



# Merry 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]                     |



## 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]



# Belgische Nachrichten Nouvelles belges Belgisch Nieuws

## HLE 13

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

1319 has had a test run so should be back soon after an Intermediate Revision.

1323 is next up for an Intermediate Revision.

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

## HLE 18/19

Interested in the Intermediate Revision dates on

1806#, 1823, 1841#, 1843#, 1847#, 1920 & 1924# [# In Salzinnes Works].

1857 is back in service after ETCS works.

1859 has the Revision Date of 14.08.25

1920 is back in service after a RI2 Revision.

I did note the other week that 1856 had gone into the Paris Quigo Pool. Interesting because it is away from the rest of the Paris locomotives [1863 to 1873] and is not allocated to Kinkempois. The photograph below appeared of 1856 at Paris Nord on 19th December 2025 so indeed the loco can go to Paris. The photo was taken by Olivier Lecouffe and posted to NMBS Historisch / SNCB patrimoine on Facebook.



## HLE 21



It looks as if the Fat Lady has sung for sustained regular use of the HLE 21s & 27s. No HLE 27 has worked a passenger train since 2730 worked on the Mons/Tournai - Airports on Saturday 13th and no HLE 21 since 2134 worked into Brussels on 7006 05:17 De Panne - Schaarbeek on Wednesday 17th December.

On Wednesday 16th December 2025 Tim Sabelis took a photo of the last train from Schaarbeek with an HLE 21.

HLE 2134 is standing in Brussel Noord with P 8006 to De Panne. 16-12-25



Here is 2134 with E7006 05:17 De Panne - Schaarbeek which was the last commercial service of the HLE 21s on Wednesday 17th December 2025.

Photograph by Tom Lievens and posted to NMBS Historisch / SNCB patrimoine on FB.

The end of an era



## HLE 27

2730 was seen moving on the main line under it's own power on 22nd December 2025.

I wrote last week "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. "

Kurt kindly went along and took two photographs of 2703 and 2710 on Wednesday 18th. Fabrice and Noach had also put themselves out as well. Thank you to these, and other gentlemen, for their efforts.

I have also written a couple of e-mails to try and get more information but had no reply.

2703 and 2710 at Casier Deerlijk on 18th December 2025.  
Photographs by Kurt Vankeirsbilck



## **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.

- 186 182 is in service with TrainCharter Services.
- 186 350 is still at Alstom Brugge for repair.
- 186 445 is back in normal service after revision at RoseMobility Kassel.
- 186 451 is back in normal service after revision at Talbot Aachen.
- 186 454 will be the next one for revision at Talbot Aachen in early January.

## **HLD 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.
- 7807 is temporarily out of service due to vandalism.
- 7817 is back in service.
- 7824 is back in service.
- 7825 is at Brouwer Technologie BV Roosendaal for installation of ETCS.
- 7835 is at Brouwer Technologie BV Roosendaal for installation of ETCS.
- 7852 is at Salzinnes Works for Revision.

7788 and 7792 are seen here outside Salzinnes Works on 19th December 2025. Both are effectively finished and await commissioning and final testing. There is always an attempt to have a clear out at Salzinnes before Christmas. Many a time the workshop pushes things out before Christmas and they are commissioned the following year.



Photograph by Wilmes and posted to Les ateliers SNCB on Facebook.

7788 was in for fitting with ETCS and LED lights along with a repaint into Infrabel Blue. 7792 was there for repairs after it and 7791 ran out of track at Boitsfort on Line 161 on Thursday 7th March 2024.

## Boitsford Overrun - 7th March 2024

On Thursday 7th March 2024 a ballast train headed by 7792 and 7791 basically ran out of track south of Boitsford in the Brussels Capitol Region at KM Post 20. Most of the train remained on the rails apart from the front three bogies of the ballast wagons and both locomotives. Basically the track stopped but the train did not.



The amount of time it has taken to repair 7791 and 7792 is no longer than normal for accidents like this but there has been a lot of time where nothing happened. The locomotives were recovered from the site and went to Salzinnes by rail and then sat. It has been legal and money issues that have caused the delay and not the amount of mechanical and repair work.



7792 came to rest against the side wall pushed there by the weight of the train behind it.

