



The Ramble

557 of 19th January 2026



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|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Wednesday 28th 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 2026

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

Shrove Tuesday is on Tuesday 17th February and there are Ski Trains from NL on Friday 13th & 20th returning on Sunday 15th and 22nd around this half term holiday week.

Good Friday is on Friday 2nd April
Easter Monday is on Monday 6th April

Chemin De Fer De La Baie De Somme - Fête de la Vapeur - 25th and 26th April

<https://www.chemindefer-baiedesomme.fr/en/steam-festival-2026>

The link to both diesel hauled charters is here. One on Saturday and one on Sunday.

<https://chemindefer-baiedesomme.fr/fr/fete-de-la-vapeur-2026/trains-speciaux>

Train à Vapeur d'Auvergne Railtour on Saturday 2nd May

www.trainvapeur-auvergne.com/produit/train-de-chenonceau

Tour from Clermont-Ferrand to Chenonceau with a BB67400.

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. Got my hotel booked in Birmingham.

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.

Chemin de Fer Touristique de la Vallée de L'Aa - Le Festivallée 4th & 5th July

The festival at the Chemin de Fer Vallee de L'Aa is a regular preserved railway gala weekend. Kjeld went over a couple of years ago.

The Friday was a 'Photographic Day'. It was actually a rehearsal day where they ran the trains empty and sold a copy of the timetable so you could go to various locations to get (mostly) unobstructed photos. You could not travel on the trains and needed a car to get between the photo locations.

The Saturday & Sunday we're running days with visiting locos and passengers travelling on trains. My pics from that weekend start here: <https://flic.kr/p/2peDVit>

This is how it worked in 2023. I assume it'll be something similar.

Arques Station is about 5km or 3 miles from Saint Omer station. Catch the Number 3 & 6 bus to Arques Centre Ville [Place] but note there are no buses on Sundays and Public Holidays.

There is 15 km of railway up the Aa valley in the heart of the Regional Natural Park of Caps and Marais d'Opal.

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. The next phase of works started on Monday 19th January and in this 2nd phase the works are mainly devoted to the upgrade of Spontin station expected to end in April. This should hopefully mean there will be a Gala as Phase 1 was the trackwork from Spontin to Ciney. Next is the (re)construction of the Évrehailles-Bauche station which will have tracks around a central island platform with one terminal track.

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]

Train à Vapeur d'Auvergne Railtour on Saturday 5th December

www.trainvapeur-auvergne.com/produit/train-pour-la-fete-des-lumieres

Tour from Clermont-Ferrand to Lyon-Perrache with a BB67400. Note midnight return!

Scrap Metal

I mentioned in Ramble 554 about Unimetals Metals going into Administration. Another big rail connected British scrapyards has also now gone into Administration with C.F. Booths in Rotherham going bust.

As I said at the time, Unimetals were cutting up Class 455s for Porterbrook. It would appear that the deal was for Unimetals cut the vehicles up for Porterbrook and give them a portion of the proceeds. It is difficult to see how the scrap realisation from a 455 unit actually made money when you factor in transport and all the other logistical costs to actually get the them to Newport.

Unimetals chopped up the vehicles with a set of jaws and put everything in the shedder. Then the metal was sorted out by machine later. All the non metal items like the seating and interior panelling has to be disposed off and the environmental rules both here in the UK, and in the EU, make taking things to landfill expensive.

This is 1182 being reduced to smaller parts for the shredder to deal with at Ecore.



It is reported that Porterbrook are owed £750,000 by Unimetals.

C.F. Booths were clearly not interested in the Class 455s because the cost of disposal of the non metal outweighed the realisation of the scrap. So now Porterbrook has the problem of a lot of redundant vehicles that need scrapping and no one willing to do the work unless they are probably paid to do it.

In the topic about Unimetals on WNXX, 808 Centaur said this - "China is not buying in scrap at anything like the quantities it used to, and domestically we do not recycle anything like the scrap we produce. Another reason to change how we produce refined metals in the UK. China is now insisting on ferrous and non ferrous scrap having 99.1% purity and few countries can guarantee that. Alternative markets for scrap are a fraction of what China used to be. What scrap is used in China comes from near neighbours in the Far East."

So there are all these Class 455 vehicles to scrap and no market for the metal.

We saw last week the Tender document from NS asking for expressions of interest of around €100 000 for each ICRm coach. Personally I think they are in cloud cuckoo land asking this sort of money. How much interest do you think there will be in 40 year old coaches that are in need of a major revision? If you want a coach go and see the Belgians and they will supply oven ready International coaches. Scrap metal prices are low at the moment so anything for the ICRms would in real life be a bonus. There is a possibility that NS could be facing having to **pay** scrap dealers to take the ICRm coaches away. There is not a rail connected scrapyards in the Netherlands and everything has to be moved by truck at great expense. The unit scrapping has stopped and I wonder why.

