



The Ramble 552 - 15/12/25

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]
Monday 6th April	Easter Monday - No Ramble
Monday 13th April	[566]
Monday 20th April	[567]
Monday 27th April	[568]

7381 at Ghislenghein on 9th January 2009 in one of the best picture postcard scenes I have ever seen. Photograph by Laurent Joseph and looking a lot like Christmas!



For The Diary

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

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 23rd 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]

Private Companies Operating Long Distance Locomotive Hauled Trains In Benelux

Operator	Type	Train Number	From	To	Run Dates	Loco Type
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Current 15th December 2025

1	3	5	European Sleeper	Night	453	19:22 Brussel Zuid	Praha hlavní nádraží	11:19 Mon/Wed/Fri	TRAXX
2	4	7	European Sleeper	Night	452	18:00 Praha hlavní nádraží	Brussel Zuid	09:17 Tue/Thu/Sun	TRAXX

February 2026 Only

5	UEX	Night	18:15 Amsterdam Centraal	Schladming/St. Anton a Arlberg	10:40 13th & 20th Feb 26	?
6	UEX	Night	17:40 Schladming/St. Anton a Arlberg	Amsterdam Centraal	09:25 14th & 21st Feb 26	?

From March 2026

2	4	7	GoVolta	Day	8:34 Amsterdam Centraal	Berlin	15:09 From 19/03/26	Vectron
2	4	7	GoVolta	Day	16:10 Berlin	Amsterdam Centraal	11:55 From 19/03/26	Vectron
1	3	5	GoVolta	Day	8:04 Amsterdam Centraal	Hamburg Hbf	13:26 From 20/03/26	Vectron
1	3	5	GoVolta	Day	14:21 Hamburg Hbf	Amsterdam Centraal	11:55 From 20/03/26	Vectron
2	4	7	European Sleeper	Night	496 17:45 Paris	Berlin [via Brussel & Liege]	9:59 From 26/03/26	?
1	3	5	European Sleeper	Night	497 18:31 Berlin	Paris [via Brussel & Liege]	10:00 From 27/03/26	?

From June 2026

1	4	6	European Sleeper	Night	xx:xx Brussel Zuid	Milano Centrale	xx:xx From 18/06/26	?
1	4	6	European Sleeper	Night	xx:xx Amsterdam Centraal	Train Combines in Germany	xx:xx From 18/06/26	?
3	5	7	European Sleeper	Night	xx:xx Milano Centrale	Brussel Zuid	xx:xx From 19/06/26	?
3	5	7	European Sleeper	Night	xx:xx Train Divides in Germany	Amsterdam Centraal	xx:xx From 19/06/26	?



Belgische Nachrichten Nouvelles belges Belgisch Nieuws

Friday 12th December 2025 - Last Day -Sort Of

There has been speculation about what was actually going to happen on Monday 15th December. One was that the HLE 21s and 27s would be withdrawn by Sunday and others saying that the HLE 21s would continue. Other speculation was that both HLE 21s and 27s would continue into 2026 as late as April, may be as hot spares.

Sat here writing this on Monday 15th December, who knows?

Belgium Railways are like this. The plan one day becomes waste paper the following. On the ground are good people trying their best playing what appears to be a game of football with Schrödinger's goal posts. A penalty is kicked and ? Is the goal there or isn't it? You do not know until the Referee signals a goal or does not. The plan is rolled out by NMBS/SNCB managers and then it changes. These changes come at the point when senior management's plans meet reality as many of us see in our jobs at work.

Treat some of the following information with caution.

HLE 21

2105 Last worked on P7007 06:18 De Panne - Schaarbeek on 15/12/25
2114 Last worked on P8306 16:57 Brussel Zuid - Tongeren on 12/12/25
2124 Last worked on 28th November 2025
2132 Last worked on P7515 07:06 Mouscron - Schaarbeek 15/12/25
2134 Last worked on P7006 05:17 De Panne - Schaarbeek on 16/12/25
2143 Last worked on P7007 06:18 De Panne - Schaarbeek on 10/12/25
2148 Last worked on P8007 17:40 Schaarbeek - De Panne on 05/12/25
2153 Last worked on P8007 17:40 Schaarbeek - De Panne on 15/12/25