## AM/MS 30

<https://mobilitib.substack.com/p/la-sncb-attribue-officiellement-a>

The Board of Directors of the Belgian National Railways (NMBS/SNCB) officially awarded the tender contract to CAF on Friday and ordered new AM30 trainsets from the Basque manufacturer, confirming information obtained by mobilitib from a source. This award had been postponed following numerous appeals filed with the Council of State by other bidding manufacturers, which cost SNCB approximately eight months. The company now anticipates an initial delay in the AM30 program, which includes three types of trainsets, one of which is a fully battery-powered version. In total, the company will invest over €1.7 billion for 180 trainsets offering 54,000 seats, expected to enter service from the last quarter of 2030. Two additional options for 380 trainsets, providing 116,000 seats, could extend deliveries between 2033 and 2038.

<snip>

In total, NMBS/SNCB ordered its 180 new trainsets for an initial cost of €1.695 billion without options, and a current cost of €1.722 billion, which also includes the options added by the state-owned company. Of the €27 million difference compared to the initial award of February 2025, €16 million is due to these options.

It is likely that these railcars are from the Civity series, which the NMBS/SNCB has not yet confirmed.

According to information from Mobilitib , the 54,000 seats will be divided into: 136 high-capacity InterCity multiple units, each composed of four cars, two of which are double-deckers, for which SNCB (the Belgian National Railways) was able to obtain a discount; 20 high-capacity local multiple units , each composed of three cars, one of which is double-decker; and 24 single-level, three-car local multiple units , which will be equipped with batteries. These will eventually replace the AR41 diesel trains, some of which will be withdrawn from service next year.

Each unit costs between €7.992 and €8.860, with the battery-powered version being the most expensive. Added options include validation and certification of various critical components, software, text-to-speech synthesis, and upgrades for RGB LED side and front displays.

The SNCB indicates that autonomous accessibility for people with reduced mobility, quiet zones, information screens, connectivity and sufficient spaces for bicycles will be included in the new trains.

The design studies for these trains will begin sometime next year.



19 December 2025

## **CAF SECURES MACRO CONTRACT TO SUPPLY NEW TRAIN FLEET TO BELGIAN OPERATOR SNCB**

SNCB (Société Nationale des Chemins de fer Belges) has awarded CAF the contract for the design, manufacture, and supply of the new AM30 train fleet, which will upgrade the rolling stock currently operated by the Belgian company. This is a framework agreement with an initial scope of 180 trains with a capacity of 54,000 passengers. The agreement is valued at 1.7 billion euros, with the possibility of extending the supply by up to 380 additional units with a capacity of 170,000 passengers.

*(The note issued by SNCB regarding this decision is attached).*

Founded in 1926, SNCB is Belgium's national railway company, currently employing a workforce of over 17,000. It transports approximately 250 million passengers each year along its 3,700 kilometres of track. It operates InterCity, Regional and Suburban train services that connect major cities and regions, playing a central role in the country's mobility network.

Finally, CAF's long track record of success in Benelux in recent years warrants mention. This includes key contracts for the supply of metro units for Brussels, metro and tram units for Amsterdam, and trams for Luxembourg, Utrecht, the Belgian Coast Line, Antwerp and Liège. Additionally, CAF has delivered more than 200 commuter trains to the Dutch rail operator NS (Nederlandse Spoorwegen), as well as the most recent projects such as 60 double-deck units also for NS and 10 commuter trains for the Dutch operator QBuzz. Solaris also holds a strong position in the bus sector, having supplied close to 550 buses to major operators in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg.

### **Haine St Pierre**

A couple of guys break into Haine St Pierre and explore what's inside. It is better with the sound off as the "commentary" is shite!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GebyjYPX4wI>

It is interesting to see what is in there and the condition it is in.

## **A Tramblette - Tramlings in Belgian Tramland**

Nikko has been too silent for too long, all a result of some mild winter ailments (the flu bug has struck) and associated recovery issues (still fatigued).

Things have been moving in Antwerp's tram landscape - in the wrong direction.

In the last few months, major issues have struck over large parts of the Antwerp network, due to ageing infrastructure. The long of the short of it: historically, Antwerp's tram network was built with the existing tram stock in mind - PCC's with a 4-ton axle weight. However, ever since the introduction of the Hermelijn units in 1999, these same tracks have been used by trams with a 7-ton axle weight - the Hermelijn, Albatros and Stadslijn units. Sporadically, some parts of the tramway infrastructure are renewed, however some are so busily used that renewing them would have massive impacts on services. Additionally, historic budget cuts meant that for two decades, the money for repairs and renewal wasn't there - or at least, not in the amounts required to maintain or upgrade the entire network.

