



The Ramble

569 of 4th May 2026



Bank Holiday Monday

It is a Public Holiday here in the UK today!



Monday 11th May	[570]
Monday 18th May	No Ramble as at SVR Diesel Gala
Monday 25th May	[571] Spring Bank Holiday
Monday 1st June	[572]
Monday 8th June	Holiday
Monday 15th June	Holiday [North Norfolk Diesel and Beer Event]
Wednesday 24th June	[573]
Monday 29th June	[574]
Monday 6th July	[575]
Monday 13th July	[576]
Monday 20th July	Holiday [Tomorrowland]
Monday 27th July	Holiday [Tomorrowland]
Monday 5th August	[577]
Monday 10th August	[578]
Monday 17th August	Holiday
Monday 24th August	Holiday
Monday 31st August	Holiday
Wednesday 9th September	[579]
Monday 14th September	[580]
Monday 21st September	Holiday [Innotrans]
Monday 27th September	Holiday

For The Diary 2026

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

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. 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.

Tramway touristique de l'Aisne à Érezée 60th Anniversary Event 4th & 5th July

<https://www.facebook.com/tramwaytouristiquedelaisne.erezee>

Tomorrowland

First Weekend Wednesday 15th [AMCS] & Thursday 16th inbound [AMCS & Düss]
Monday 20th outbound [AMCS & Düss]

Second Weekend Wednesday 22nd [AMCS] & Thursday 23rd inbound [AMCS & Düss]
Monday 27th outbound [AMCS & Düss]

Chemin de fer à vapeur des 3 vallées [CFV3V] - July 17th

On Friday 17th July there is a photographic event at the CFV3V.

Chemin du fer du Bocq - August 15th & 16th

The 2025 Festival is just Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th with the Photo Safari on Friday 14th. The main themes of this year's event are the renewal of the railway line and 100 years of NMBS/SNCB. Special attention will be given to the renovated Spontin station, now expanded to three tracks, as well as the track doubling works in Bauche.

They hope to be able to present a large number of NMBS/SNCB railway vehicles during the event.

I have given the Organiser some suggestions. You can be proactive or start asking questions on Facebook a month before the Gala.

Pukkelpop - Thursday 20th to Sunday 23rd August

Sometimes there are extra trains and it is always busy in the Hasselt area.

European Railtours 28th & 29th August 2026

Two days of tours based in Rotterdam with a short Friday tour and a full days tour on Saturday. RailExperts are again facilitating the tour. Booked my hotel.

I have had e-mails and questions about these tours. I have asked the Organiser when the details will be available but had no reply at the time of writing.

Stoomtrein Maldegem-Eeklo - 5508 Running day - 20th September

<https://stoomtreinmaldegem.be/nl/evenementen-2026/20-september-2026-rij-mee-met-de-5508/>

Open Day at Mechelen and Salzinnes Works - Sunday 4th October 2026

Both works have an Open Day on 4th October 2026.

Akiem Krefeld

Akiem have a building at Krefeld where they do work on their own locomotives. It is capable of doing revisions which is how I found out about it. Akiem has taken over the Bahnbetriebswerk Krefeld premises on the same site as well.

You can get up nice and close to the locomotives that are parked up in this road at Krefeld Station. Here is 186 016 and 186 239, two locomotives that worked for NS. Photographs by Nigel Pearson on 28th April 2026.



186 016



186 239 was originally owned by CBRail Luxembourg who sold 186 239 to Macquarie. They subsequently sold the locomotive leasing part of the business to Akiem. In a continuation of our throwaway society, some of these TRAXX locomotives are now regarded as old. We are all supposed to be doing the green thing and yet business is doing the exact opposite. Here is a locomotive that entered service in 2010 and before it has reached it's half life, is regarded as old.

186 239's last hire was to Rhenus Rail and you can see the Rhenus name left by the vinyls in the loco side.



Nigel likes it in Krefeld so he went back the following day. By then, 186 026 had joined the line. 026 left the Nederlands on 21st April and may have been inside for handback checks.



As you can see there is a lot of locomotives here that are not earning for their owners. Mr Trumps little disturbances are not helping world trade and it is places like Krefeld that the effects can be seen. Each of these locomotives can be leased at over €1000 per day.

