



The Ramble

558 of 28th January 2026



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]
Monday 4th May	[569] May Day Bank Holiday
Monday 11th May	[570]
Monday 18th May	No Ramble as at SVR Diesel Gala
Monday 25th May	[571] Spring Bank Holiday

Scrap Metal

There is an article on the BBC about large illegal tipping sites.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c1ev4yg1j1lo>

This caught my eye, "Businesses have to pay site fees to use legitimate licensed landfill sites, depending on the amount and type of waste they are trying to get rid of, and landfill tax is also charged at just over £126 per tonne."

£126 per tonne = €145 per tonne.

Iain's Comment - There is a landfill tax in Belgium and in most other EU Countries. The fees in the UK seem to be the highest of all of them. I understand the aim is to encourage recycling, but really high fees encourage fly tipping and high costs in general to businesses operating on low margins like scrapyards.

<https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/maps-and-charts/overview-of-landfill-taxes-on> .

So you think in a unit there is the flooring, seats and internal facias. These cost more to dispose of per tonne, than the metal makes as scrap, hence why scrapping them makes little or no money.

Some M4 coaches are currently being scrapped on a quayside in Brussels. Before the shears go in they are stripping things like the windows out. I am assuming in this way the heavy window glass can go away for recycling as glass and will not be subject to any landfill tax. I think they are taking other things out as well which may also save them landfill tax.

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 Vallée 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!



Belgische Nachrichten Nouvelles belges Belgisch Nieuws

TGV-M in Belgium

The first TGV M has arrived in Belgium being hauled by 7858 to Forest-HST (Vorst-HST) for test rides in Belgium. The set is labelled 1402 so it is for use in Italy. As they drive in Italy under 3 kV DC the sets is able to operate in Belgium as they have ETCS everywhere.



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/135235560@N07/albums/72177720331645204/>

HLR 7858 (LNS) "VL" (2005) + 1 Remms (STSI) + TGV M 1402 (SNCF) "ALS" (2025), LNS 27370 Villeneuve-Saint-Georges-Triage (19H20) - Bruxelles-Midi-AT-TGV (10H02), Luttre (BE), INFBL, le vendredi 23 janvier 2026. © Gwenaël PIÉRART

Tests are due to run from February till March.

A press release from SNCF about them buying some TGV-M for Belgium

<https://www.sncf-voyageurs.com/fr/presse/sncf-voyageurs-annonce-la-commande-de-15-tgv-m-supplementaires>

HLE 17

1704 was seen in Hennigsdorf on Tuesday 20th January. There are also some pictures on the web showing it doing high speed tests around Fulda with I11 coaches.

HLE 21

Ten HLE 21s were moved by 7766 & 7761 from Melle to Ronet on their way to be scrapped on Friday 23rd January. In the consist are [in order] 2145, 2156, 2159, 2136, 2138, 2157, 2144, 2150, 2108 & 2133.

On Saturday 24th, 2157, 2144, 2150, 2108 & 2133 continued to Ecore at Aubange behind 7752 with 7749 as tail gunner.



Photograph by Willy Peyskens and taken at Schellebelle.



These two photographs by Pierre Herbiet



This is a Facebook reel of 2157, 2144, 2150, 2108 & 2133 arriving at Ecore at Aubange behind 7752 with 7749 as tail gunner.

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1219866000210293>

Filmed by Christophe Bourguignon and posted to his Trains des 3 frontières Facebook page on Saturday 24th January 2026.

HLE 28/29/186

186 209 and 186 235 are back in store at Brugge after a brief return to service with TCA. The future 2851 [186 001] and 2852 [186 002] have been photographed by Kees Mooij moving from Zaanstraat to Watergrafsmeer. As you can see they are in standard Akiem livery. Photographed on Wednesday 28th January and posted to Beneluxtrein, Fyra, IC Brussel en IC Direct on Facebook.



HLR 77/78

7737 is still riding around with it's DB stickers although it is back with B-Transport since the New Year. Photo by Nathan Van Riet, Schaarbeek, 27th January 2026.



M4

It is reported that Wednesday 28th January 2026 is the last day for the use of M4 coaches on the Belgian network.



A photograph by Danny Moens when they were being built at Brugge and before they became unloved and covered in graffiti.