As things stand, increasing wear has now pushed the network to its breaking point. Here's how things stand for all of the Antwerp lines:

**Line 1 (P+R Luchtbal to Zuid):** one of the few lines not subject to issues. Almost the entire line was either newly built, or renewed, with the oldest sections in use dating to 2004.

**Line 2 (Hoboken to P+R Merksem):** services no longer run between Hoboken and 'Zwaantjes' due to the poor state of the tracks and pending a full rebuild.

**Line 3 (P+R Merksem to P+R Melsele):** services subject to a 10 km speed restriction between stops Astrid and Halewijn.

**Line 4 (Hoboken to Berchem Station):** services no longer run between Hoboken and 'Zwaantjes' due to the poor state of the tracks and pending a full rebuild. 10 km speed restriction between Groenplaats and Meirbrug, and between Berchem Station and the Groenenhoek loop due to the poor state of the tracks. In an awfully well-timed development, a yellow working notice went up this week (announcing the intention to grant permission for major works) for the tracks running across the Borsbeekbrug (lines 4 & 9, between stops Berchem Station and Groenenhoek. As mentioned, this section is currently subject to a 10 km/h speed restriction due to the state of the tracks.

**Line 5 (Wijnegem to P+R Linkeroever):** services subject to a 10 km speed restriction between stops Astrid and Halewijn. Services not stopping at station 'Sportpaleis' due to the Oosterweel works.

**Line 6 (P+R Luchtbal to P+R Olympiade):** currently not affected by issues.

**Line 7 (Mortsel - Eilandje):** services subject to a 10 km speed restriction between stops Kuijpers and Harmonie due to the poor state of the tracks. Questions about the state of tracks between Harmonie and Nationale Bank.

**Line 8 (P+R Wommelgem to Astrid):** currently not affected by issues. Running on tracks which were all built or renewed in the last decade.

**Line 9 (Silsburg to P+R Linkeroever):** services suspended as of November 1st 2025 on the section between Silsburg and Berchem Station (Groenenhoek loop) due to the poor state of the tracks, and pending a full rebuild. Replacement bus services running for this section. Services subject to a 10 km speed restriction between Diamant and Halewijn.

**Line 10 (Wijnegem to P+R Schoonselhof):** currently not affected by issues.

**Line 11 (Berchem Station to Melkmarkt):** service suspended on the entire line as of March 13th 2023. Line has been rebuilt between Berchem Station and Draakplaats, and is under rebuild on the Rooseveltplaats - Melkmarkt loop. Services possibly resumed early 2026.

**Line 12 (Sportpaleis - Centraal Station):** services suspended between Sportpaleis and Schijnpoort as of August 23rd 2023, due to the Oosterweel works. Can only be served by bi-directional trams due to no loop at the Schijnpoort end. Was Gent PCC until August 31st 2025; these have now been retired (official last ride on November 29th 2025) and replaced by bidirectional Stadslijn units.

**Line 15 (Boechout to Regatta):** services subject to a 10 km speed restriction between Kuijpers and Harmonie, and between Diamant and Halewijn.

**Line 24 (Silsburg to Havenhuis):** services suspended between Silsburg and Muggenberg since August 18th 2025 due to the line currently being rebuilt between Florent Pauwels and Silsburg. Can only be served by bi-directional trams due to the lack of a loop on the Muggenberg end.

As bad as the situation currently is, it will only become more 'interesting' next year due to three issues:

1) The shared section Kuijpers - Harmonie on lines 7 and 15 will be rebuilt from early 2026 onwards, with works expected to last until the end of 2027. The works are planned to be done in two stages (De Merode to Sint Willebrordus in 2026, and Sint Willebrordus to Kuijpers in 2027), with traffic reduced to single track operations to allow for trams to continue to run. However it can be expected that tram frequencies are likely to be reduced for the duration of the works.