HLE 27

2701 Last worked on P8802 17:00 Schaarbeek - Quévy on 05/12/25 with 2754
2730 Last worked on 1921 21:45 Tournai - Brussel Airport on 13/12/25?
2741 Last worked on P7006 05:17 De Panne - Schaarbeek on 08/12/25
2752 Last worked on P7802 06:28 Quévrain - Schaarbeek on 05/12/25
2754 Last worked on P8802 17:00 Schaarbeek - Quévy on 05/12/25 with 2701
2759 Last worked on P8800 15:45 Schaarbeek - St. Ghislain on 12/12/25

M4 will continue to run for a few more weeks. But ADx will no longer be allowed to run from Sunday 13th, so M7 BDx/BVx will be used instead. You can see this in Jon's photograph below.

80 M5s are due to go into park with two commercial & one reserve train remaining in service.

2730 sat at Tournai waiting to push IC 1914 14:45 Tournai - Airport. Note the M7 BVx driving trailer on the back which has replaced the M4 ADx. Photo by Jon Piesing 12th December 2025.



Here at Brussel Zuid, 2730 pushing IC1914 14:45 Tournai - Airport meets 2132 on P8012 15:37 Schaarbeek - Gent St. Pieters. Photograph by Jon Piesing on 12th December 2025.





Here is 2153 is at Schaarbeek with a train of M5s ready to depart with the 17:18 to Quiévrain on 12th December. Photograph by Steve Lersberghe and posted to Belgische treinspotters groep on Facebook.

Er was uiteindelijk nog redelijk wat concurrentie, maar zonder grote plotwendingen is deze 2153 wel degelijk de allerlaatste HLE 21 in commerciële dienst. Ze staat klaar met een stam M5 op P 8803, is vertrokken om 17.18 u en zal met een aankomst in Quiévrain om 19.05 u de paar andere kandidaten (waaronder P 8574 en 8306) achter zich laten.

You take this at face value only to find that 2105 worked out of Schaarbeek 22 minutes later.

Personally, I did think it was a very strange decision to send these trains to a country end terminal destination on their last day. All that happens is that the sets have to be worked back to town ecs. As it turns out the HLE 21s continue to roll.

The question is, has the Fat Lady sung for the HLE 27s?



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/It_ain't_over_till_the_fat_lady_sings

2730 came out to play on Saturday 13th on the Airport to Tournai/Mons circuit in a last hurrah! Seen here in two photographs by Ivo Van Steenwinkel and posted to Train en Station Vroeger en Nu (Train et Gare d'aujourd'hui et d'autrefois) on Facebook.



Three HLE 21s worked on Monday 15th December.

2134 on 7006 05:17 De Panne - Schaarbeek.

2105 on 7007 06:18 De Panne - Schaarbeek

2132 on 7515 07:06 Mouscron - Schaarbeek

7515 is seen here at Tournai in a photograph by Gilles Laurent and posted to Belgische treinspotters groep on Facebook.



Two worked out on Monday

2134 on P8006 16:40 Schaarbeek - De Panne

2153 on P8007 17:40 Schaarbeek - De Panne

One HLE 21 worked in on Tuesday 16th December

2134 on 7006 05:17 De Panne - Schaarbeek.

(2153) on 7007 06:18 De Panne - Schaarbeek

From information on HGBTF, this train was actually hauled by 1831 and 2153 was hauled dead inside. Tracker shows 2153 only.

Other trains that were worked by 21s in the morning last week have been formed with these trains as follows

7014 - AM96

7306 - M7

7802 - AM96

Quite what is going to happen going forwards I do not know. There are still persistent rumours about the HLE 21s and 27s being kept in warm store until April. Driver competences will also need to be kept up across a number of train crew depots or you have problems rostering drivers.

HLE 21

2160 has been loaded onto the truck and has been transported to a place for restoration and will return in a few weeks. Upon return it will be transferred to Melle, Monceau, or Treignes. Originally 2160 was for sale/scrap and is special in that it was the last whole locomotive built in Belgium. It was destined for the museum at CFV3V but if it is going to Melle or Monceau, it looks more likely that Trainworld has preserved it. Trainworld has already got 2150 as a museum lok.

We are getting into murky water here and it may be we have to wait to see what exactly pans out with 2150 and 2160.