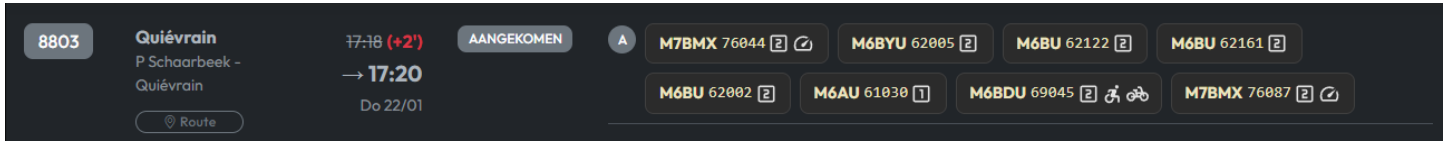
Then these photographs from Kris De Sutter of the kitchen area in a M4 BDK that still existed in September 2021. An astonishing find!



M7

This week 79034, 79044, 79050, 79054 & 79055 entered service.

Maxim wrote that in Mons he saw 76044 with six M7 carriages and another M7BMx on Thursday 22nd January. He knew that this composition with two BMx was technically possible but had never seen or heard of one active in Belgium.



8803 Quiévrain
P. Schaarbeek - Quiévrain
Route

17:18 (+2')
→ 17:20
Do 22/01

AANGEKOMEN

M7BMX 76044
M6BYU 62005
M6BU 62122
M6BU 62161
M6BU 62002
M6AU 61038
M6BDU 69045
M7BMX 76087



Go Volta

The coaches for Go Volta finally left Schaarbeek on Saturday 24th January 2026 as HKV 13407 Schaarbeek-Groupe R (08H32) - Rosendael (10H14)

Gwenaël was on hand to take some photographs of the train

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/135235560@N07/albums/72177720331630105/>

Some coaches were left in Roosendaal at the Brouwer Technology site and some were then moved onto the Brouwer Technology at Blerick.

All will need the paperwork doing and checking over. Perhaps a good deep valet might be done to brighten them up. Attend to all the little details to make them fit for their new owner.

Bocq Railway

This is the spending of Development Grant for the Bocq Railway

<https://www.cfbcq.be/blog/subside-de-la-region-wallonne-pour-le-chemin-de-fer-du-bocq/>

On 22nd December 2022, the Walloon Government, on the initiative of the Minister for Tourism, Valérie De Bue, approved a grant of €1,300,000 for the development and preservation of Line 128, the "Chemin de Fer du Bocq".

As mentioned above the next phase of works started on Monday 19th January and in this second phase the works are mainly devoted to the upgrade of Spontin station. These works are expected to end in April. This should hopefully mean there will be a Gala in August as Phase 1 was the trackwork from Spontin to Ciney.

These three photographs have come from PFT/TSP.



The next phase is the (re)construction of Évrehailles-Bauche station which will have tracks around a central island platform with one terminal track. I do not know the timescale for these works but hopefully they will also be completed for the Gala in August with some winning track for most of us.

You do not see Spontin like this very often and hopefully not again in my lifetime!



Demolition of Gent St Pieters Platforms 1, 2 & 3

Photographs by Buitensporig and taken on 25 01 26







Mechelen

Maxim Herman went along to Mechelen on 22nd January and has sent in these words and photographs. Every time that I enter the station of Mechelen it seems that the main corridor has moved.