There is news later in the Ramble that Mechelen Works is to start to dismantle some HLE 27s. I will wait to see how this pans out but going back to in-house cutting may be the only way forward.

When I went round Galloo in Gent in September 2013 they were cutting up the HLE 23s. The metal was loaded into barges and away but the traction motors were put to one side. There is a lot of good quality copper in there and it was worth opening them up and recovering this copper in a building. Modern trains do not have such large DC motors any more and coaches do not have traction motors at all.



Back then in 2013 it was worth separating out the alloy wheels whereas now, the machine does the separating [or there is no longer money in old wheels].



This is what the Chinese do not want, lots of mixed metal. There is steel here in the unit body but the pipes are? The wiring is copper but it is not worth stripping the copper cables out by hand. So you end up with some copper and a lot of mixed metal.



Photograph by David Arnould taken at Ecore on 23rd February 2014.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/154376151@N04/49373482453/in/photostream/>

Then shredded up and into the sorting house.





Belgische Nachrichten Nouvelles belges Belgisch Nieuws

Trainfo Map

The creator of the new Belgian tracker, <https://tracker.treinfo.be/>, has rolled out a real-time map including routes and passing points with the latter based on data from SNCB.

<https://map.treinfo.be/>

Antwerpen Trams

On Wednesday 14th January John saw 7090+7089 and 7154+7078 on Line 7. Hadn't seen one out in quite a while, but perhaps they've made a small return in the peaks



Photograph by John Mulrine

David Thornhill posted that the De Lijn app is hard work. It has lots of info but he finds it not intuitive and he ends up bashing random tabs in the hope eventually he would find something useful. On Monday 19th January 7105 + ? did 1643 Zwaantjes - Merksum P&R and 1741 Merksum P&R - Zwaantjes on Line 2!

For the a.m. peak he spotted nothing of interest. Above is all he could find this evening, but there has been an incident on Line 7 and that route is in a mess.

So it looks like the PCCs in Antwerpen live on. That you can do whole of Line 2 in 2026 on PCCs is impressive.

The app alerted him that 7105 (or rather its service) has reached its destination, with a cartoon of a snoozing tram. How sweet!

Movement of HLV 26.102

26102 ex TY2 7173 PKP has been moved by road to Mariembourg from where it was stood outside Beverly Food & Beverage, Lierselei 177, 2390 Malle.

Here it is arriving at Mariembourg on Tuesday 9th December 2025.
Photograph by Pierre Herbiet



The weather got worse before the loco was unloaded.

Reunited with it's wide tender by 11th December 2025





26102 ex TY2 7173 PKP and its wide tender being hauled by HLR 7304 at Olloy-sur-Viroin station (L132) during its transfer from Mariembourg to Treignes Friday, January 16, 2026.

Photograph by Maxime LM and posted to NMBS Historisch / SNCB patrimoine

The HLV 26.102 with L cars and artificial smoke at the station of Olloy-sur-Viroin.

There was an impromptu event organised by Pierre Herbiet to put 26.102 on some passenger coaches for the photographers and provide a little smoke.

Seen here “puffing” away at Olloy on Friday, January 16, 2026.

Thank you to Pierre for organising this event and providing the smoke.



Photograph by Jean-Pierre Campolini and posted to NMBS Historisch / SNCB patrimoine.

HLE 27



Kurt reported that on Friday 18th February that five HLE 27s had arrived at the Mechelen workshop for demolition. HLE 2720 is already there and also now for demolition. HLE 2715 was placed in front of the line of locomotives for a farewell photograph.

In order were 2715, 2741, 2701, 2705, 2723, and 2709.

2715 is at Mechelen as shore supply for testing the coaching stock on site. It is still fully operational as you can see here. 2720 was also a shore supply at Mechelen and may not be so lucky. Both photographs by Kurt Vankeirsbilck.



Noach Taillieu sent in this photograph of a row of HLE 27s that had been moved from Kinkempois and sent to Antwerpen for unknown reasons.

The 27's in Antwerpen Noord are 2758 - 2742 - 2737 - 2752 - 2746 - 2734 - 2722 - 2712 - 2735 - 2736.



The line up at Ronet appears to still be the same as photographed by Pirate Détection, Urbex & Bushcraft [an urban explorer] on Sunday 18th January 2025.

