



The Ramble 550 - 01/12/25

Tuesday 9th December	[551]
Monday 15th December	[552]
Monday 22nd December	[553]
Thursday 25th December	Christmas
Tuesday 30th December	[554]
Monday 5th January	[555]
Monday 12th January	[556]
Monday 19th January	[557]
Monday 26th January	[558]
Monday 2nd February	[559]
Monday 9th February	[560]
Monday 16th February	Krokusvakantie Holiday
Monday 23rd February	Krokusvakantie Holiday
Monday 2nd March	[561]
Monday 9th March	[562]
Monday 16th March	[563]
Monday 23rd March	[564]
Monday 30th March	[565]

PUBLICATION 2026 of Timetable Updates



PUBLICATION 2027 of Timetable Updates



For The Diary

If you know of an event, let me know and I will put it here.

Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th December 2025

PFT/TSP trains to the Christmas Market in Aachen and from Aachen to Eupen for the Christmas Market there.

The PFT/TSP trains to the Christmas market at Aachen (D) and Eupen (B) will be top and tailed by two out of these three Railtraxx locos: 186 210, 186 215 and 186 216. All are former Class 28s and these 3 locos will return to Alpha Trains in 2026. They may not work passenger trains again any time soon...

The Organiser says, "Dear Bashers, this is your chance!!"

2026

Shrove Tuesday is on Tuesday 17th February and there are Ski Trains on Friday 13th & 20th returning on Sunday 15th and 22nd.

NEW: The UEX now also from the Netherlands

Just in time for the **Dutch Crocus vacations**, the UEX is bringing back the traditional ski train – with direct connections from:

- ♦ **Amsterdam Centraal**
- ♦ **Utrecht Centraal**
- ♦ **Rotterdam Centraal**
- ♦ **Eindhoven**
- ♦ **Venlo**

In Germany, the train also stops in:

Mönchengladbach – Cologne – Siegburg/Bonn

Destinations in Austria including: **Jenbach, Innsbruck, Ötztal, Landeck, St. Anton, Zell am See, Kitzbühel, St. Johann im Pongau, Schladming**

→ Bookable in **sleeper or couchette car** – with bar car for a relaxed start to your vacation!

Travel dates

North-South: nights **13/14** and **20/21.02.2026**

South-North: nights **14/15, 21/22.02.2026** and additionally via Cologne/Düsseldorf **28.02./01.03.2026**

Good Friday is on Friday 2nd April
Easter Monday is on Monday 6th April
May Day is on Monday 4th May

Severn Valley Diesel Gala - Thursday 14th May to Sunday 17th May

If you have not been to a UK Diesel Gala this is usually one of the best to go to. I have started to make a week's holiday of it.

Spring Bank Holiday is on Monday 25th May

Stoomtrein Dendermonde-Puurs - July 4th & 5th

On Saturday 4th & Sunday 5th July the SDP usually kicks off their tourist season with Scheldeland in Steam.

Tomorrowland

First Weekend Wednesday 15th & Thursday 16th inbound
Sunday 19th and Monday 20 outbound

Second Weekend Wednesday 22nd & Thursday 23th inbound
Sunday 26th and Monday 27 outbound

Chemin de fer à vapeur des 3 vallées [CFV3V] - July 18th

On this weekend the CFV3V usually have some form of event.

Chemin du fer du Bocq - August [14th], 15th & 16th [17th]

The 2025 Festival is usually on this weekend. At the time of writing it will depend if the monumental works on the track have been finished.

Pukkelpop - Thursday 20th to Sunday 23rd August

Sometimes there are extra trains and it is always busy in the Hasselt area.

Innotrans 2026 - Tuesday 22nd to Friday 25th September

One of the biggest train events is Innotrans at Berlin Messe. [Trade Only]

Retirement

I thought this was quite interesting

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jowm-xdn1rw>

She is a professional lady with a career and not someone like me who had a job. The last point about identity is quite interesting. I was a "x" or I was a "m" and now I am retired. However after seven months away from work, I am wondering how I had time to work 30 hours a week.

I have realised I am sitting down too much at the computer. I have enjoyed watching some of the absolutely wonderful You Tube videos out there on a range of subjects. Also the young ladies with big boobs who infest my Facebook feed are also something that brings a little sparkle to the day. The one thing I am going to have to do going forward is become much more active and spend a certain number of hours per day being active.

Interrails Etc

In the past I had always used paper Interrail Tickets. For one I did not have a smart phone and I had heard stories about the Interrail App failing in areas with no signal. I got a smart phone last year and I have found that I do not dick about with it as much as I thought I would do. Having got a smart phone it does have it's uses.