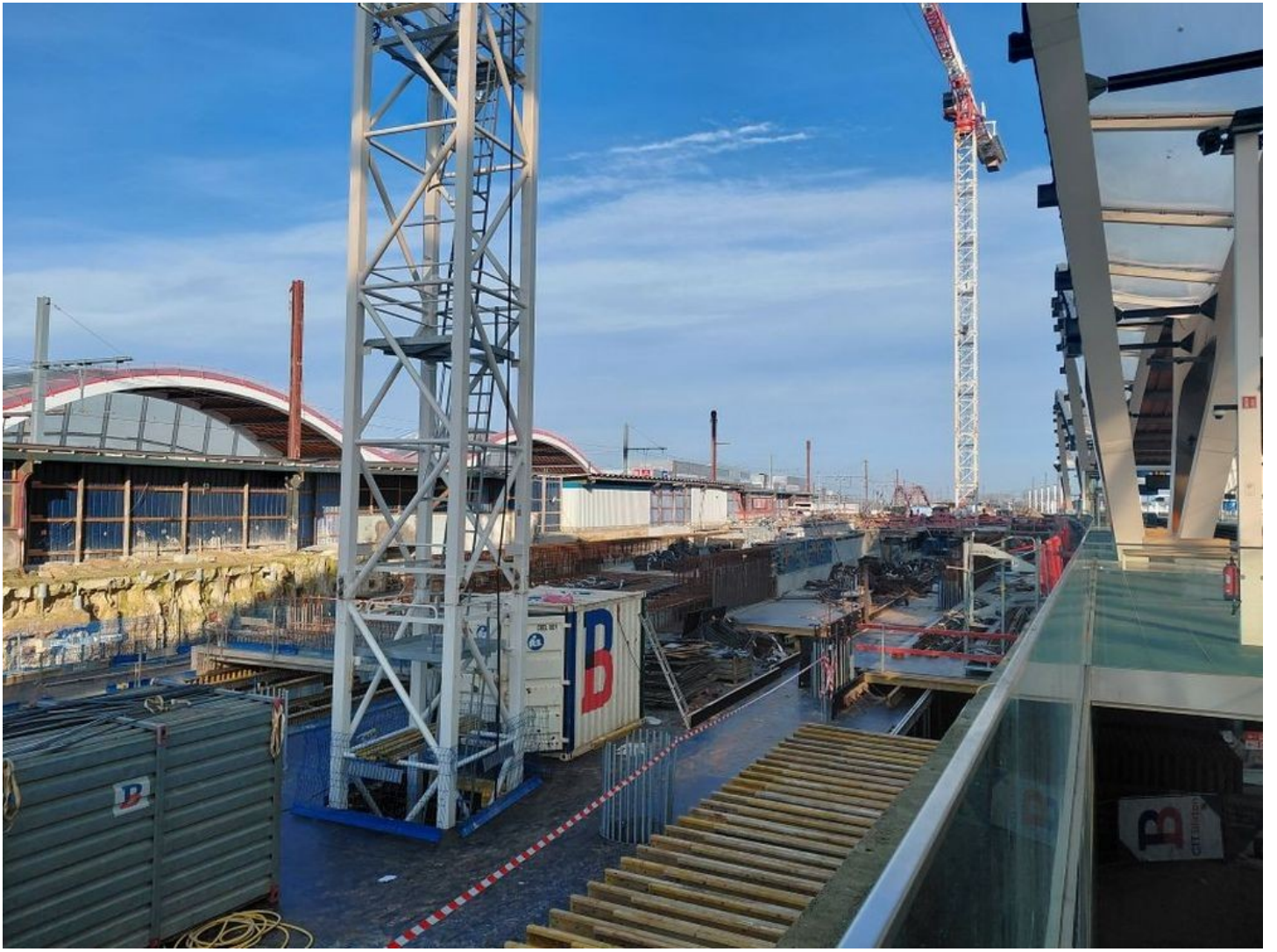
Construction and pouring concrete is going very fast, in some areas it's easy to see where the new tracks will be installed

