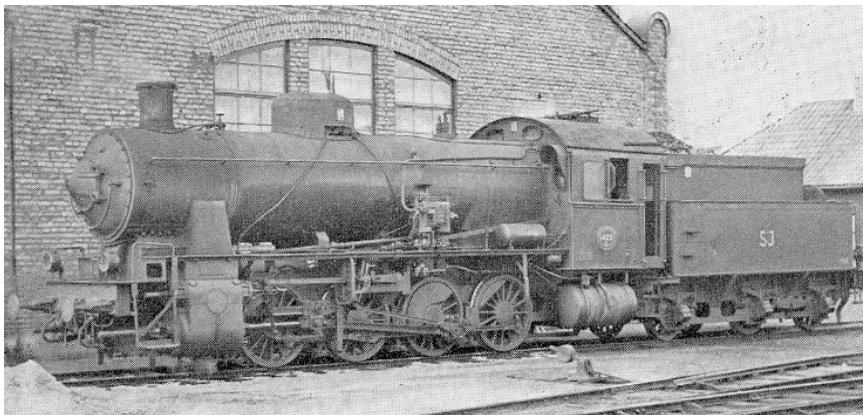
With the outbreak of World War II SJ realised that it would need more goods- locos, and decided that the Ga and Ga2 should be fitted with a pony-truck to widen their route-availability and make them suitable for use on secondary lines. In 1940 Ga 1410 was rebuilt with a 730 mm diameter pony-truck, which slightly reduced the 17.5 tonnes axle-load, but it retained its original boiler and became Littera Ga3. Ga 1418 was similarly rebuilt in 1941, but was given a new boiler and became class Ga4. They became G3 and G4 in 1942, but in 1948 G3 became extinct when 1410 gained a new boiler and became a G4.

No other Ga or Ga2 were rebuilt with pony-trucks, but thirteen of SJ's Gb were. 1410 was used at a number of depots in central Sweden until 1945, when it went to Norrland, but 1418 went straight there after rebuilding. SJ's two Ga (1413 and 1414) and two Ga2 (1412 and 1425) were mainly used in central and northern Sweden; 1414 was on loan to NSB for a while as class 60G (others may also have been). The locos became Littera G and G2 in 1942, but the G gained BG boilers in 1943 (1413) and 1948, becoming G2 and rendering G extinct.

The BJ was absorbed by SJ in 1948 and its five locos regained their SJ numbers (1415, 1416, 1422, 1424 and 1427); despite all having been stored by BJ, they were returned to service by SJ. The two G4 were stored in Norrland in 1955, but were later (probably late in 1971) moved to Sveg. TGOJ had completed its electrification in 1956 and the seven former SJ locos were bought back by SJ in 1957 following the Suez crisis, but they were put straight into store.

The G2 mostly saw use in Norrland, particularly on the Vännäs-Umeå and Mellansel-Örnsköldsvik lines, but they also appeared on the lines from Falun to Borlänge and Mora. By the early 1960s only 1412, 1413, 1415, 1416 and 1427 were in use, mainly on the Örnsköldsvik and Svappavaara lines, the latter then being under construction.

The last ones were taken out of use in late 1963 and early 1964 and stored (probably also in Norrland), but during the hard winter of 1966 two saw use on the Örnsköldsvik line.



SJ G2 1422 at Rattvik in 1958

Despite their high power and relatively new boilers, all G2 and G4 were withdrawn on 1 October 1973. 1413 was sold to Persöner Återvinning of Luleå and 1412 to Adolf Höglunds Metalaffär of Notviken for trial scrapping: both were delivered in April 1974. Höglunds later bought the remaining fourteen G2 for 35,300 kronor each, the price also applying to the first loco, and cut them up in the second half of 1974.

It was not until 1975 that the two G4 were moved from Sveg to Vislanda, where 1410 was cut up in 1977. In 1979 1418 was designated for preservation by SAS, but it was cut up at Vislanda in 1980. (Reportedly, it was obstructing clearance work following a derailment there in August of that year.)

Sources for article on SJ War locomotives

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Various copies of Tåg