



The Ramble

562 of 9th March 2026



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

Neil Webster

This Saturday, 14th March 2026, sees the twenty fifth anniversary of the death of Neil Webster. He published books of train numbers, initially starting off in the UK and then branching out to books with train numbers in Europe. He did teach me quite a few tricks and some of Neil does live on with the presentation of the Ramble and the Current List information. The problem, even back then, was there was no real money in publishing spotting books and railway books in general.

I compiled three books for him and in doing so became the first person in our family to have a book published with my name as author.

He was also one of the people behind the setting up of the EM2 Society and then Werkgroep 1501 in the preservation of the NS Class 1500s.

He would have been 69 on 18th March.

For The Diary 2026

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

Good Friday is on Friday 3rd 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.

Stoomtrein Maldegem-Eeklo - Stoomtreinfestival - 2nd and 3rd May

<https://stoomtreinmaldegem.be/nl/evenementen-2026/2-3-mei-2026-stoomtreinfestival/>

European Sleeper



The new Paris Nord to Berlin service starts on 26th March 2026 and is still down to be operated by TRAXX 3, presumably throughout [I am awaiting confirmation of this]. The whole point of these multi system, multi voltage locomotives is to be able to work anywhere. With ETCS the ability to work anywhere increases and as ETCS is rolled out to more and more places, the area of operation only gets bigger.

This is the calling pattern which is very minimalist to say the least. From this it looks as if the Liège Guillemins stop and stops in near Germany have gone. It would appear that the train is still **going** via Liège and Aachen with their steep banks upon departure. Perhaps there is a lot of engineering work and the route of the train may flip flop about like a fish out of water, so for the moment some stops have been put to the side. It is a lot easier not to advertise a stop than keep on needing Bertie Bus to get passengers to the train or the times changing on a week by week basis.

Departure Tue, Thu, Sun

Paris Nord	17:45
Bruxelles Midi/Brussel Zuid	21:45
Hamburg Harburg (from 13 July)	6:57
Berlin Hauptbahnhof	9:59

Departure Mon, Wed, Fri

Berlin Hauptbahnhof	18:31
Hamburg Harburg (from 13 July)	21:55
Bruxelles Midi/Brussel Zuid	7:06
Paris Nord	10:00

The European Sleeper Train from Brussels to Milano starts on 7th September 2026. It is a bit unfortunate as this misses the Summer season but hopefully everything will be bedded in [pun intended] for the winter season.



Departure Mon, Thur, Sat

Bruxelles Midi/ Brussel Zuid	17:56
Liège Guillemins	19:45
Aachen Hbf	21:13
Köln Hbf	22:07
Zürich	06:42
Art-Goldau	07:26
Göschenen	08:25
Bellinzona	09:28
Lugano	09:45
Chiasso	10:15
Como San Giovanni	10:41
Milano Porta Garibaldi	11:30

Departure Wed, Fri, Sun

Milano Porta Garibaldi	17:30
Como San Giovanni	18:33
Chiasso	19:00
Lugano	19:26
Bellinzona	19:45
Göschenen	20:45
Art-Goldau	21:45
Zürich	22:35
Köln Hbf	07:59
Aachen Hbf	08:48
Liège Guillemins	09:40
Bruxelles Midi/ Brussel Zuid	11:10