The planned track renewal on lines 7/15 for 2026 is between stops De Merode and Sint Willebrordus (more precisely: between the Boomgaardstraat and the Antwerp Ring). This is an important nuance, as it means that while tracks will be renewed from that point onwards towards Mortsel, it still leaves the triangle of tracks around the Koning Albertpark needing a full rebuild. The tracks on the Mechelsesteenweg - Belgiëlei - Elisabethlei crossing were renewed in 2020 -

<https://www.frateurdepourcq.be/portfolio/harmonie/> - while the joined tracks of lines 2, 5 and 15 through the Belgiëlei were renewed in 2023; however the triangle running through the Koning Albertpark (line 7/15 on the Mechelsesteenweg side, and line 2/5 running through the park itself) still date from before the 2000s.

I have to say that it is a very weird way of working for De Lijn, as it means that after the planned works on the 7/15 line are completed in 2027, they will still have to return at a later date to replace the 300 meter section between Harmonie and De Merode.

It's not exactly unique either - Line 11 has been out of service for nearly three years now, and in that time the entire section between Berchem Station and the Draakplaats has been renewed; however the section between the Draakplaats and the Central Station has not. It's a very weird approach for De Lijn to decide to take a 4 km route out

of service for 3 years, and then to decide to renew just one 450m section on the one end of the line and a 1 km section on the other end, but decide to keep a 1.7 km section in the middle 'as was' even if it means that with new and heavier trams serving that line once services restart, the heavier wear on the old tracks more or less guarantees that the line will have to be closed down at a sooner-rather-than-later point in the future to renew the remaining section - even if that section lay unused for the three years the works on either end lasted.

2) The section Berchem Station (Groenenhoek) - Silsburg is planned to be subject of a rebuild. Works for this should have started early November 2025 lasting into early 2027, however they have been suspended due to planning issues - there's no saying when they will start. Additionally, plans for this rebuild included a new loop to replace the Eksterlaar loop which was no longer suited to the new tram types, however permits for this have been suspended.

### 3) **The big one.**

The pre-metro between stations Astrid and Diamant on the one end, and the left bank on the other end will be closed from May 2026 onwards to allow for the replacement of the rails. As this is the busiest section of the whole of the Antwerp tram network (served by lines 3, 5, 9 and 15), the impact of these works will be massive to say the least.

To alleviate at least *\*some\** of the transportation issues, the NMBS is planning to reopen the Linkeroever station (opened in 1970 but closed as part of the IC/IR cuts in 1984); meanwhile De Lijn is retraining a large number of tram drivers to drive buses, as replacement bus services are planned between the left and right banks of the Scheldt.

Originally the works were planned to last 6 months, but it has since emerged that due to the presence of asbestos in some of the tunnel sections, they will last well into 2027 (no definitive end date has been given so far).

The affected lines will be 'merged' for the duration of the works - Line 5 (Wijnegem - Linkeroever) will be cut at Astrid and merged with Line 9 (Linkeroever - Berchem Station) at Diamant, creating the temporary line 5/9 (Wijnegem - Berchem Station); while Line 3 (P+R Merksem - P+R Melsele) will similarly be cut at Astrid and merged at Diamant with Line 15 (Linkeroever - Boechout), creating the temporary line 3/15 (P+R Merksem - Boechout).

In other news - as much as the Antwerp tram system currently is having issues, the situation in Brussels is ***much worse***. The planned Metro Line 3 - construction of which started in 2020 - has run into insurmountable issues which has now put the entire project at risk. Subsidence issues have caused costs to overrun estimates to a point where the viability of the entire project is now being questioned, and proposals have been put forward to cancel the line and freeze the works 'as is' until a later date. The whole issue has not been helped by the lack of a Brussels government - Brussels (the city, that is) has been running under a caretaker government since the elections of June 9th 2024, and the lack of a working government is now having real impacts on the city's budget.

In some late news I have just found this article:

<https://www.raadvst-consetat.be/?page=news&lang=nl&newsitem=913>

The Belgian Council of State (Raad van State/Conseil d'Etat) has suspended the MIVB's permission to dismantle the Zuidpaleis in Brussels - throwing a massive spanner into the MIVB's attempt at building the new Metro 3 connection.

As I mentioned earlier, the project has been fraught with a number of insurmountable technical issues. One of the more important of these was that one of the tunnel sections had to be dug underneath the Zuidpaleis, a listed 19th century building. As early as 2021 it was found that due to the marshy nature of the ground in this quarter of Brussels, just digging a tunnel underneath the building was not possible. A number of solutions were considered, such as temporarily freezing the ground underneath the building, but eventually it was found that the only realistic solution was to partially demolish the building so a trench could be dug for the tunnel's construction. This led to some considerable outcry and protest.