The building in the background is an old DB depot that was taken over by Bahnbetriebswerk Krefeld who ran a private locomotive service and storage company from there.



I would like to thank Nigel for sending these in.



Belgische Nachrichten Nouvelles belges Belgisch Nieuws

Gent Sint Pieters

Jon reports that anyone using Gent St. Peters to be aware that there's now only one entrance/exit between the main front station building and the platforms. This gets extremely busy at peak times. The former connections from the main station area and the 'tram' tunnel are both out of use and being demolished. Jon is stood at the Panos end of the passageway looking towards the main entrance hall of the station, with the booking office to the right. There is an entrance at the back on St Denijslaan.



This is the passenger access being built which was photographed the other week by Sibren. This is where the temporary passageway above leads to.



So you come out through the hole in the wall, walk between these two concrete structures and into the ground floor area of the station.

Once this old tram tunnel structure is demolished then the building back should start very quickly. A priority is likely to be another access point to the station from the front. Photograph by Jon Piesing.



Mechelen

Maxim reports that the works in Mechelen are continuing at a remarkable rate. Track and catenary works are starting on both ends of the platforms and the construction of the platforms itself is going well. Each section of the roof is in a different finishing order, so multiple teams must be working on these elements.



There is two rows of roof spans to go in this time to cover Platforms 10, 9 & 8. The crane will be in the way of one of the spans and will have to move.





On the far left side you have Platform/Spoor 12. Then you have Platform 11. The platform edge in the middle of the photograph is blank. There is only one track to go in this space and this serves Platform 10 on the right. So where these bushes are will remain an unused platform edge. Platform 7 will be similar with a blank face between it and Platform 5. See plan below



The original schedule for platforms were for them to open for the end of 2026 and looking at these photographs that may be possible. Photographs by Maxim Herman.

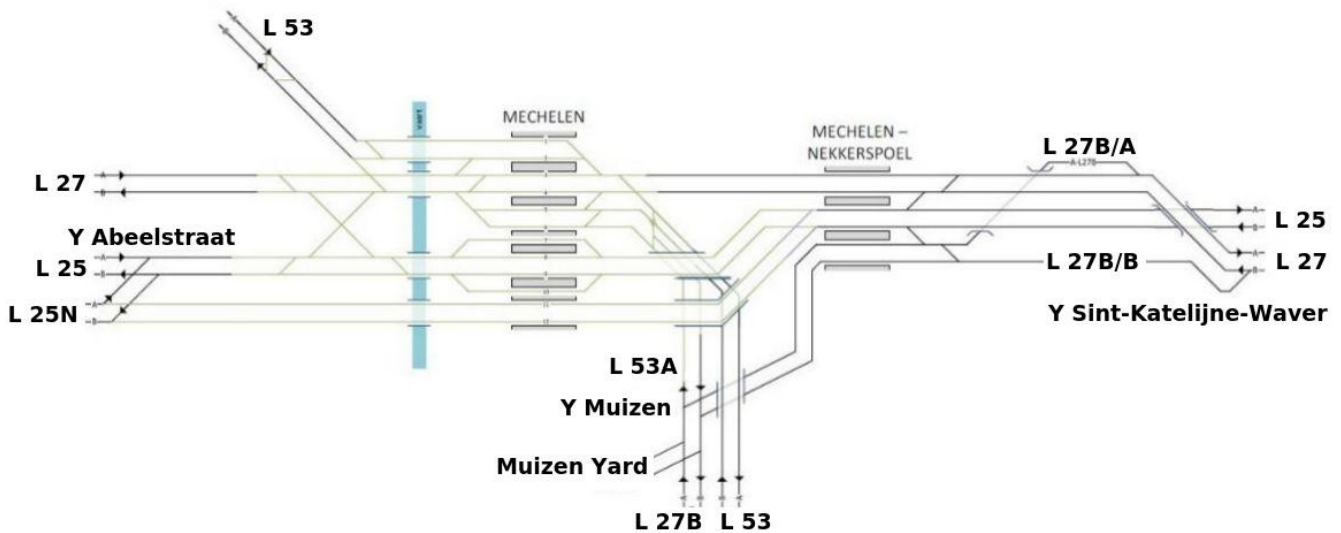
BOUW VAN HET NIEUWE STATION

Van buiten naar binnen

De Arsenaalzijde van het station, waar perrons 11 en 12 zich bevinden, geeft al een duidelijk beeld van hoe het station er ook aan de stadskant zal uitzien. Om het treinverkeer niet te verstoren, blijft de vernieuwing van het station in fases verlopen. We nemen slechts een **beperkt aantal sporen tegelijk uit dienst**. De werken aan de bovenbouw (perrons, sporen en