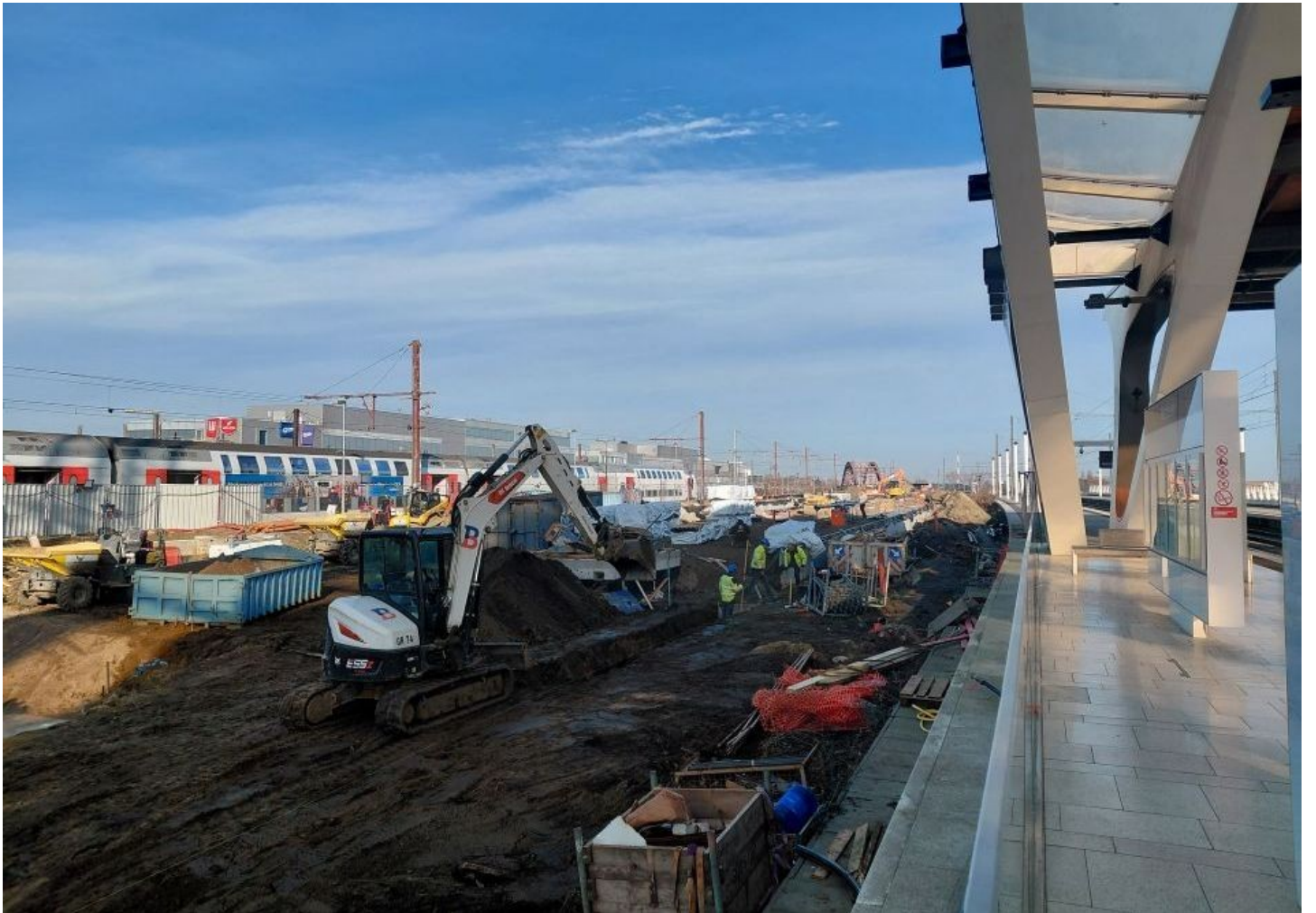
Even in the areas where a lot of concrete isn't needed the trackbed is becoming visible

Panos!



For now the main hall is used by trucks with prefab concrete elements.





Iain's Comment - This next phase of the work is due to be finished by the end of 2026.



Trambelette

Nikko Yaginuma has had a letter in his postbox from De Lijn.

It details the timing of impending works on the Borsbeeksebrug near Berchem station, planned for Friday, February 13th, 8 PM to Friday, February 20th, 8 PM.

During this week, the rails on the Borsbeeksebrug (which, he recently reported, are in a very poor state with a speed limit imposed) will be completely renewed, and as a consequence all tram traffic on lines 4 and 9 will be severely limited.

Between Friday, February 13th (8 PM) and Thursday, February 19th (end of services) all trams on line 4 will be diverted in a counter-clockwise loop between the Bolivarplaats, Nationale Bank and Groenplaats; while all trams on line 9 will be diverted from Metro station Plantijn via the Belgiëlei and Mechelsesteenweg to the loop at the Koninklijkelaan.

There will also be a large number of diversions for road traffic as well as the Tram 9 replacement bus, which will be extended to serve most of the stops not served by Tram 4 during the works.

<https://www.delijn.be/en/nieuws/werken-antwerpen-borsbeeksebrug/>



Norichten aus Lëtzebuerg

CFL 2400



Photograph by Eirc who reports that 2452 entered service on January 19 according to www.rail.lu . It is the only 24/5 in service so far.