In August, the Zuidpaleis' listed status was rescinded and permission was granted for a partial demolition of the building; however this decision has now been reversed. It means that the section of the Metro 3 project can no longer be built, effectively pulling the plug on the project.

Iain's Comment - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South\\_Palace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Palace)

The South Palace or Midi Palace (French: Palais du Midi; Dutch: Zuidpaleis) is a former covered market in Brussels, Belgium. It was originally built between 1875 and 1880 by the architect Wynand Janssens (fr) for the Compagnie générale des Marchés, though it was heavily renovated in the 20th and 21st centuries. Nowadays, it still houses shops, as well as several sports halls and a school.

The building is located at 132-172, boulevard Maurice Lemonnier/Maurice Lemonnierlaan in the Midi-Lemonnier or Stalingrad Quarter (southern part of the City of Brussels). **Iain's Comment** - If you have walked from Brussel Zuid to the Moeder Lambic Fontainas you have walked past the Palais du Midi / Zuidpaleis.



I would like to thank Nikko Yaginuma for writing this article and sharing it with us.

## NS Vectron

It is not only NMBS/SNCB that have changes in decisions. I specifically asked which Vectrons NS were keeping and the answer was from within NS International in late October was "The following Vectrons will stay with NS:

193 263, 193 733, 193 737, 193 759 & 193 766"

Then a Grand Fromage in the Dutch Train Information Scene e-mailed to say "193 759 also lost the NS stickers. I am now completely unsure which locomotives stay at NS, if any even do. There is a rumour they're all being replaced by either new ELL locos, or ÖBB 1293's."

You now know as much as I do.



6193 759 at Amersfoort on Thursday 18th December in ELL livery.

Photograph on Treinposities by Trainspotter Julian <https://treinposities.nl/foto/410995>



6193 939 at Amsterdam Centraal on Thursday 18th December in partial ELL livery

Photograph on Treinposities by BR120 <https://treinposities.nl/foto/411342>

## [ex-] NS TRAXX

If anyone is passing Zaanstraat I am interested to know if there are any yellow and blue ones outside the depot.

Mentioned last week that Metrans in Hamburg has taken twelve of the ex-NS TRAXX. These nine were quoted 186 020, 022, 023, 024, 030, 032, 034, 035 & 043 and they have been joined by 186 027, 029 & 039 to make twelve.

I do not think any TRAXX have gone back recently but 186 004, 019, 026 and 009 are sat in a line on Watergraafsmeer looking like they are ready for the off.

The following photographs are from Eisenbahn-Kurier

<https://www.facebook.com/share/17rWG54y3b/>



Here is the 10 loco lash up on 9th December 2025 being hauled by 185 572.  
Photograph by Nico Daniel

186 027, 029 and 039 departing Krefeld on 19th December 2025. Photo Nico Daniel



Passage of the train near Tostedt on 19 December 2025. Photo: Rüdiger Dohrendorf



## NS Units

There is no other NS Unit information apart from the ICNG report.

### ICNG

In Service are 64 examples. As with all things ICNG, "Service" is open to interpretation.

ICNG-5 3101, 3102, 3103, 3105 [4]  
3111, 3113, 3115, 3117, 3120 [5]  
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, 3307 [4]  
3311, 3312, 3313, 3314, 3315, 3316, 3317, 3318, 3319, 3320 [10]  
3321 [1]

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

In Commissioning/Acceptance/Testing are 3114, 3118, 3351 & 3352.

3113 entered passenger service on Monday 22nd December 2025.

3114 arrived on Sunday 21st December 2025.

Expected to be out on it's grinding in tests on 23rd December 2025.

3118 is on Acceptance Testing.

3143 is at Alstom Brugge for retrofit work.

3219 has been accepted and is awaiting Passenger Service.

Here is 3114 on delivery at Hengelo being hauled by 9901. Photo by Ron Snieder  
<https://treinposities.nl/foto/411932>



# Blast From The Past



There is a lot of blast here in this photograph of 55016 on 19th December 1981 at Huntingdon by Peter Rowlings. This is just over forty four years ago.