luifel) van het station verlopen in **vijf fases en van buiten naar binnen**. We bouwen in die volgorde **door het niveauverschil in de perrons**. Perrons 1-6 liggen lager dan de perrons 7-12. Dat niveauverschil zorgt ervoor dat de spoorlijnen ter hoogte van de Leuvensesteenweg elkaar kunnen kruisen. Zodra een spoor of perron **klaar is, wordt het meteen in gebruik genomen**.

Momenteel zitten we in spoorfase 1. In 2025 start spoorfase 2. Langzaam maar zeker wordt het station een **nieuwe stadspoort** en een iconisch visitekaartje voor Mechelen. De bouw van het nieuwe station zal soms gepaard gaan met **hinder** zoals lawaai, trillingen en stof. Dank voor jullie begrip.



Line 25N will feed into and out of Platforms 11 & 12

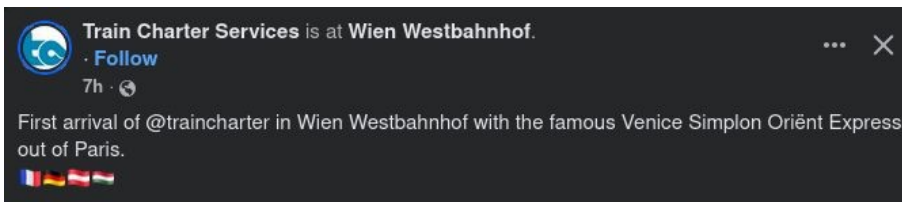
Line 25 will feed into Platforms 8 & 9. There is a loop line going towards Antwerpen, Platform 7, and a loop line going towards Brussels, Platform 10.

Once Spoorfase 2 is completed, the operation of Mechelen Station will become a lot easier.

European Sleeper



Tuesday 28th April 2026 saw 1851 haul ES 474 after technical problems with 188 144. Photo at taken at Cuesmes on Line 96 on the way to Quévy, Aulnoye-Aimeries and Paris-North. Photograph by El Dorian Mrq and posted to Belgische treinspotters groep.



<https://www.hgbtf.net/viewtopic.php?t=16540>

This was discussed on HGBTF where a HLE 18 will work between Paris and Aachen on ES 475& 474 this coming week. The TCS 188 has been moved onto other work [see right] and TCS have hired in HLE 18s as a replacement.



This shows that there are not many or no Class 188s spare. So if 188 121 or 144 fails or needs a major exam the replacement, at the moment, is unlikely to be another 188.

Posted on 30th April 2026

Stoomtreinfestival - Stoomtrein Maldegem-Eeklo

This is what I think happened.

Saturday

DE18 4185 202 worked the 09:00 Maldgem - Eeklo

6463 worked the 09:30 Eeklo - Maldegem

5538 had a fault before working the 11:30 Maldgem - Eeklo

This was replaced by 5501 which also developed a fault

DE18 4185 202 replaced 5501 & 5538 and worked the 11:30 Maldgem - Eeklo and 13:20 Eeklo - Maldegem

5538 worked it's booked turn on the 14:15 Maldgem - Eeklo and 16:05 Eeklo - Maldegem.

Everything else worked as booked I believe.

Sunday

DE18 4185 202 worked the 09:00 Maldgem - Eeklo

5538 worked the 09:30 Eeklo - Maldegem

Everything else worked as booked

5501 did not work a passenger train on either day. However, 5501 did work back to Mariembourg from Gent on Monday 4th May 2026. The fault cannot have been too serious on the locomotive.

As already mentioned, 1817 is still in the process of being repaired. It looks mint but there are still mechanical things to attend to.

