



The Ramble 551 - 09/12/25

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]

Christmassy

We are in December and we can get a bit Christmassy now.

Ruurlo Level Crossing by Mark Peters.



© Copyright: Mark Peters, Winterswijk (NL)
<https://www.facebook.com/M.Peters1976/>

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.

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 20th outbound

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



Belgische Nachrichten Nouvelles belges Belgisch Nieuws

Haltelink Tracker

I have been making enquiries and I have a couple of leads which may be helpful in finding a working replacement for Haltelink. I am positive at the moment but there is a long way to go between now and a functioning replacement.

Looked tonight and the Haltelink Tracker has reverted to it's original page layout and the closure notice has gone. I wonder.....

HLE 13

After the Revision Dates on 1313 and 1319# [# In Salzinnes Works].

1319 is at Salzinnes Works for an Intermediate Revision. Back in mid December.

1333 is at Salzinnes for repair after a collision with a truck in France on 27/02/25.

HLE 17

Delivery of the first series vehicles [1705 to 1724] is predicted to start in March 2026.

HLE 18/19

There are six HLE 18/19s at Salzinnes undergoing RI2K Revision at the moment. Some of these look to have overrun but six is a large number and the highest I think I have seen it. As you will see later there is a shortage of motive power at the moment.

Interested in the Intermediate Revision dates on
1806#, 1823, 1841#, 1843#, 1847#, 1859, 1920# & 1924# [# In Salzinnes Works].

1806 is at Salzinnes Works for a RI2 Revision. Back in service by late December.

I think this loco went in for ETCS works and has then been selected for Revision.

1819 is back in service after ETCS works.

1822 is back in service after ETCS works.

1823 is back in service after a RI2 Revision.

1839 is back in service after ETCS works.

1841 is at Salzinnes Works for a RI2 Revision. Back in service late January.

1843 is at Salzinnes Works for a RI2 Revision. Back in service mid January..

1847 is at Salzinnes Works for a RI2 Revision. Back in service for Christmas.

1849 is back in service after ETCS works.

1857 is in Salzinnes for ETCS works.

1860 is in Salzinnes for ETCS works.

1874 is in Salzinnes for ETCS works.

1890 is still in Salzinnes Works for accident repairs. Due out for Christmas.

1896 is in Salzinnes for ETCS works.

1920 is at Salzinnes Works for a RI2 Revision. Back in service by Black Friday.

1924 is at Salzinnes Works for a RI2 Revision. Back in service in late January.

HLE 21s & 27s

The 14th December 2025 was an artificial date based around the mandatory introduction of ETCS. This is not happening until the end of 2027 due to a number of freight operators not having their fleets equipped.

The word on the streets in early November was that the HLE 21s will continue into 2026. In November it was mentioned that the HLE 27s had problems around their bearings and were likely to go by the end of 2025. The M4s may also stay on into 2026 as hot spares with perhaps the odd booked service.

I have had a word with Johnny the Shoeshine Boy and he is still not able to confirm what is happening next weekend [11/12/13/14 December]. They are short of locomotives and it would be a strange decision to switch off serviceable locomotives when you are short.



What there does not appear to be, are any 21/27 farewell events being planned for this weekend.

I have seen some quotes on Facebook that some the HLE 21s & 27s will become hot spares until April 2026. Perhaps the HLE 27s will continue to work until they need an exam at NK and are stopped then. This happened with the HLE 23s where they went onto Antwerpen Noord and didn't come out. Perhaps the HLE 21s will indeed continue well into 2026 or both the 27s and 21s until their ticket expires, they fail or another date is chosen as a final date. There is a big timetable change on 7th April 2026 which would fit the proposed extension.

The problem comes with competences and spares. B-Technics will only have a limited supply of spares for these locomotives and their ordering processes will have been geared up to the locomotives being stopped this month. The staff can go and take parts off withdrawn locomotives but if they have been outside for too long, the parts may have decayed. Most drivers will be passed off for the HLE 21s & 27s but if they have not driven one for a while then this may get crossed off the driver's competency list when it is due.

HLE 21

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

2124 is on maintenance and due off on 17th December 2025

HLE 27

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

HLE 28/29/186

Interested in the Revision dates on 186 256, 186 258, 186 348, 186 350, 186 445# & 186 451#. 186 211 may have also been revised.

186 350 is at Alstom Brugge for pantograph repairs after incident at Douai, France.
186 445 is at RoseMobility Kassel for its revision.
186 451 is at Talbot Aachen for Revision.

HLD 62

All the HLD 62s are fitted with ETCS and a working third headlight.

6305 has been stopped since 08/10/24 with engine problems.