55016 is still with us and is now in LSL's Museum at Margate.

The Main East Coast Railway Line is electrified.

The bay platform is still there and is now electrified.

I suspect the dmu is long gone.

I do not think there are any HST restaurant cars left in service and there are no HST sets in regular service on the East Coast Mail Line.

The rather domineering and brutal A14 viaduct over the top of Huntingdon has now gone completely and replaced by a new A14 alignment a few miles further south.

## Chris Rea †

Today's Ramble is published with the sad news that Chris Rea has died today. He has quite a large body of work and is one of my favourite artists.

One thing his was famous for among the UK enthusiast community was having an album called "Deltics" with a photograph of the prototype on the rear of the cover.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deltics\\_\(album\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deltics_(album))

Christopher Anton Rea 4th March 1951 - 22nd December 2025



# Belgian Can Can



28 / 144

This week's can is 2104 and is seen here at Blankenberge Station on 8th July 2004.  
Photograph by Danny Moens





# Other News



This photograph of Emma Watson wearing a “Feel The Joy” jumper caught my eye and then I looked at the photograph a bit more carefully, to see it had been badly photoshopped. The hands are dreadful but why spend all the time making a good job of the head and then botch the hands? Why would Emma be photographed in a shop like that when I assume she has flunkies to do her shopping? I do appreciate that some people have more than a “thing” about Emma Watson.

You can see what has happened. A lady has gone into the shop with the jumper on and a photograph has been taken. Then a man has changed it to Emma Watson. Why?

The other photograph is real and all the better for it.

If you want to “Feel The Joy”

<https://uglyswearerdepot.com/collections/feel-the-joy-sweater/>

You can also buy from Amazon.





I am no cook. But I can follow the directions. Which said to let the bird chill in the sink for a few hours.