Gwenaël sent the link to his Stoomtreinfestival photographs

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/135235560@N07/albums/72177720333453908>

One of the highlights of the Festival was this line up outside the shed of three HLD 55s I various liveries and their CFL cousin. Photographs by Kurt Vankeirsbilck on Saturday 2nd.



I have seen a lot of similar photographs to this on Facebook. This view of the four locomotives was important.

Both these two by Kurt Vankeirsbilck on Saturday 2nd.



Soignies - Maandag 04-05-2026

Z93951 Gent-Zeehaven - Mariembourg

TUC Rail HLD 5501 + 5538 + CFL 1817 + SR 2

Photograph by Alain Eloit - www.railpassie.eu - www.railpassion.eu



There cannot have been that much wrong with 5501 and I do wonder if keeping the line up of 5501, 1817, 5538 and 5508 was of more interest.

The teddy would have been out of the cot if I had have travelled to Eeklo on Sunday morning for 5501 to find it substituted for 5538. Not a problem if 5501 was a failure as they are elderly locomotives and shit happen. But then to see it fit enough to work on the main line the following day?

HLE 13

1313 on repair at Antwerpen Noord after colliding with a car on the Athus Meuse Line.

1323 is back in service after an Intermediate Revision

1343 is potentially the next one up for revision and may go into Salzinnes this week.

HLE 28/29/186

Interested in the Revision dates on 186 256, 186 348, 186 446 186 447, 186 454 & 186 492#.

186 492 is at Talbot Aachen for revision.

186234 (the former 2842) passing through Aachen on 16th April 2026. John Tattersall.



HLD 62

The aim was to merge the Infrabel locomotive pools into larger areas like Operations South and Operations Tracks. Having been told so, this has not happened. What I have done is put both in the spreadsheet.

HLR 77/78

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.

7708 is back in service after fitting of ETCS.

7774 is at Voith Turbo, Kiel for Revision.

7782 is at Salzinnes for Revision.

7812 is at Brouwer Technologie BV Roosendaal for installation of ETCS.

7827 is back in service after fitting of ETCS.

7830 is at Brouwer Technologie BV Roosendaal for installation of ETCS.

7852 is at Brouwer Technologie BV Roosendaal for installation of ETCS.

M7

The original order placed in December 2015 was for 445 vehicles

M7B x 145	Built - 72001 to 72145
M7AB x 145	Built - 73001 to 73145
M7BDx x 55	Built - 75001 to 75055
M7Bx x 10	
M7BMx x 90	Built - 76001 to 76090

In December 2020 a further 204 cars were ordered for mobility impaired people

M7Bx multifunctional x 70	Built - 75066 to 75136
M7BD multifunctional x 134	Building - 79001 to 79134 [79001 to 79081 built and accepted]

In December 2021 there was a further order for 98 additional M7 vehicles.

M7B x 12	Built - 72146 to 72157
M7AB x 80	Built - 73146 to 73214 [68] Not Built are 73215 to 73226 [12]
M7BM x 22	Built - 76091 to 76113

Also in December 2021 there was a reduction

M7BD Multifunctional x 7	lost 79128 to 79134
M7Bx x 9	lost 75056 to 75065? [which is 10]

Since 2021

M7BMx x 1	Built - 76114 [to replace 76017]
M7BMx x 2	Built - 76115 & 76116 [extra]

If anybody knows what the numbers are I would be very pleased to hear. I have asked on HGBTF and drawn the usual blank.

Extra Trains to the Coast

<https://www.hgbtf.net/viewtopic.php?t=16526>

Over the Easter Weekend the Tourist Trains now EXP trains (currently still branded as EXT) were scheduled. As the weather was not good they were removed from the route planner at the last minute.

This is a brief overview (including expected rolling stock) for 11th April. This gives us a good idea of what to expect in spring / summer 2026 going forward.