HLE 27

In a topic on HLE 21s on HGBTF you get this “Er zijn al enkele stuks HLE27 die deze week zijn toegekomen in Casier Recycling te Deerlijk” [EN - Several HLE27 units have already arrived this week at Casier Recycling in Deerlijk.]. So you ask the question, which ones?

Then I have to start to ask people to go and take a look to see what has gone for scrap. We/I might only find out in three months time when a photograph appears in a magazine.

2703 was loaded onto a truck at Cuesmes on 9th December 2025.

2708 I think is the new ets supply at Cuesmes Works.

2710 was taken from Cuesmes by road to Casier Deerlijk on 10th December 2025

Things in General

Maxence Canart produced a list on NMBS Historisch / SNCB patrimoine on Facebook of HLE 21s and 27s. I picked up a couple of bits of information as other people contributed their information.

I did write, “The problem is that people no longer take records and place them in a public place. People take photographs and place them on Facebook where there is no archive. So when you want to research information there are no resources to use to be able to produce it. I do a list but it is as a pdf and I cannot attach files to posts.....” Subsequently I put up a screen dump of the HLE 21 & 27s lists as you can post photographs on Facebook. Nothing. The only likes were from two British people. So you reach out and try and help and nothing.

Mr Canart is an All-star contributor as well. Posters can put up any old crap and be rewarded for it which is also part of the problem. I am not including Mr Canart in this, but rewarding the number of posts simply ensures that the crap drowns out the good interesting stuff. Another problem with Facebook is the disinformation. Platform end wibble is not challenged because there is no one to challenge it.

The problem is not the vehicles in service, it is the ones that are stored or withdrawn. There are not the British doing spotting trips and there are very few Belgians making notes. Vehicles go for scrap and it is unrecorded. In the UK a local enthusiast will walk down to a scrapyards if something has arrived and report it to Ian at WNXX. In Belgium you only usually get a report if there is a photograph to go with it. No photograph - usually no report.

It is slowly getting worse and will continue to get worse.



With a Christmas star in the cab, 186 216 of Railtraxx is ready to depart Vilvoorde between the beautifully restored stair windows on the platforms. Running as Train 13403 Schaerbeek - Aachen transporting participants on the TSP Christmas market train 13th December 2025. Photograph by Ivo Van Steenwinkel and posted to Trein en Station Vroeger en Nu (Train et Gare d'aujourd'hui et d'autrefois) on Facebook.

I understand that on the Sunday the trains were quite lightly loaded and the train from Aachen to Eupen had very few passengers on board. This is a shame as if people want charter train operations then they have to support them. In the UK the charter train operators started off running enthusiast trains and then over time have done more and more day out trains for non enthusiasts. This change in the market has taken time to happen and even then a lot of operators have stopped their businesses.

I have always had a dream of running charters abroad and one of the things I did think about was running to Germany and doing the Christmas markets. Put the right TRAXX for the enthusiasts and run the right train for normal passengers. On the strength of these trains then perhaps this is not such a good idea. Having already spent fifty six days abroad this year, with two trips over recently, I personally found it hard to justify this trip. Then my Dad's operation killed it completely for me.

Part of the problem is the difference in the hobbies with photography being the prime driver of enthusiasts in main land Europe. They want to take a photo of a train and not ride it.

I10 Coaches

12743, 12721 and 12738 are the first three I10 carriages that are marked as sold to GoVolta.

M4

M4 52147 is marked for preservation by Train World.

A scrap dealer will dismantle some M4s locally at the Port of Brussels. They can process approximately one carriage per day. There will be one to two shipments of five carriages per week starting soon.

DE18

92 82 4185 202-1 L-NXRL was unveiled at Rail Service Net [RSN] on Thursday evening 11th December 2025. This DE18 of HSL Belgium was presented in a new livery and is one of two the company has leased. Photograph by Willie Steamtrain.

Also <https://www.facebook.com/reel/887916100333934>

I am expecting that 7725 will return to Lineas.



Route of European Sleeper Service from Paris to Berlin

In Ramble 548 I mentioned about the route of the European Sleeper from Paris to Berlin. This train will call at Brussels and Liège. I speculated which way the train would be going. If you look at the European Sleeper advanced information the European Sleeper from Amsterdam & Brussels to Milano calls at Köln.

<https://www.europeansleeper.eu/milan>

It is possible this is where the two portions will be joined. This assumes a ES presence or at least an agreement with DB at Köln station. If you are providing a service for one train then it is easier to bolt services for other trains.