HLR 77/78

7701 is, or will be, transported by road to Salzinnes.
7705 is out of service at Salzinnes Works after a shunting accident with 7701.
7730 is in Salzinnes Works for ETCS fitting.
7739 is at Salzinnes Works for ETCS fitting.
7742 is at Salzinnes Works for ETCS fitting.
7745 is back in service after ETCS fitting.
7749 is at Salzinnes Works for ETCS fitting.
7753 is at Salzinnes Works for ETCS fitting.
7773 is back in service after derailment repairs
7788 is at Salzinnes Works for the fitting of ETCS and repainting into Infrabel Blue.
7790 is at Salzinnes Works for the fitting of ETCS and repainting into Infrabel Blue.
7792 derailed on Line 162 on Thursday 7th March 2024.
At FAZ for repairs and due off mid December. Repainted into Infrabel Blue.
7800 is at Salzinnes Works for the fitting of ETCS and repainting into Infrabel Blue.
7804 is back in service after fitting ETCS and repainting into Infrabel Blue.
7807 is temporarily out of service due to vandalism.
7817 is temporarily out of service due to vandalism.
7824 is at Brouwer Technologie BV Roosendaal for installation of ETCS.
7825 is at Brouwer Technologie BV Roosendaal for installation of ETCS.
7837 is back in normal service after installation of ETCS.
7852 is at Salzinnes Works for Revision.
7854 is at Antwerpen Noord for collision repairs and will then go to Brouwer Technologie at Roosendaal for ETCS fitting.
7863 is back in normal service after installation of ETCS.

Where things get difficult is with locomotives like 7701. I may yet be deemed to be repairable but you do not know. It may have moved to Salzinnes but there are not any pictures if it has. It may be being moved for spares recovery although that could be done at Antwerpen.

Then it gets really murky. They may combine 7701 and 7705 and how much of each is now in the new locomotive?

AM/MS 75

They do exist without graffiti!

843 outside Mechelen Works on 26th November 2025 with three LED headlights.
Photos by Lucien Claeys



843, CW Mechelen, 26 nov 2025, @Lucien Claeys



Gent St. Pieters

The last of the old 1913 platforms at Gent St. Pieters have finished being used.

<https://www.vrt.be/vrtnws/nl/2025/12/03/gent-sint-pietersstation-verbouwing-timing-vertraging-perrons-ei/>

Platforms 4 & 5 opened on 3rd December and Platforms 2 & 3 closed the same day. Platform 1 was active until Saturday 6th December when it too closed for good. Then this part of the station will be demolished and rebuild.

This was the scene on 4th November



This was the scene on 14th October 2025



14th October 2025



22nd June 2008



17th May 2013



Photographs in the Ramble

The Ramble is a newsletter and it is about the spread of written information. I use photographs to help with the news and newsworthy photographs are always welcome. A photograph can explain something better than words.

The Ramble is not a photographic showcase. I fully understand that enthusiasts in Europe take photographs and that is the main driver in the hobby.

I am restricted by the size of the file I want to e-mail out. I am also restricted to the time I have to spend dealing with photographs.

Line 139 on 6th November 2025

These photographs have been sent in by Lucian Claeys. I have space this week to feature some of them but they are not newsworthy.

These are very nice photographs but outside of the core of what the Ramble is.

What no fence? It will never catch on. 186 294 and one other on a steel train.



186 235 [ex-2843 Kamila] on a container train





1345 "The Beast" at work for Lineas.



A nice friendly wave!



NS Vectrons

On Sunday 7th December 2025 NS 193 939 was photographed in a part ELL livery at Hengelo. It was hauling a significantly delayed NJ420 from Austria to Amsterdam. Photograph by Ron Snieder and posted to Rail Magazine.nl fotogroep.

6193 939 and 948 left the Nederlands on 16th November and the restickering only partially happened on 939.

Tim May saw 6193 948 at Hegyeshalom (Hungary) on 8th December 2025. It has had the NS Vinyls stripped off and is in white except the cabs in ELL livery similar to 939 above.

NS TRAXX

186 011 and 186 013 were returned to Akiem on 2nd December 2025.

I suspect that others may have also been returned.

186 044 is on standstill maintenance at Antwerpen Noord.

Class 1700

1745 is seen here outside Strukton on 4th December 2025 and is being worked on with a view to re-entering service. Photograph by Emiel van Zuijlen and posted to the Locomotieven 1600/1700 groep on Facebook.



Here is 1752 on a lightly loaded container train to Gekkengraaf on 21st November 2025. Photograph by Niels Karsdorp and posted to the Locomotieven 1600/1700 groep on Facebook. 1745 above may end up in this livery.

ICNG

Correction Corner – last week it should have read 3113, 3117, 3118 3121

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 are 3117, 3121 & 3219

In Commissioning/Acceptance/Testing are 3113, 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. Testing software?

3117 has been accepted and awaiting entry into passenger service

3118 arrived on Sunday 30th November and taken to the naughty step at Utrecht Cartesiusweg Technisch Centrum on Wednesday 3rd December 2025.
3118 was out on test on Monday 8th December 2025.

3121 has been accepted and awaiting entry into passenger service

3143 is at Alstom Brugge for retrofit work.

3219 has been accepted and awaiting entry into passenger service

3307 is on Acceptance Testing.

3118 was hauled to the naughty step at the Technisch Centrum on Wednesday 3rd December 2025 by 9903. Photograph by Frans van den Hurk and posted to Facebook.