EXT-treinen — zaterdag 11 april 2026

EXT Welkenraedt ↔ Oostende

18201 06:48 Welkenraedt - Oostende 10:07 (2x HLE 18 + 8X M6 200, continues as 18211)

18219 19:03 Oostende - Welkenraedt 22:11 (2x HLE 18 + 8X M6 200, 18209 is the inbound working)

EXT Leuven ↔ Oostende

18202 09:24 Leuven - Oostende 11:07 (10x M7, 6+4)

18212 11:53 Oostende - Leuven 13:35

18207 14:24 Leuven - Oostende 16:07

18217 16:53 Oostende - Leuven 18:35

18203 10:24 Leuven - Oostende 12:07 (6x M7)

18213 12:53 Oostende - Leuven 14:35

18208 15:24 Leuven - Oostende 17:07

18218 17:53 Oostende - Leuven 19:35

18204 11:24 Leuven - Oostende 13:07 (2x HLE 18 + 8x M6 200)

18214 13:53 Oostende - Leuven 15:35

18209 16:24 Leuven - Oostende 18:07 9 (then works 18219)

18211 10:53 Oostende - Leuven 12:35 (2x HLE 18 + M6 200, inbound working is 18201)

18206 13:24 Leuven - Oostende 15:07

18216 15:53 Oostende - Leuven 17:35

18205 12:24 Leuven - Oostende 14:07 (2x MR08)

18215 14:53 Oostende - Leuven 16:35

EXT Antwerpen-Centraal ↔ Blankenberge

18222 08:27 Antwerpen-C - Blankenberge 10:12 (2x MR08, then works 18237)

18226 10:27 Antwerpen-C - Blankenberge 12:11 (2x HLE 18, 8x M7, 1x I10, then 18235)

18235 17:51 Blankenberge - Antwerpen-Centraal 19:33

18237 19:50 Blankenberge - Antwerpen-Centraal 21:33

EXT Charleroi-Centraal ↔ Blankenberge

18223 08:47 Charleroi-Centraal - Blankenberge 11:25 (Consist TBC)

18233 18:33 Blankenberge - Charleroi-Centraal 21:13

EXT Sint-Truiden ↔ Blankenberge (normally a Hasselt starter)

18228 10:24 Sint-Truiden - Blankenberge 12:49 (10x M7, 6+4)

18230 19:10 Blankenberge - Sint-Truiden 21:34

Antwerpen Tramblette

Nikko reports that without any fanfare or real announcement, a historic event happened on Friday 30th April: the last service by a PCC tram in Antwerpen, closing a chapter of sixty six years.

Entirely by coincidence, he happened to catch 7074 and 7098 on a regular service on Line 2 at Central Station - Diamant Pre-Metro Station. It was adorned with a sign that marked the occasion. The timing of the withdrawal is not coincidental: from Monday, May 4th, the pre-metro tunnels under the Keyzerlei, Meir and Scheldt are closing for a long-overdue 11-month rebuild, meaning the number of trams running daily is reduced significantly. This coupled with the recent arrival of the new CAF "StadsLijner" units meant that there was no longer any use for the old PCC units. With May 1st being a public holiday and May 2nd/3rd being a weekend, April 30th was the logical last date of service for these vintage units.

The first PCC arrived in Antwerp on October 3rd 1960 and entered service on December 1st 1960, coincidentally on Line 2, which then ran from Hoboken via the Harmonie, Central Station and Groenplaats to the Suikerrui, this during the very last years the loop Groenplaats > Groenkerkhofstraat > Reyndersstraat > Vlasmarkt > Ernst Van Dijckkaai > Suikerrui > Oude Koornmarkt > Groenkerkhofstraat > Groenplaats still existed (this section of tramways, dating back to 1875, was taken out of service in 1963 with services subsequently curtailed to the Groenplaats).

So it's fitting that the very last service of this type, that once was the backbone of the Antwerp tram system, was the very same line.

The PCC's will be missed.



Words and photograph by Nikko Yaginuma

NS TRAXX

The last TRAXX has gone back to Akiem. 186 026 was photographed on the 'meer on 20th April and it left on 21st April. By the 29th April, 186 026 is sat at Krefeld.



Photograph by Nigel Pearson

ICNG

In Service are 72 examples. As with all things ICNG, "Service" is open to interpretation.

ICNG-5 3101, 3102, 3103, 3105, 3107, 3108, 3109 [7]
 3111, 3113, 3114, 3115, 3117, 3118, 3120 [7]
 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, 3308, 3309 [6]
 3311, 3312, 3313, 3314, 3315, 3316, 3317, 3318, 3319, 3320 [10]
 3321 [1]

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

In Commissioning/Acceptance/Testing are 3110, 3116, 3119, 3310, 3351 & 3352.