GoVolta

The main GoVolta Web Site is <https://govolta.nl/nl/>

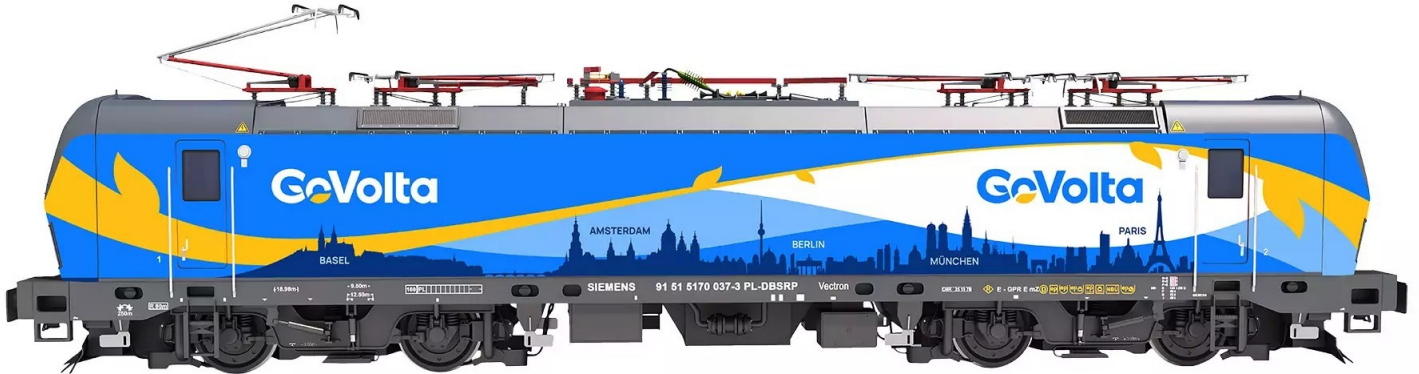
<https://treinpositives.nl/treinseries>

The Amsterdam - Hamburg is 300 series.

The Amsterdam - Berlin is 320 series.

There is a good article here about the build up to launch [it is in Nederlands]

<https://www.martijnvanvulpen.nl/nieuws/ready-set-govolta/>



The above an image of a Vectron in the corporate identity of GoVolta came from the above Martijn van Vulpen article [the original image source was Railcolor News]. In addition to smooth blue and yellow lines, buildings of Amsterdam, Basel, Berlin, Munich and Paris are displayed in contours. The same images are on the carriage stickers. To start with the trains are currently only calling at Amsterdam and Berlin.

The EVN on this graphic is 91 51 5170 037-3 PL-DBSRP [DBSRP = DB Cargo Polska S.A.]

These are some restickered coaches outside. Photo from Linked In.



During 2026 Go Volta wants to take over more carriages from NMBS/SNCB. This would allow the frequency to be increased to Berlin and Hamburg as well being able to run the connection to Paris via Antwerpen and Gent. Perhaps there may be some stops in northern France as well.

These were taken inside at Brouwer Technologie in Blerick where Mr Stickers has been very active. Photographs from Linked In.



I might have been tempted to either repaint or clean off the graffiti from the roof and bogies before stickering up. I also would have had a valeting company in to deep clean everything including the door stairs. Do note the previously metal window surrounds have been sprayed dark brown / black.

Some of the stock is seen here on 4th March 2026 in a photograph by Gydo Evers.



Gydo also sent me a link to a You Tube film on GoVolta. It is in German but the translating tool does not work for me here.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wcm3ekfxGYI>

French Railways News

<https://frenchrailwaysociety.org/march-2026-news>

Always a good read but John e-mailed to say there was an article about Alstom and late deliveries.

“Alstom and SNCF together bear responsibility for the long lead times in delivery and commissioning that have dogged recent rolling stock orders. That is the conclusion of the enquiry into delivery delays ordered in January 2025 by the government from three industry experts, according to a leak to Ville, Rail & Transports, made as it was feared the report might be watered down or suppressed altogether. They were tasked with finding out why lead times have mushroomed over the last decade to between eight and 12 years, and to suggest changes and improvements in procurement management and industrial practices.

The leak highlights the role of the State, transport authorities and policy-makers in creating unrealistic deadlines and increasingly complex demands on rolling stock suppliers. Ironically, the report was delayed for several months’ due to the complexity of the issues investigated. The Covid pandemic still casts a shadow but the report appears to pull no punches in criticising suppliers and clients; media coverage described it as ‘explosive’, hence the leak.”

So not just the Netherlands then!



Belgische Nachrichten Nouvelles belges Belgisch Nieuws

Schaarbeek Old Diesel Depot - Demolition?



Photograph by Nathan Van Riet.

When I was in Belgium some works started outside the front of the old depot at Schaarbeek. To me it looked like a turning circle so trucks could drive over the crossing, turn round, load up and drive out again. What they do not want is the potential for trucks to be queuing up over the level crossing, which will remain active.

There was an accident a few years ago when 2113 hit a dustbin lorry at Schaarbeek, on a level crossing, and the locomotive's cab caught fire. The damage was bad enough for the locomotive to be withdrawn. So I expect Infrabel to be very cautious when allowing vehicles driven by non railway staff over a live level crossing. The level crossing in the photograph is only a slow speed crossing but so was the one involving 2113 and it only hit a more light dustbin lorry and not one loaded with demolition material.