HLR 80

8051 has been transported to Treignes and hopefully will be in service sometime in 2026. The accompanying 26.102 also went to the CFV3V.

8051 was at Location is Beverly Food & Beverage, Lierselei 177, 2390 Malle

8051 was at 51°17'06.08N / 4°43'28.69E and both locomotives were sat parallel to the N14 and were visible from a public place. As you can see, 8051 had an advertisement for Beverly fastened to it.



Photographs by Yvan de Vulder and taken on 27th March 2024.



Norichten aus Lëtzebuerg

CFL 2400

This photograph appeared in the week on Lëtzebuenger Eisebunn, Tram & Bus Frënn.

“CFL 2452, 6-deeleg Alstom Coradia Stream HC, ass och ukomm.”



CFL Cargo

<https://groupe.cfl.lu/en-gb/affiliates>

It was pointed out that the remaining active CFL 3000 locomotives are shown as working for CFL Cargo. Has this been verified? Obviously they no longer do passenger workings, and many enthusiasts appear to use the "CFL Cargo" name as a shorthand for all freight services operated by CFL related companies. "CFL Multimodal" is a wholly owned part of CFL and CFL Cargo is a joint venture between CFL and Arcelor Mittal. The more recent pictures of CFL 3000 series show the locos hauling container trains between Luxembourg and Antwerpen, the very route that happens to be the main corridor of CFL Multimodal's services. This made our correspondent think that the locos might only be working for CFL Multimodal and not CFL Cargo. The Luxembourg Class 188 locos (or the great majority of them in any case) have been leased by CFL Cargo directly, without using CFL as a middle man, making me think that CFL Cargo doesn't necessarily need to lease old equipment from the mother company any more.

In the future, CFL Multimodal and CFL Cargo are likely to use a common pool of locos anyway. Rumour says that all the remaining 3000 series locos will be stopped next year when the additional Class 188 locos arrive in Luxembourg. As CFL Multimodal can never operate the Antwerpen service with CFL 4000 series, not north of the voltage changeover point anyway, sharing the Class 188 pool with CFL Cargo would be the no-brainer solution.

Originally four CFL 4000 had costs allocated to CFL Cargo, When the first Class 188 locos arrived, the 4000 series were returned to the parent company where they ended up replacing some of the 3000's.

[Ex-] NS TRAXX

Twelve of the TRAXX that NS used to lease have been transferred to Metrans in Hamburg in one monster move by 185 572 on Tuesday 9th December. They were available to Metrans to use from Sunday 14th December. 186 043 can be seen in the photograph and these are the rumoured ones.

186 020
186 022
186 023
186 024
186 030
186 032
186 034 (already active for a while)
186 035
186 043



This is quite a lash up.

Photograph by kabelcontainer and posted to Drehscheibe.

<https://www.drehscheibe-online.de/foren/read.php?006,11312141>

Vectrons

6193 766 has left NS and is now in service with TXL and has been seen hauling an empty waste train from Amsterdam towards Italy. 6193 766 has lost its NS livery. The information from sources was 766 was one of the locos to stay at NS, but apparently not. This would mean that 193 263, 733, 735, 737 and 759 are the ones to stay.

A poster on SOMDA said "Related to this: 11 Vectrons must be returned to ELL by December 31st, the same number as leased to the ICB two years ago. Several have already been returned and are operating with other carriers in ELL or other liveries."

As the contract between ELL and NS appears to be power by the hour, or some variant of this, it would make sense to do any outstanding work on the five remaining now. There is no point in waiting until February and then take one of the five out to go for Revision when you have spare NS liveried Vectrons around at the moment.

Class 1800



The new RFO '1931' in its brand new sticker has been presented in Rotterdam, in celebration of 95 years of the NVBS! Photograph by Clint Weijers of 1831.

ICRm Sets

Stored: 16472, 16475

Watergraafsmeer to Arnhem Goods
10th December: 16472, 16475

16472 has not been used since 18th September.

16475 has not been used in service since 4th October.

NS Units

VIRM

Returned to service: 9570

9570 collided with a car at Udenhout, 29th November (not October as previously reported)

Out of service (collision damage):8665

8665 had a collision with a tree at Sterksel on 8th December.

ICNG

In Service are 62 examples. As with all things ICNG, "Service" is open to interpretation.