3110 arrived on Friday 3rd April and was out on test on Friday 17th April 2026.

3116 arrived on Sunday 3rd May 2026.

3119 arrived on Saturday 2nd May 2026.

3136 is the next unit to go to Alstom Brugge for retrofit work.

3140 is at Alstom Brugge for retrofit work and is ready to return to the Netherlands.

3223 is at Alstom Brugge for retrofit work.

3308 entered service on 2nd May 2026.

3310 arrived on Friday 3rd April and was out on test on Wednesday 8th April.

Blast From The Past



Here is 6234 upon arrival at Charleroi with some steaming M2.
Photograph by Rob Dale.

With apologies to the people reading this who live in Charleroi, the station is still a dump and that flyover does little to improve things.

The 62s and M2s were replaced by the AR41s and now, twenty four years later NMBS/SNCB are starting to withdraw them as life expired. In five years or so all the AR41s will be replaced by battery powered AM/MS 30s. It is going to be interesting running up to Couvin on batteries!

6234 was cut up at Ronet in March 2004.



Belgian Can Can

44 / 144



This week it is the turn of 2120 for the Can Can in a photo by Huib den Dulk in 2022.

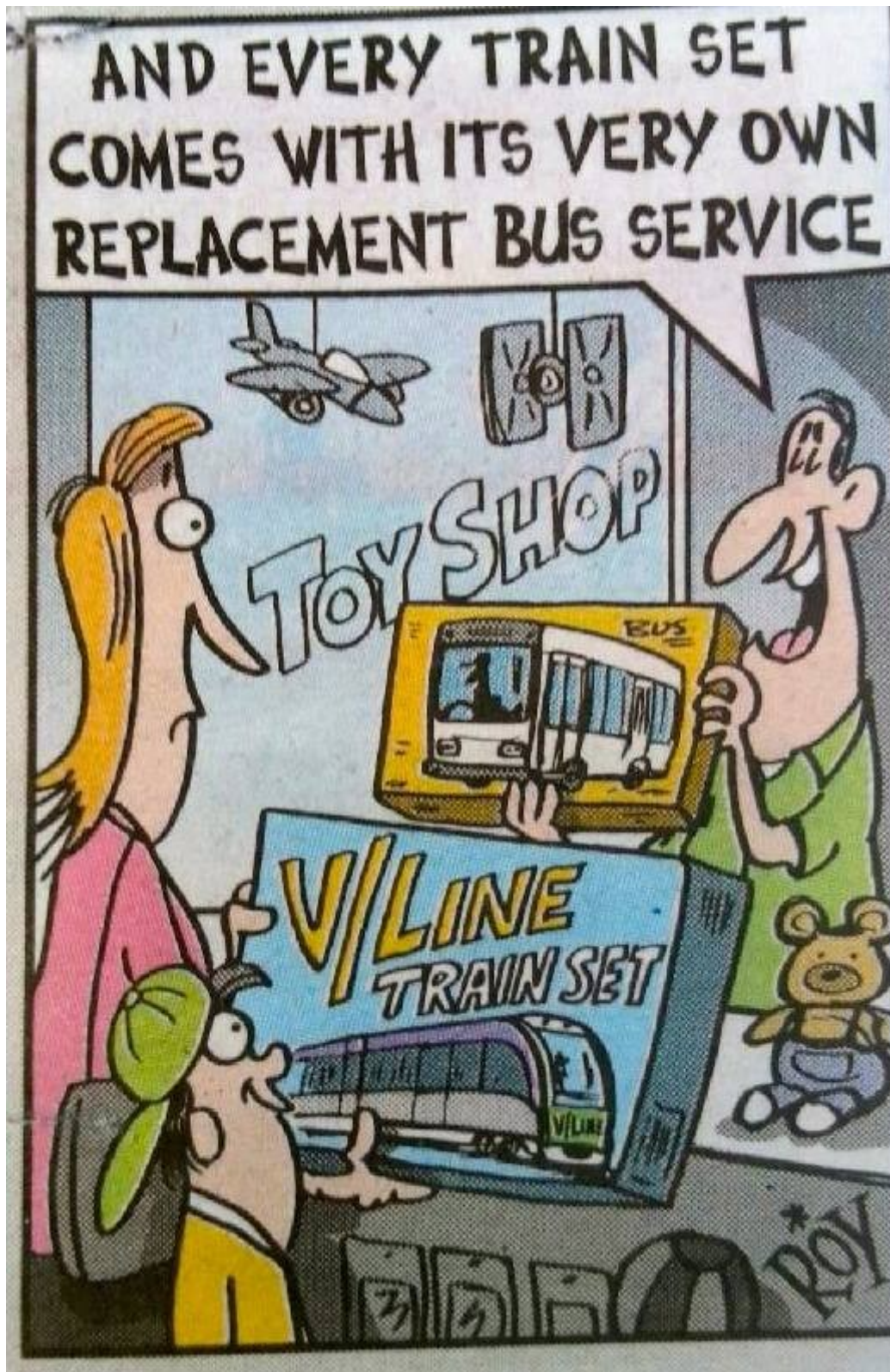
It is thought that some of the ex-Belgian locomotives have been cut up. We do know that some were in a dreadful state with parts missing. Then add being sat outside for a few Polish winters and they are now really only fit for scrap.