In November I went over for the European Railtours trip on November 1st. Two days of the trip were on a paper ticket and four days were on an Interrail on my phone. I thought I would give the electronic version a go and see how I liked it. After the first morning, when the teddy went out of the cot at Hoofddorp, things got a lot better. Things did improve when I found out how to amend a journey and delete the original one. I was inputting a train and getting a journey to destination where I was actually getting off part way. All went well and I got more and more impressed.

What I do like is being able to buy the Interrail and then decide when you want to start it. With the paper version you have to nominate a start date which is printed on the ticket. I would probably still use paper if I could write on the main start date myself. Perhaps the aim is to abolish paper Interrails altogether and not being able write on the main start date is one way to make the paper ones of limited use. According to the Man in Seat 61, 97% of sales are for electronic tickets.

In the current sale I have bought £1 487 worth of Interrail Tickets which is basically my train holidays in Europe for next year. I could have bought more but the aim is to go to Australia next autumn.

I did put some information in the Ramble last Monday about the likely amount of discount available. I based this on the fares quoted by Myinterrail in Alton. They have the contract with National Rail/ATOC to do Interrail ticket. I did find it strange that they were not selling discounted tickets when other Interrail suppliers were. So I e-mailed them to ask why and this is the reply.



Dan Lucas (International Rail)

26 Nov 2025, 11:19 GMT

Hi Iain,

Thanks for your email.

Unfortunately Myinterrail is not taking part in the Black Friday sale this time, however it is available through interrail.eu and a number of other rail retailers in the UK.

Apologies and with best wishes,

Dan

Peter e-mailed to say that "I understand Myinterrail will stop selling Interrail passes in the near future." Selling a large number of Interrail tickets would only prolong the need for customer support and perhaps why they are not participating in the sale.

After I had posted the news on some UK newsgroups, Andy Brabin sent me an e-mail promoting his site, Discover By Rail.

<https://discoverbyrail.com/interrail-pass/>

The purchase on this site is quite clunky in that you have to buy each pass individually and the details have to be entered in each time. However if buying in GBP, the passes are a few pounds cheaper than [Interrail.eu](https://interrail.eu). If you cost you time out at Minimum Wage, the savings are greater spending longer using Discover By Rail site and having to type out each time, than spending more using [Interrail.eu](https://interrail.eu) and only having one transaction. It has not taken me an extra hour to use the Discover By Rail site.

The one thing Discover By Rail do not do are the individual country passes like the Benelux one that I use a lot. You have to go to Interrail.eu. for those.

Alan wrote that "I was in touch with Dan at Myinterrail.co.uk yesterday. And his reply was the same. I've always used them in the past, so was very surprised. Shame really, as they have even been slightly cheaper than others. I used my interrail a lot as they also gave TOPCASHBACK, so that was a real Bargain."

So that is £1487.00 that has gone to Discover By Rail instead of the foolish people at Myinterrail. Multiply that by a number of people reading this and that is a shed load of business lost.

This next section I have done for my benefit to assess my travel options. I have shared it for others to read to see how it might pan out for them.

Global Pass and Domestic Travel

I live in Leeds on the Sunny Southside and I usually get a [First Class CIV](#) ticket from Wakefield to London Kings Cross. The main reason is that there is more luggage space in First Class. We get a lot of people going to London for short trips. So you get on the train to find the luggage space in Standard Class is full of little pink wheelie cases with no room for bigger cases. You do not tend to get this in FC. The First Class tickets can be £64+ to London each way and quite frequently the fare to London and back is more than the Eurostar fare.

It is usually cheaper to use a Benelux ticket to travel between Brussels and the Netherlands as well. So a Global Interrail is a much better deal as I get "free" travel to London and the price for a days Global Interrail for the Brussels - Netherlands journey is not that much different to a Benelux Interrail.

Interrail Reservations on Eurostar

<https://www.seat61.com/interrail-and-eurail-passes-on-eurostar.htm>

This was a shock! I assumed that Eurostar claimed some money back from Interrail and the Reservation would be about £15. NO! The Eurostar Reservation is €35 in Standard and €40 in First [+ €2 booking fee]. My reservations for Eurostar in February are £83 for a return London - Brussels [€94.83 - £1 = €1.1425] and it will cost €72 to make reservations. So the "savings" by using a Global Interrail for Eurostar are only €22.83 or £19.98 against the cheapest Eurostar Standard fare.

Flying

Leeds & Bradford to Amsterdam Schiphol flying out on the on 12th February on the 10:00 flight and returning on the 21:45 Amsterdam to Leeds on 24th February was £269.97 / €308.44. On top of this I have to get to LBA for 08:30 in the morning [difficult] and it is a taxi home when I get back. Flying in February I have been diverted to Teesside before and once nearly got bumped off a flight. There may be cheaper flights from Manchester but there is a cost in getting there and the **time** to get there. By the time I have travelled to Manchester Airport, I can be at Peterborough on my way to Kings Cross loco hauled.