ICNG-5 3101, 3102, 3103, 3105 [4]
3111, 3115, 3117, 3120 [4]
3121, 3123, 3124, 3126, 3127, 3128, 3129, 3130 [8]
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, 3220 [3]
3221, 3222, 3223, 3224, 3225, 3226, 3227 [7]
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 3113, 3219 & 3307.

In Commissioning/Acceptance/Testing are 3118, 3351 & 3352.

3113 is accepted and awaiting entry into passenger service.

3117 entered passenger service on 16th December 2025.

3118 is on Acceptance Testing.

3121 entered passenger service on 10th December 2025.

3143 is at Alstom Brugge for retrofit work.

3219 has been accepted and is awaiting Passenger Service.

3307 has been accepted and is awaiting Passenger Service.

On Tuesday 16th December, 3203 was photographed by Martin The Train Driver being moved from Magdeburg- Buckau to Poland for retrofitting.

In the Netherlands by September 2026?



Blast From The Past



LNER 6000 "Tommy", te leen bij NS om ervaring op te doen met elektrische tractie.
Locatie uiteraard station Maliebaan.
Foto E.j.G. Scheffer, collectie Eelco Storm

LNER 6000 'Tommy', on loan to NS to gain experience with electric traction. Location is Utrecht Maliebaan Station which is now the NS museum site.



Belgian Can Can



27 / 144

This week's Belgian Can Can was taken by Eli Ameel and features 2103 at Nivelles at the last stages of finishing off in 1984.



I am not sure about the provenance of this photograph.



Other News



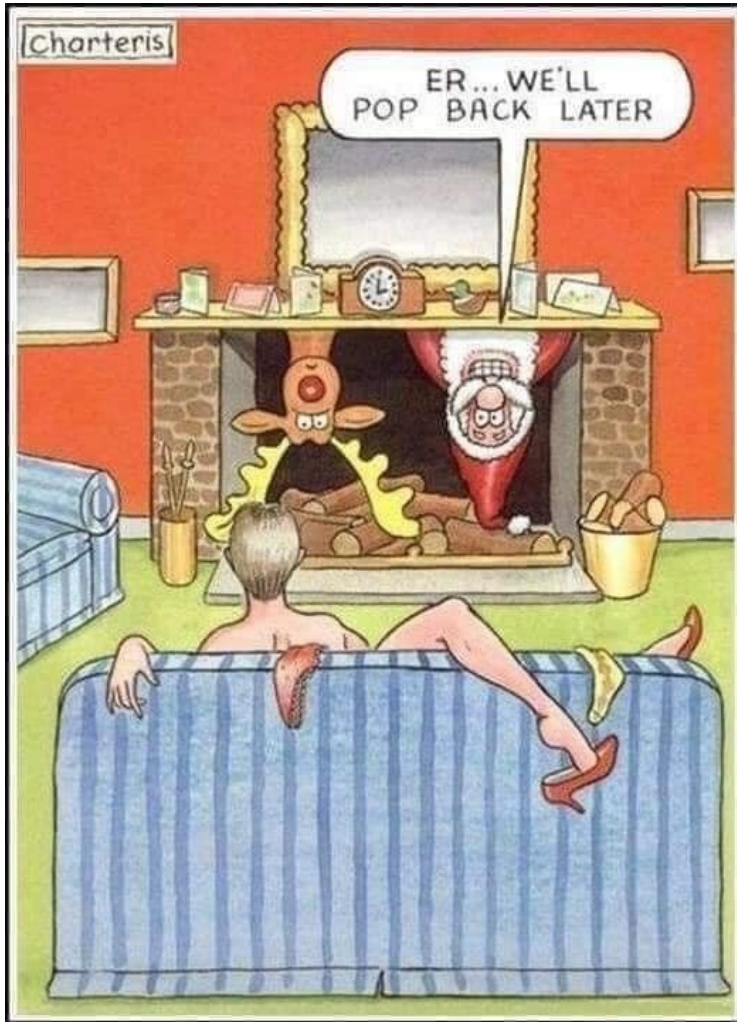


RUDDOLPH BEGINS TO RETHINK HIS AGREEMENT TO LEAD SANTA'S SLEIGH



"It's always cold, I'm surrounded by midgets, the reindeer stink, and-if you must know...
I never *really* liked kids."







Have a nice week

Iain