Trainfo Tracker - <https://tracker.treinfo.be/>

There is some limited information on the CFL 2400s working in Belgium. It is only on the [Luxembourg] - Arlon - Libramont trains.

Go to Material Type and put in "AM24CFL" and up comes a list in Train Number order of the CFL 2400s working to Arlon and Libramont. I do not know if this information is being inputted manually or is being populated automatically.

If you type in "Arlon" into the Station information box then most of the trains are populated with their formations.

If you type in "Athus" into the Station information box then the only formations shown are the AM08/5 trains on the Arlon - Bertrix - Libramont trains and the CFL 2400s on the Arlon - Bertrix - Libramont trains. The use of CFL 2400s on the Arlon - Bertrix - Libramont trains is part of their diagram. The trains scuttling over the border from Rodange are shown as "no data". So 2452 has not featured so far

AI Slop

Post on the Dull Men's Centre Group that found it's way to my feed. I commented that it was slop and someone replied "Iain Dobson this is an actual train, possibly in Amsterdam. I was there for New Year." I offered him a £1000 for a real photo of something that looks like this.



This sort of shit is ruining Facebook.

NS TRAXX

There are TRAXX leaving the Netherlands and then coming back some weeks later. I think 186 007 and 186 010 have left the Netherlands but when and to where, is a mystery.

NS Units

ICNG



ICNG 3109 during it's first test drive over the Hanzelijn on Tuesday 20th January 2026. Photograph by Henry VanderHoven and posted to the ICNG Group on Facebook.

Whichever 31xx series ICNG comes next to the Netherlands will be a slotter. Of the nine to come, only two have not been in the Netherlands before.

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

3107 is on Acceptance Testing.

3109 is on Acceptance Testing.

3114 is on Acceptance Testing and may be nearly ready for passenger service.

3118 has been accepted. It was due to start work on Wednesday 28th January but failed at Amersfoort before setting off for it's first train off Rotterdam. It has worked Train 1862 18:11 Amersfoort - Breda on 28/01/26.

3143 is at Alstom Brugge for retrofit work.

Most of the recent arrivals have gone into service after around twenty working days of testing. 3114 is on 27 days of testing and so is overdue now.

ICM

The mBFk car of 4043 is in Haarlem Works and is reported as being prepared to become a gate guardian at Zaanstraat.

SLT

Returned to Service: 2435

2435 was in collision with a car near Lisse on 15th December 2025.

SNG

Out of service (fire damage): 2306

2306 had a fire in rooftop equipment at Zaandam on 1st January 2026.

VIRM

Returned to Service: 8665

8665 had a collision with a tree at Sterksel on 8th December 2025.

Blast From The Past



On 3rd August 1991 5515 was at the head of a short M4 carriage train on an 'IR' service between Luxembourg and Liège. It is seen here at the station of Hautbellain on the Gouvy - Troisvierges border section.

5515 was scrapped on 26th November 2024 by Vymetal at Casier, Deerlijk. It had stood outside the old depot at Scharbeek for a number of years.

The M4 carriages finished on Wednesday 28th January 2026.

Hautbellain Station was in a rural area north of Troisvierges and was closed on 22nd May 1998. Nothing at the site remain and the only clue is a bus stop called Bellain Gare.

The photograph was taken by P. Dumont and posted to Sur les rails d'Ardenne et d'ailleurs on Facebook.



Belgian Can Can



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This week's locomotive is 2109. It is seen here at Roosendaal on 9th July 1989 with a TGV set and is painted in "Technorame" livery. I did a search to find out exactly what Technorame is and got some references to a train and 2109 painted in Technorame livery. There is a place in Switzerland called Technorame.

If anyone on here knows more about Technorame then I will put it in next week's Ramble and why 2109 was painted in this livery.



Photograph by Edwin Werner and posted to Flickr.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/lok1501/48871381798>



Other News

“They served a little back from the frontlines.”



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Wootton_Bassett#Repatriations

They shall not grow old,
as we that are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them,
not the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun
and in the morning
We will remember them.

Laurence Binyon

We **WILL** remember people from nations all over the world who served a little back from the frontlines.