HLE 13

After the Revision Dates on 1313, 1319 & 1323# [# In Salzinnes Works].

1319 is back in service after an Intermediate Revision

1323 at Salzinnes Works for an Intermediate Revision. Back in March.

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

HLE 18

1806 is back in service after an Intermediate Revision and is fitted with Baseline 3.

1861 is back in Service after ETCS works.

1894 is back in Service after ETCS works.

HLE 28/29/186

Interested in the Revision dates on 186 256, 186 258, 186 348, 186 350, 186 445, 186 446# & 186 451#. 186 211 may have also been revised.

186 350 is back in normal service.

186 446 is at Kassel for revision.

186 451 is at Talbot Aachen for revision.

At the end of December the following locomotives went off-lease and are now parked at Alstom Brugge in some form of standstill maintenance / warm store.

186 207 (ex- DB Cargo)

186 208 (ex- RTB Cargo)

186 209 (ex- TCA) [this loco has been leased back to TCA for a fixed term lease]

186 210 (ex- Railtraxx)

186 211 (ex- BLS Cargo Nord)

186 215 (ex- Railtraxx)

186 216 (ex- Railtraxx)

186 230 (ex- BLS Cargo Nord)

186 231 (ex- DB Cargo)

186 235 (ex- TCA) [this loco has been leased back to TCA for a fixed term lease]

The poor freight market circumstances in Germany and the massive influx of Vectron locomotives are hitting the leasing business. In the words of Captain Oats, "some of these TRAXX may be there some time".

At the same time as these Alpha locomotives are being put into warm store, the ex-NS D/A/B/NL TRAXX belonging to Akiem are also becoming available. Twelve have gone to METRANS but most of the others are still looking for homes. There are quite a few of these ex-NS locomotives waiting for retrofit at Brugge.

There is an overview of world shipping [with a US slant] is here in this You Tube film from What's Going on With Shipping? with Sal Mercogliano.

2026 Container Shipping Forecast and 2025 US Container Import Review

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVPTquZSiBY&t=1195s>

Gives background into world wide trends and then demand for moving boxes inland which is what people need locomotives for.

Class 188

Class 188s are currently testing in Switzerland so active testing is taking place.

<https://www.railpictures.net/photo/899221/>

HLR 77

7701 is at Salzinnes for repairs to collision damage after a shunting accident with 7705.

7705 is under repair at Salzinnes Works after a shunting accident with 7701.

7807 is still out of service due to vandalism.

7821 is at Brouwer Technologie BV Roosendaal for installation of ETCS.

7825 is back in service.

7852 is at Salzinnes Works for Revision.

HLR 91

9124 has been placed as a "monument" at the entrance to Oostende Depot.

In the evening the headlights turn on...



Photograph by Rian De Rous and posted to NMBS Historisch / SNCB patrimoine

NMBS/SNCB AM/MS 30

This has appeared on the wire of the NMBS/SNCB AM/MS 30 Stop Train Variant. I did wonder if it was real or AI Slop. It is real as the photo below shows of a meeting between NMBS/SNCB and CAF.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/17ekPh13HV/>



The photograph above has a double deck car in it which is one of the other versions.



Photograph by Jeffrey Rackels and posted to Flickr.

<https://flickr.com/photos/193418660@N06/55046556098>

NMBS/SNCB 4135 + 4141 (Z14985 Hasselt-E - Charleroi-AT)

On Saturday 17th January two railcars were transferred from Hasselt-Bundel E to Charleroi. As it was planned that these railcars would travel via Liers to Liège and then on to Charleroi, the photographer decided to wait for them along Line 34 in Villers-Saint-Siméon, a borough of Juprelle.

The MW 41 railcars will remain at Hasselt and Mol depots until September. After that they will apparently be divided 50/50 between the Melle and Charleroi depots. Whether these two railcars will remain in Charleroi permanently is still unknown.

Be interesting to see how long they remain in this condition at Charleroi as Hasselt does it's very best to remove graffiti whereas other depots do not.

M6 & M7

There are still a number of stock changes going on with the M6 and M7 fleets.

Go Volta Stock



16008 moved on Thursday morning from Oostende to Schaarbeek in the consist of P7002. Photograph by Mathias Seynaeve and posted to Belgische treinspotters groep.

Following carriages are sold to GoVolta and were due to be transferred from Schaarbeek to the Netherlands on Sunday 18/01. This move was cancelled to Brouwer Technology at Roosendaal but we can expect movement soon.