Ferries

The ferry for me is Hull to Rotterdam with P&O. Out on Wednesday 11th on the daily evening sailing and returning on Tuesday 24th is £345.65 / €394.91. This does include a cabin, evening meal both ways [stout buffet], breakfast both ways [fat bastard], Bertie from Rotterdam to Europoort both ways and Bertie from Hull City Centre to the Ferry Terminal both ways. On top of this I have to get to Hull on the train. The downside, apart from the cost, is the North Sea in February.



Belgische Nachrichten Nouvelles belges Belgisch Nieuws

Spoor Gazet

The next edition of Spoor Gazet is now available to download from Patrick Tassignons's site here <https://www.tassignon.be/trains/PDF/De%20Spoor%20Gazet%20nr%207.pdf>

The Spoor Gazet is in Nederlands but there are translating tools and most people will be able to make sense of some of photo captions. You will also see it is different to the Ramble and like me they are finding it harder to get news. The Spoor Gazet is very photography based, reflecting the hobby in Belgium where the Ramble tries to be written information based reflecting our UK hobby.

Haltelink Tracker

I did send Simon who does the Haltelink Tracker an e-mail but as of yet I have had no reply. I also started a topic on HGBTF to ask if anyone had a contact with Hyperrail to see if they could include a vehicle search function.

The information source is available but I do not know enough about computers to make head or tail of it <https://github.com/iRail/iRail> .

In the past I was sent information on a weekly basis which was a full fleet list. This enabled me to compile the Ramble. The person who sent this moved jobs and this information stream stopped. Other people stepped in to help but a lot of the more current information since then, has come from Haltelink. As I have said before, I have to be very careful about overstaying my welcome.

AR/MW 41

One snippet I did pick up from the Spoor Gazet was that four AR/MW 41 have gone into Park.

4103 into Park on 01/10/25
4166 into Park on 01/10/25
4178 into Park on 01/10/25
4182 into Park on 01/10/25

HLE 21

All the current HLE 21s in service are operational and have all worked within the last week according to the Haltelink Tracker.

HLE 27

All the current HLE 27s in service are operational and have all worked within the last week according to the Haltelink Tracker except the following.

2752 last worked at passenger train on Thursday 20th November

Timetable 2026

Written by David Thornhill

<https://beluxtrains.net/index.php>

This excellent site already has the duties for the new TT. In recent times although it might report the rostered data, something different happens in reality, so read with that in mind.

As expected, no 21/27/M4 have rostered work.

For the rest of the railway there isn't much change on IC beyond a shuffle of coaches on some trains. A slight increase in loco on some routes where currently an EMU does an off peak return; the 18 now stays out. From a quick scan, notable changes:

IC-06: Seems an increase in 18 + M6 on M-F at least.

IC-18: A surprise with 2407/2408/2435/2436 back with 18 + M6 restoring locos to line 125.

IC-20: I predicted the SSuO duties here would go M7, but this was questioned. The service does seem to be 100% M7.

P trains not so lucky. Some 18 + M5 - I thought these were to be 18 + 18.

7014/8012/7572/8574/7013/8013/7306/8306/7803/8800/7802/8803 all EMU, so considerable track is lost (some already has gone).

Iain's Comment - this are the six trains that are going EMU and at the current time all are hauled by HLE 21 or 27s with some using M5 stock.

7014 - 8012 AM/MS 96

7572 - 8574 AM/MS 08

7013 - 8013 AM/MS 80

7306 - 8306 M7

8306 - 8800 M7

7802 - 8803 M7

Most of the trains going to Quiévrain are M7s and all 7803/8800/7802/8803 are going to do is join other M7s operating in the area. There are plenty of AM96s in Gent and Breaks and Desiros are everywhere.



Norichten aus Lëtzebuerg

CFL 2000

The last run did take place on Saturday 29th November 2025. Many people were out taking photographs including Gwenaël Piérart who has compiled this selection for his Flickr page.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/135235560@N07/albums/72177720330666973/>

Photographs and words by Christian Schmitz

De Lundi à Mercredi j'ai pu assister aux derniers trains avec une motrice Z2 entre Noertzange et Rumelange. Aujourd'hui un train d'adieu vers Diekirch va cloturer la carrière de ces motrices remarquables.
La 2014 sera préservée en état de marche.

From Monday to Wednesday, I was able to witness the last trains with a Z2 unit between Noertzange and Rumelange. Today, a farewell train to Diekirch will mark the end of the career of these remarkable units.
2014 will be preserved in working order.