3118 was on test on Monday 8th December. Photograph by Erik Nieboer and posted to ICNG Intercity Nieuwe Generatie NS on Facebook



VIRM

Out of service (collision damage): 9570
9570 collided with a car at Udenhout, 29th October.

Heerlen - Aachen

<https://www.treinreiziger.nl/drielandentrein-gaat-begin-2026-2-maanden-niet-van-en-naar-duitsland/>

“The Three-Country Train will not run between Heerlen and Aachen, Germany, for more than two months starting January 9th. The German rail infrastructure manager DB InfraGo will be working on the German section of the rail link. Arriva, in collaboration with other carriers, will be setting up replacement bus services.

Train traffic to Aachen is scheduled to be disrupted until March 6th. DB InfraGo will be carrying out work at several locations on and along the track. Work will include the construction of a railway bridge near Aachen and the removal of level crossings.”

GoVolta New Trains in 2026 with Vectrons

<https://www.vrt.be/vrtnws/nl/2025/12/08/nederland-oude-nmbs-treinen-amsterdam-duitsland/>

In the Netherlands, a new rail company will offer international train rides from March with carriages that it has bought from NMBS/SNCB. It concerns thirteen vehicles that the Belgian Rail Company will put out of service by the end of this year.

After a difficult access route, GoVolta, with the support of Keolis, a subsidiary of the French railway company SNCF, has enough funds available to operate to German cities from Amsterdam three times a week.

Last year, the project seemed to fail, because there were no financiers who wanted to make the purchase of second-hand trains possible. Eventually, the company was able to buy trains from Belgium. NMBS/SNCB clarifies that it concerns 110 carriages. Nothing is known about the price of the vehicles.

The first train departs for Berlin on 19th March with stopovers in Amersfoort, Deventer, Hengelo, Bad Bentheim, Osnabrück and Hanover. The train to Hamburg, which stops in Amersfoort, Deventer, Hengelo, Bad Bentheim and Bremen, will run for the first time on 20th March. Tickets are for sale from 10 euros single ride.

There is more detail here at Treinreiziger

<https://www.treinreiziger.nl/govolta-lanceert-vanaf-19-maart-treindienst-naar-berlijn-en-hamburg-ticketverkoop-van-start/>

The artists impression of the locomotives being used is a Vectron.

The maintenance will be carried out by Brouwer Technology, which is closely involved in the initiative. Not all thirteen carriages will be deployed. The train will consist of a locomotive and seven 2nd class carriages, which is called GoVolta economy, and one 1st class carriage, which is called comfort. In addition, a on-board restaurant goes with it.

A guaranteed seat is included as standard, unlike the ICE. The baggage rules are stricter: two pieces of hand luggage are included; large suitcases cost extra. Winkelman: "We find it undesirable for travellers to carry huge amounts of luggage." **Iain's Comment** - Fee, fie, foe, fum, I smell the blood of an Irishman! This is Ryanair crap charging for luggage."

GoVolta also introduces an option to book the seat across the street for extra space and guaranteed seating in the direction of travel. This service will be offered under the name XL Duo Seat.

GoVolta has an option on additional NMBS/SNCB carriages and is investigating an extension to Paris in 2027. The intended Dutch stops are Amsterdam, Haarlem, Dan Haag, Rotterdam, Lage Zwaluwe and Roosendaal. Lage Zwaluwe was deliberately chosen because of the free parking options. In Belgium, GoVolta hopes to be able to drive via Gent [***?***]. Strategic cooperation with the French Keolis - a subsidiary of the SNCF - should facilitate access to the French market.

? It does seem an odd way to go.

Blast From The Past



Here we have 1108 at Amsterdam Centraal Station on Train D205.
Photograph by Alan Page and taken on 23rd August 1980.



Belgian Can Can

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Here is 2102 on an unidentified working at Welle on a very pleasant 28th April 2010.
Photograph by Arno Verhagen.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/spoorstad/39176669151>



Other News

A cartoon from the post war era



"We've been thinking about your parrot, Grandma. Supposing we can't get a turkey for Christmas . . ."

COULD BE A LONG XMAS EVE...



Give her a Hoover and you'll be the best

Christmas morning
(and forever after)
**she'll be happier
with a Hoover**

P. S. to husbands:
She cares about her home, you know, so if you really care about her ... wouldn't it be a good idea to consider a Hoover for Christmas? Prices start at \$66.95. Model 29 (shown here) \$95.95. Low down payment, easy terms. See your Hoover dealer now.

THE HOOVER COMPANY
North Canton, Ohio

© Mike Baldwin / Cornered



“Nice iron. Your wife will love it. While I wrap it, you might want to go over to sporting goods and pick out a helmet.”



ICE 8026 Driving Home For Christmas. Photograph by Kevin Trumpie and taken at Amersfoort on Monday 1st December 2025.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LrdW5iP9xZo>

Got thrown out of the church Christmas cake competition again this year!



Have a nice week

Tain