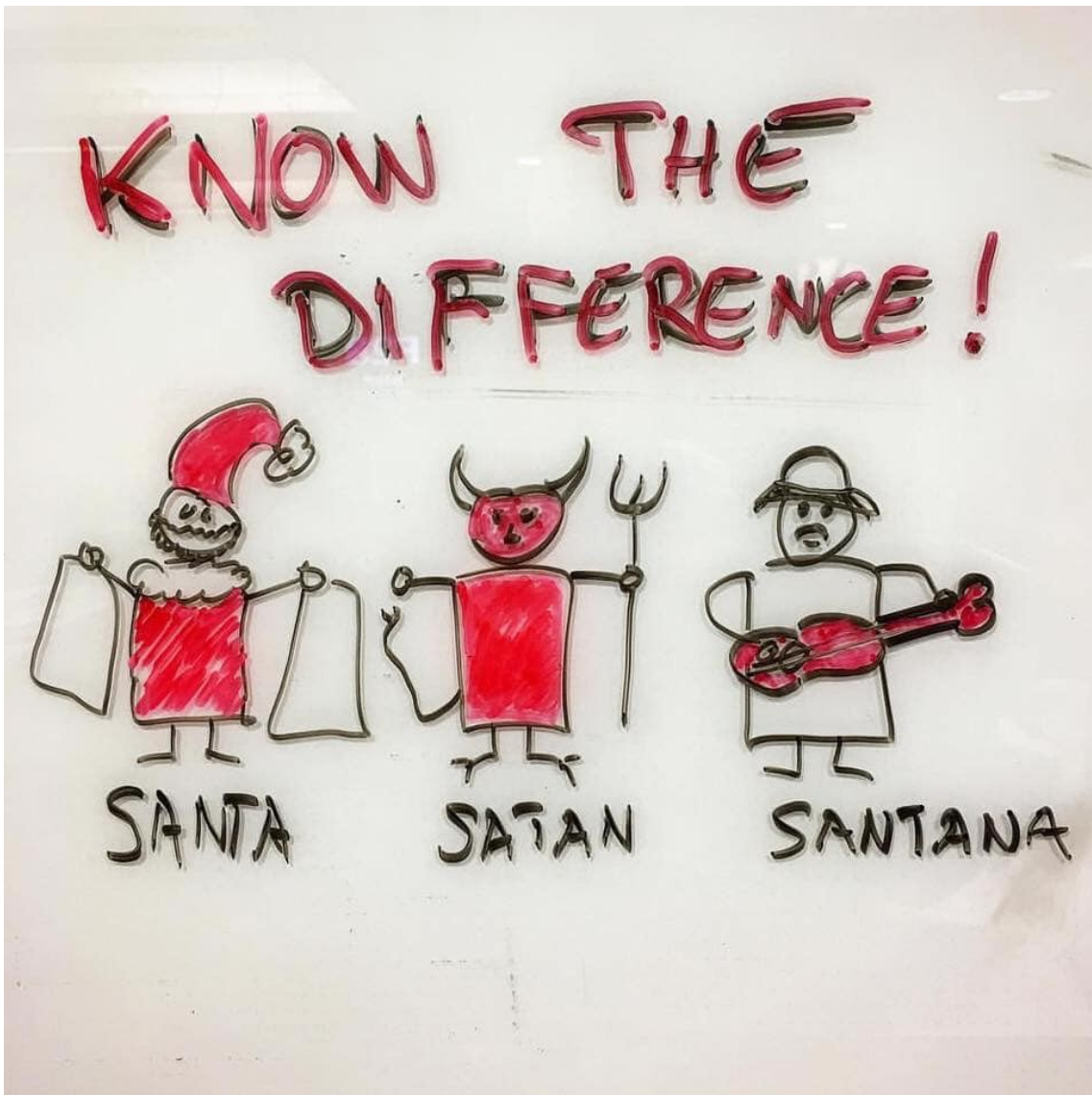
# *Silent Night*





AT CHRISTMAS WE CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF JESUS! GREAT GUY... HE DID A LOT OF GOOD THINGS, SOME NOT SO GOOD, BUT A LOT OF GOOD THINGS, AND A LOT OF PEOPLE LOVE HIM... A LOT OF PEOPLE LOVE ME, AND CELEBRATE MY BIRTH. MAYBE EVEN MORE PEOPLE... YOU GO ONLINE AND YOU SEE TREMENDOUS NUMBERS, INCREDIBLE NUMBERS... AND I GET PRESENTS! PEOPLE GIVE ME THINGS, BEAUTIFUL THINGS, BETTER THAN MYRRH, BUT NEVER FROM SANTA CLAUS! NEVER FROM SANTA... I CALL HIM "STRUGGLING SANTA" BECAUSE OF HIS CRIPPLING TRUMP DERANGEMENT SYNDROME! A BAD CASE. HE SEES A LIST, HE GOES "NO, NO, NO!" TOTALLY RIGGED! NAUGHTY LIST? IT'S A DEMOCRAT HOAX! LIKE THE LYING BBC... AND BY THE WAY, NOBODY HAS EVER SEEN HIS BIRTH CERTIFICATE, BUT CROOKED BIDEN LET HIM BRING THINGS IN BY THE SLEIGHLOAD! NO TARIFFS! SO WEAK... SANTA CLAUS HAS BEEN TERRIBLE FOR THIS COUNTRY, BUT WE'RE LOOKING INTO IT, AND WE'RE GOING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE NORTH POLE VERY SOON!

THE NARRATOR...



Now departing



## Rural Retreat - Virginia on Christmas Eve 1957



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RdWI4ur6hMM>

"It is 9:39 P.M. on Christmas Eve, 1957 in Rural Retreat Vagina, a farming community near the highest point on the N&W's line from Bristol to Radford. Mrs. J. E. Dodson plays carols on the Lutheran Church chimes. From far to the southwest comes the distinctive whistle of a Class J locomotive No. 603 powering Train 42, "The Pelican", eastbound from New Orleans to Washington. Old heads in southwestern Virginia still call 42 "The Vestibule," dating it to the time in the 'nineties when it was the regions first train with enclosed platforms. "Silent Night" floats over the village as the rumble grows. Another whistle and the warning bell on the automatic crossing gate begins its clangor. The bell ceases as 42 blows and comes with a rush, its 17 cars rumbling across the highway to a quick flag stop at the wooden station. It pauses with a final squeal but almost immediately moves again, the 603 sure in its rhythm. There is another whistle as "The Vestibule" fills the night with power. The chimes continue above a far farewell salute. Seven nights later the last steam engine ran over the Bristol Line." Record Cover Notes

Turn the sound up and the lights off. Listen to this in the dark!

Have a nice week and a Merry Christmas!

# *Tain*