11702 (for parts)

11708

12744

12703

12705

12708

12721

12723

12730

12737

12738

12743

16008 (restaurant)

M4 for Scrap at Port de Bruxelles - Haven van Brussel

This week the first tranche of ten end-of-life coaches destined for scrap entered the Port of Brussels by rail from Schaerbeek. In the coming weeks a weekly transport will follow to deliver a total of 60 coaches. On the Monnoyer quay the coaches will be dismantled by the Vymat Company. The recovered metal will be recycled at B.R.MET within the port area. There is quite a green slant in the original Port Company blurb.

B.R.MET (Brussels Recycling Metal S.A.) <https://www.brmet.be/en>

Chaussée de Buda, 1-2 B-1130 Brussel
Rue du Dobbelenberg 123, 1130 Brussels

In true Belgian style there are two addresses in both languages. The problem is they are in different places with the Dutch address being the one where the company looks to be!

The waste will be transported away by water.

The Monnoyer Quay is where the HLD 55s were moved to before going on a one way cruise to Deerlijk.



One of the things I was thinking about was suggesting running a railtour down the line and onto the quay. The line to the Port of Brussels is on a new alignment for the cognoscente to enjoy. A short Sunday Wanderette might be of interest with two HLR 77s top and tail. There appears to be no gauging problems with coaching stock.





This was taken on 19th January by Lucien.



The original photograph from Lucian is 7.9MB and is quite long. So the details do not show up in the full sized photograph shrunk to 19cm wide. However by blowing an area up you can see that the coaches have been stripped of their glass. The frames are aluminium and the glass can be recycled. Also when the shears go in, there is not loads of glass everywhere. The site is right next to the waterway and contamination is a no no.





ACTIE!

**TREINTICKET NAAR BERLIJN,
HAMBURG OF BREMEN**

22,00

scan je kaart



- Actievoorwaarden:**
- Reserveer je ticket voor 1 april 2026 en reis vanaf 19 maart tot uiterlijk 30 september 2026.
 - Vertrek is mogelijk uit Amsterdam, Amersfoort, Deventer en Hengelo.
 - Bekijk mogelijke vertrekdata & vertrektijden online.
 - Wil je een retourticket? Koop dan 2 vouchers p.p. en combineer deze tijdens het reserveren voor heen en terug.

**ENKELE REIS
ECONOMY CLASS**

24,00

Meer informatie en online bestellen op www.kruidvat.nl/treintickets

ICNG

In Service are 65 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, 3219, 3220 [4]
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]

In Commissioning/Acceptance/Testing are 3107, 3109, 3114, 3118, 3351 & 3352.

3107 is on Acceptance Testing.

3109 arrived on Sunday 18th January and should be out on test on Tuesday 20th.

3114 is on Acceptance Testing.

3118 is on Acceptance Testing.

3143 is at Alstom Brugge for retrofit work.

On Sunday, 18 January 2026, the new ICNG 3109 was brought to the Netherlands for the second time. Last time, the train derailed and ended up in a field via a side track. Fortunately, today everything went well and, after a locomotive change in Bad Bentheim, the 3109 was able to begin its journey to the Netherlands with the 9903 just before sunset. The 111 that had brought the train to Bad Bentheim was placed on a side track to take the brake vans back to Germany the next day.

Words and photograph by Marcel Kukler



We have all seen 3109 before as it was the back set in the accident at Dreilben in 16th October 2020.

This was 3105 and was rebuilt using new vehicles.



3109 I think stayed on the rails but most of the damage was done to the poor locomotive and 3105. The driver walked away from this accident.



Blast From The Past



5215 seen at Godinne, working IC1981 1144 Dinant to Namur on Saturday 20th January 1990. Photograph by Julian Mandeville.



Belgian Can Can



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This week's Can is 2108 and it is seen here in a lovely spring photograph on Train 4336 15:19 Hamont - Antwerpen Centraal. Photograph by Maarten Schoubben and taken on 4th May 2023.



© Maarten Schoubben

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/maartenschoubben/52902974300>



Other News





**“the fact they
landed a boat there
500 years ago
doesn't mean they
own the land”**

Donald Trump

I have thought for a long time that the world felt like 1913 and now I think we are in the late spring of 1914. All we need is for someone to be assassinated on a street corner, in a city of which we no little little, and the world slides into war.

I could have filled the Ramble many, many times over with these.



Dear Americans.

Go ahead, vote for the guy with the loud voice who hates minorities, threatens to imprison his opponents, doesn't give a fuck about democracy, and claims he alone can fix everything. What could possibly go wrong?

Good luck.



— *The people of Germany*

#beentheredonethat

MATT





Have a nice week

Tain