Liège Saint Lambert

Looks to have been finished. Photographs by Julien Casier taken on 27th December 2025





Like the building at Visé, the station at Saint Lambert is modular woody building.



Visé

Some views of the newly completed station at Visé by Julien Casier which were taken on Friday 6th March 2026.







The old station building closed on 6th November 2025 and the new building and new access to Visé Station moved to the new building which is slightly closer to Maastricht. It maybe that the station has technically moved as well from the KM Point of the building below to the new one a short distance away.



The new building at Visé is the similar to the one at Ciney and I think Waterloo. It is a modular design that can be adopted to suit local needs.

HLE 18

1857 is back in service after ETCS works.

1878 is back in service after ETCS works.

1886 is back in service after ETCS works.

1887 is back in service after ETCS works.



186 496 was photographed at Ramskapelle Level Crossing by Danny Moens on 7th February 2026.

The top date is when the locomotive was new and sent out from Kassel.

REV	KS	15.10.18
1. Verl.	Sp	16.10.25
2. Verl.	XSSP	15.10.26

I use the term Revision with the Ramble but it is not quite as simple as that and actually I am quoting the HU Date. The Revision System in Germany is based on the life of a steam locomotive boiler which is six years. At six years the boiler is examined and given another year [16.10.25] if it is still good. After seven years the boiler gets another extension exam and then passed for another year until 15.10.26. At this date it either goes into store, is withdrawn or given a Revision which makes it good for another six years. Then there are two more yearly inspections and eight years is up. Repeat.

Quite obviously the only hot water on this locomotive is the driver's coffee. A lot of the components are only certified by the manufacturer for so long and are changed out at set intervals. The big change out is at eight years. Some operators work on eight years and some change things at two million kilometres. Eight years is a bit low in time but it guarantees that all the parts still perform as expected.

With a modern locomotive like 186 496 a Revision consists of some on-board components but mostly it is new wheelsets and overhaul of the brake gear. Which is why when you see a freshly revised locomotive, the bodywork might be a bit rough but the bogies are freshly painted with new components on them. Now that traction motors are AC they are sealed and have no parts that touch inside. So there is nothing to replace.

There have been some movements in and out of the Alpha locomotives which were in warm store at Brugge. The current competition between Alpha, Akiem and Railpool for the Benelux market is very strong.

At Brugge in warm store / standstill maintenance are 186 208, 186 215, 186 231, 186 232 & 186 235.

I do not know where 186 207 is.

186 209 has been rented to DB
186 210 returned to Railtraxx
186 216 to Medway
186 230 to CFL Cargo. I do not think TRAXX MS2 are passed in Luxembourg and so this locomotive may be working only in Germany.



The HUPAC trains from Gallarate to Antwerpen/Zeebrugge will soon be hauled by SBB Cargo Vectrons to the Belgian ports instead of a hand-over to Lineas at Aachen-West border station. This may mean that Lineas return some TRAXX to Railpool if there is a drop in work.

186 011 and 186 025 are at TCA on a longer time lease.

186 451 has left Lineas which may have something to do with it's recent Revision as locomotives seem to move at Revision time. A TRAXX comes in to cover for a TRAXX being sent away and stays replacing the one at Revision.

186 506 is now working for Lineas.

M5

The amount of M5 coaches being used by NMBS/SNCB has increased to four daily sets by the look of things. This week there are strikes on again in Belgium so the data is not as reliable. Thank you to David for bringing the additional M5 train to my attention. Thank you as well to Sibren at Trainfo for providing the means to enable me to see what is going on.

Friday 6th March 2026

P7008 05:47 Poperinge - Schaarbeek with 1840
P7007 06:19 De Panne - Schaarbeek with 1866
P7012 06:58 Gent St. Pieters - Schaarbeek with 1889
P7009 06:59 Poperinge - Schaarbeek with 1880

P8008 16:24 Schaarbeek - Poperinge with 1880
P8006 16:36 Schaarbeek - De Panne with 1866
P8014 16:37 Schaarbeek - Gent St. Pieters with 1889
P8009 17:24 Schaarbeek - Poperinge with 1840

M7

There are increasing numbers of the M7 BD Multi coaches coming out of Brugge works and entering service. There are quite a few gaps so there may be a sudden rush. 79079 has been seen on the network but many of the 7906x series have yet to appear. The next timetable change is 7th April which is Easter weekend and could bring a large number into service.