These are by Manon Thekes and were taken of the last run at Diekirch. Posted to Lëtzebuenger Eisebunn, Tram & Bus Frënn on Facebook.



Friesenbrücke

It is ten years ago on Wednesday 3rd December 2015 that the Emsmoon struck the Friesenbrücke [Friesen Bridge].



10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Since then the Friesenbrücke bridge has been completely rebuilt, On the 5th September 2025 pedestrians and cyclists were allowed to use it. Rail transport will follow in 2026.

In mid-April 1945, shortly before the end of the Second World War, the Friesenbrücke was blown up by Wehrmacht soldiers to stop the approaching Canadian soldiers at the Ems. The Frisian Bridge was rebuilt from 1950 to May 1951 in the same form as before. The bridge was opened in May 1951.

The new bridge was first turned and closed in April 2025. Further closures are planned to keep the bridge machinery active. The tracks were laid in May 2025.

The start of operations was initially announced for the end of 2024. This then became summer 2025 and is now sometime in early 2026. In the summer of 2025 tests with locomotives began.

This is where the railway lets itself down big time. All this fanning around whilst people are inconvenienced. Back in the past in the UK, the Railway Inspector turned up, checked everything and passed it off. Train service started the following day. Why if the Bridge is built can it not be used?

<https://www.deutschebahn.com/de/presse/presse-regional/pr-hamburg-de/aktuell/presseinformationen-regional/Meilenstein-Friesenbruecke-Letztes-Brueckenteil-erfolgreich-eingeschwommen-13185228>

NS Vectron

6193 939 is back working for NS having left the country on 16th November. It is on Train 420 19:00 Amsterdam Centraal - Innsbruck on Monday 1st December.

NS have ten Vectrons at the moment with five expected to be the required number going forward.

6193 733 is still away at Revision.

NS Units

ICM

Amersfoort to Houtrakpolder (towed).

25th November: 4087, AB 4021

ICNG

In Service are 60 examples. As with all things ICNG, "Service" is open to interpretation.

ICNG-5 3101, 3102, 3103, 3105 [4]
3111, 3115, 3120 [3]
3123, 3124, 3126, 3127, 3128, 3129, 3130 [7]
3131, 3132, 3133, 3134, 3135, 3136, 3137, 3138, 3139, 3140 [10]
3141, 3142, 3143, 3144, 3145, 3146, 3147, 3148, 3149 [9]
ICNG-8 3205, 3206, 3209 [3]
3211, 3212 [2]
3220, 3221, 3222, 3223, 3224, 3225, 3226, 3227 [8]
ICNG-B 3304, 3305, 3306 [3]
3311, 3312, 3313, 3314, 3315, 3316, 3317, 3318, 3319, 3320 [10]
3321 [1]

Accepted [owned by NS] and ready for Passenger Service is 3121 & 3219

In Commissioning/Acceptance/Testing are 3113, 3117, 3118, 3121, 3307, 3351 & 3352.

3113 has been photographed on test recently but it is taking a long time to get this unit into service. 70 days is a long time now.

3117 is on Acceptance Testing.

3118 arrived on Sunday 30th November and should be out on test on Tuesday 2nd.

3121 is accepted and awaiting entry into passenger service

3143 is at Alstom Brugge for retrofit work.

3219 has been accepted and is awaiting Passenger Service.

3307 is on Acceptance Testing.

Blast From The Past



This is quite a blast as quite a lot has gone from here. The railway viaduct was demolished ten years ago and in the main been replaced by a linear park. 1615 is has become 9904 but is currently stored. Photograph by Remco Bruggink of 1615 on a Beverwijk to Kijfhoek steel train on 20th February 2015.

As you can see from the photograph the viaduct was a rather brutalist concrete structure which did not fit in well with the surrounding old area. There were environmental issues as the line ran at first story level with no noise barriers and the passing trains generated a fair amount of intrusive noise. There were privacy/amenity issues which meant sticking the line underground was a costly but effective solution.

Hats off as well to the Authorities in Delft for insisting that NS/Prorail/Government built the tunnel and station for four tracks. Otherwise there would have been a two track bottleneck in perpetuity.



Belgian Can Can



25 / 144

This week's can is 2101 and is seen here at Zwijndrecht in May 1986. The photograph is by Huib den Duik and it was Huib's idea to run this series of photographs of the HLE 11, 12, 21 and 27s in order.

At the moment, this series will finish with Nikko's photograph of 2760 in early 2029!





Other News



Bloody hell Alexa, I ordered baby cheeses





Historic photo of children listening to Mariah Carey's "All I want for Christmas"





Delicately spiced crumbly Gingerbread, Soft, Leather-Black fondant icing, This isn't JUST Christmas food, This is S&M Christmas food.





Have a nice week

Tain