This photo came from wherever but it is nice.





Other News





**"Hello... is it a skip
you're looking for?"**

**Then look no further. Your
home, garden or garage could
be Once, Twice, Three Times
as Tidy with a skip from...**



- **Mini, Midi
and Maxi skips**
- **Daily and Weekly
rates available**
- **Tipper and Grab Hire**

**Fast, Friendly and Efficient - Lionel Richie Skip Hire is
the Number 1 Skip Hire in Spalding and South Lincs.
Don't Delay - Call Today on Spalding 45612**

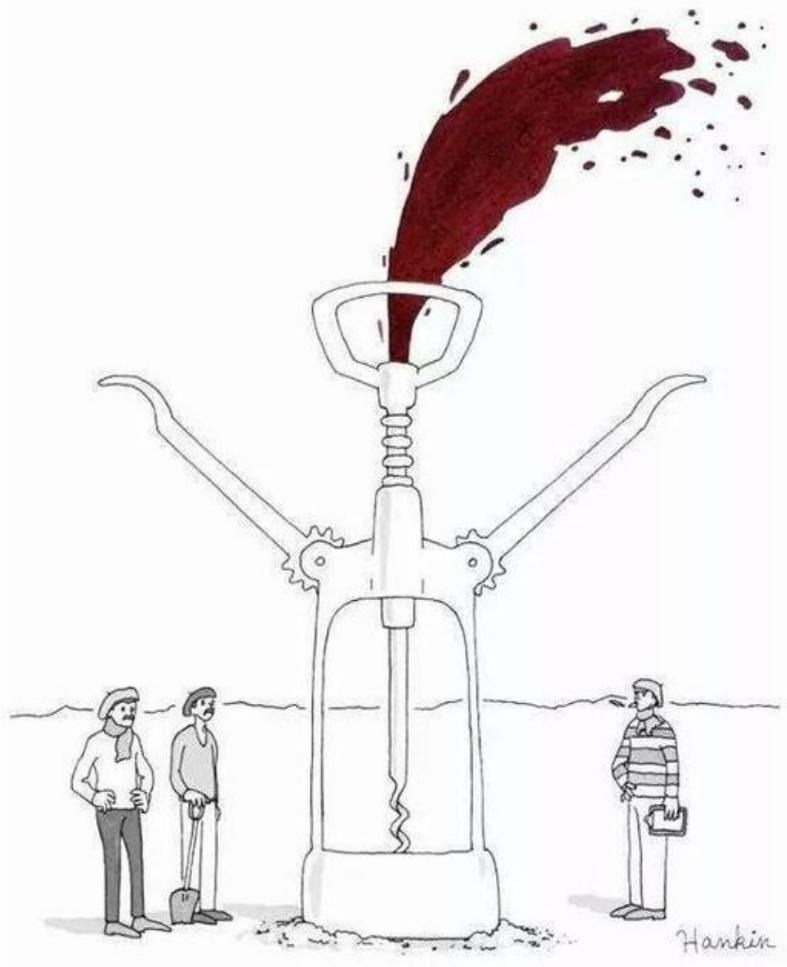
*"The prices at Lionel Richie Skip
Hire had me dancing on the
ceiling!"* **Mr S, Peterborough**