NS TRAXX

186 003 and 186 017 were returned to Akiem on 12th February. However I have seen other information that they were on the 'meer in early March. What has happened in the past is that locos leave the Netherlands, go to Akiem at Krefeld and come back. I do not know if faults have been found and they are being returned for rectification or Akiem have accepted them and the locos are being sent back for warm store.

186 011 and 186 025 are at TCA on a longer time lease.

ICNG

We are expecting the Great Stork this weekend! There has not been a delivery of an ICNG since 3109 on 18th January.

Blast From The Past

Something a little different this week in two photographs of Deltic locomotives on [Finsbury Park Depot](#) in north London. Start ups in the morning were a absolute treat for the people living in the flats around. Six locomotives have been preserved and Finsbury Park closed in October 1983 and is now a housing estate. Photographers unknown.





Belgian Can Can



37 / 144

This week it is the turn of 2113 which met an untimely end at Schaarbeek Depot when it hit a dustbin lorry on a level crossing. The resultant fire wrote off 2113. The top photo is by David Arnould and was taken at Ecore, Aubange on 23rd March 2013 and the bottom one is from the Internet of the accident.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/154376151@N04/albums/72157699600122904>





Other News

Rotherham Bugle

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In first interview as new Iranian leader Mojtaba Khamenei says he was also offered jobs with Emma Raducanu and Spurs but wanted something more secure



www.Sleepzzzband.com

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Reality

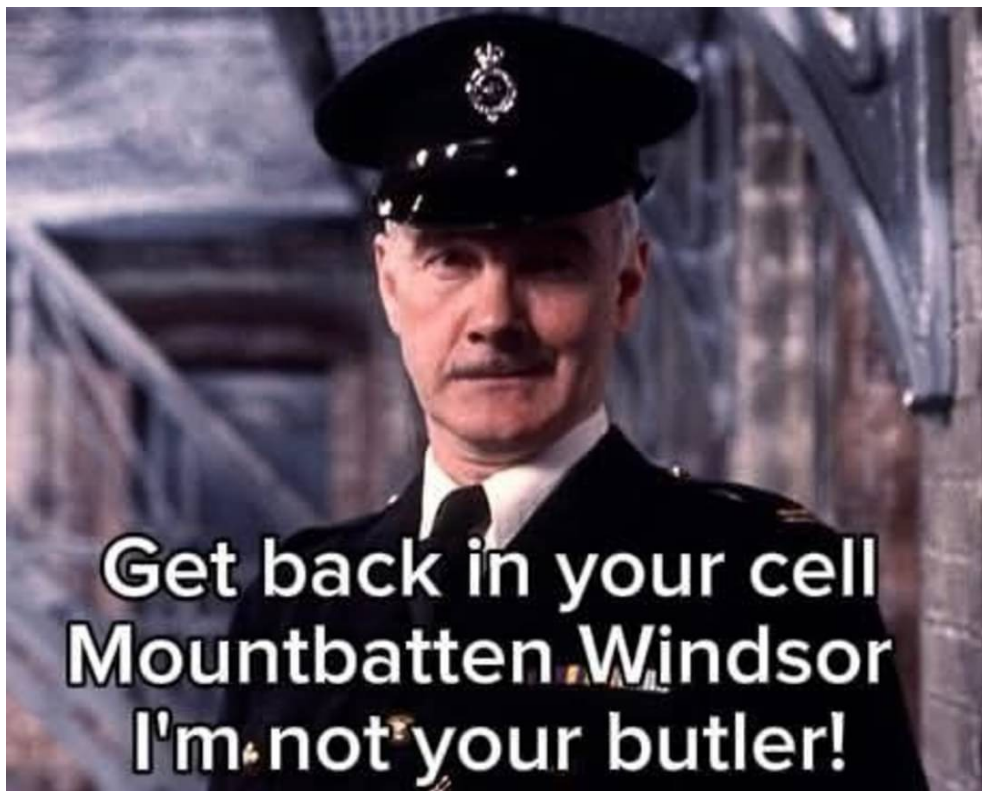


I steal socks without remorse.

LinkedIn



I curate textile assets for private inventory optimization initiatives.







Have a nice week

Iain