*"Hiring a skip from Lionel
Richie was easy like Sunday
morning."* **Mrs B, Lincoln**









BlackQuartzSphinx_ · 47m

Dolly Parton once lost a Dolly Parton look a like contest

... ↩ 👤 ⬆ 122 ⬇



Privatizitaet · 36m

Charlie Chaplin did too. And Elvis I believe. This is surprisingly common

... ↩ 👤 ⬆ 79 ⬇



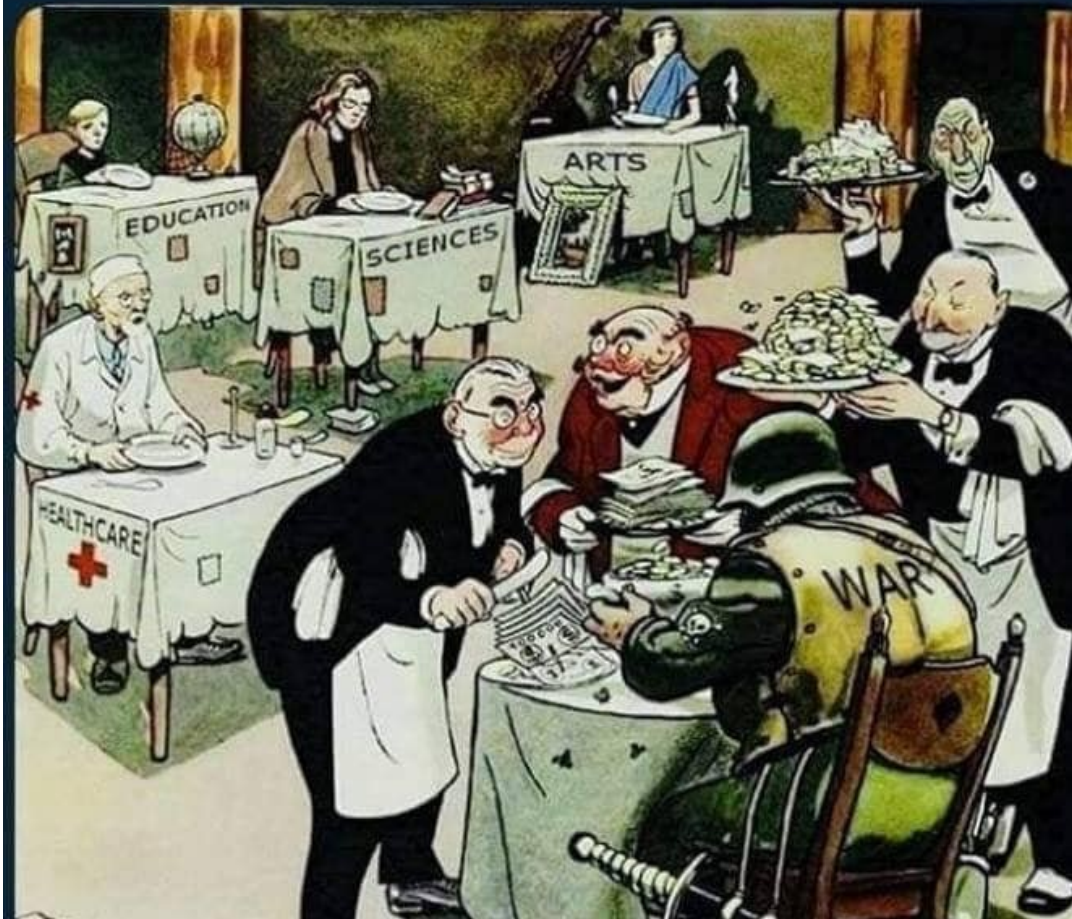
LordSupergreat · 34m

Well, Charlie Chaplin and Elvis don't look very much like Dolly Parton at all, so...

... ↩ 👤 ⬆ 89 ⬇



This comic is over 80 years old and yet you don't have to change a thing about it. It's every bit as relevant today as the day it was drawn.



Have a nice week

Tain