



# The Ramble

## 575 of 29th June 2026



|                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Monday 6th July         | [576]                  |
| Monday 13th July        | [577]                  |
| Monday 20th July        | Holiday [Tomorrowland] |
| Monday 27th July        | Holiday [Tomorrowland] |
| Monday 5th August       | [578]                  |
| Monday 10th August      | [579]                  |
| Monday 17th August      | Holiday                |
| Monday 24th August      | Holiday                |
| Monday 31st August      | Holiday                |
| Wednesday 9th September | [580]                  |
| Monday 14th September   | [581]                  |
| Monday 21st September   | Holiday [Innotrans]    |
| Monday 27th September   | Holiday                |



Here is 6508 having a small stop at Mechelen's Platform 1 whilst hauling a tamping machine today. Photograph by Robin Melis

## For The Diary 2026

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

### **Stoomtrein Dendermonde-Puurs - July 4th & 5th**

<https://www.stoomtrein.be/bezoek/scheldeland-in-stoom-2026/>

On Saturday 4th & Sunday 5th July the SDP 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.

Kield wrote a note on the Chemin de Fer Touristique de la Vallée de L'Aa - Le Festivallée, He was thinking of going, however he noticed on the website that, while it's a festival, your ticket only gets you one round trip to Lumbres (time chosen upon booking) and unlimited access to the 'Animations' at Arques station (exhibition of visiting stock, Engine shed, yard etc). There is no timetable / loco working published, and while the tickets are only €6, if you were looking for something specific, then you could be disappointed. It does seem quite scaled back from my previous visit, a 2 1/2 years ago.

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.tta.be/en/blog/news-2/60-years-of-the-tta-4>

The Tramway touristique de l'Aisne à Érezée 60th Anniversary Event 4th & 5th July includes bus shuttles between Marloie and Érezée (TTA). Historically getting to this line without a car on operating days has been difficult, or impossible, so this is a significant improvement. Bus times are on their web site. Fortunately it does not look like there are engineering works which will affect journeys in the area that weekend.

### **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 2026 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 station 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.

### Friday 28 August 2026

We anticipate a mid-afternoon departure from Rotterdam Centraal, with our train expected to be hauled by a modern electric freight locomotive along the freight-only Havenlijn towards Maasvlakte. A diesel locomotive is also expected to provide assistance at both Maasvlakte and Europoort.

### Saturday 29 August 2026

Our train, top and tailed by classic electric locomotives provided by Railexperts, will depart from Rotterdam Centraal and travel south west to the end of the line at Vlissingen. From there, we will retrace our route to Goes, where a further reversal will allow access to the Sloehaven branch.

We have specifically requested that one of the two electric locomotives is a former RRF Class 1600 locomotive 4401 or 4402, both of which are now part of the Railexperts fleet.

Once the full operating plan has been confirmed, we will provide a further update via our mailing list, website, and Facebook page.

## **Stoomtrein Maldegem-Eeklo - 5508 Running day - 20th September 2026**

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

## **De Lijn - Antwerpen PCC Tram Event - 26th September 2026**

Farewell to the PCC event in Antwerpen.

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

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



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Nigel Farage MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA  
(Sent by email)

29 June 2026

Dear Nigel Farage,

I am writing to invite you to attend the Westminster Hall debate on MPs' Second Jobs, which I have secured for this Wednesday, 1 July.

Since being elected as an MP, it has been reported<sup>1</sup> that you have raked in more than £1.5 million from outside earnings. Only former Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has declared more.

This is, of course, separate from the £5 million "gift" that you have received, which is now the subject of an investigation by the Parliamentary Standards Commissioner.

In this week's debate, I will focus on my Bill to ban MPs' second jobs.

The principles behind the Bill are straightforward.

Being an MP is not only a privilege but also a well-paid job. MPs receive a salary of £98,599 a year, earning more than 95% of people in our country. The public are entitled to expect that job to have an MP's full attention.

When MPs are chasing lucrative second jobs, far from bringing in valuable outside experience, as some claim, it leaves them out of touch with the people they are elected to represent, many of whom are experiencing a deep cost-of-living crisis.

It also undermines public confidence in politics, which has hit record lows in recent years.

If MPs want to earn huge amounts through private-sector work, they are, of course, entitled to. But they should resign from Parliament before doing so.

As one of the MPs with the highest outside earnings, I appreciate that you are likely to disagree. I therefore hope you will attend the debate and explain why you believe Members of Parliament should be permitted to earn vast sums from second jobs.

Yours sincerely,

**Richard Burgon MP**

---

<sup>1</sup> See *The Westminster Accounts* analysis of the Register of Members Interests

Some MPs have continued to work to keep their "ticket" in certain professions. I do not have a problem with this providing that the work is limited and the work is either performed pro bono publico or is taxed at 100%.

When you vote, you vote for an individual to go to Parliament and represent you and the other people in the Constituency, not to represent themselves.



# Belgische Nachrichten Nouvelles belges Belgisch Nieuws

## ETCS Baseline 3 in Belgium

From 1st January 2028, there is a requirement for vehicles to be fitted with ETCS Baseline 3 in Belgium. This explains why large numbers of vehicles are going to Brugge, Mechelen, Roosendaal and Salzinnes for ETCS fitting as well as ETCS upgrades.

As you will read below this means there are going to be changes in existing locomotive fleets. ETCS Baselines, and what has been fitted with what, is strictly for the cognoscente until it appears as a standard with a timeline. I expect the 1st January 2028 to be missed, as this usually happens in Belgium, with a low key announcement on a busy news day. However the deadline will only move a little.

### ETCS History

Early 2000s: Initial ETCS specifications deployed before baselines were fully stabilised

Baseline 2: First widely deployed reference for many cross-border projects

Baseline 3 (from mid-2010s): Introduced to stabilise the specification and limit national divergence

Baseline 4 is the newest reference in the CCS TSI (Baseline 4 Release 1)

ETCS Baseline management is now a core element of European interoperability policy and signalling migration planning.

## HLE 13

Lineas is also planning to cease to use the HLE 13s at sometime in the foreseeable future. The HLE 13 is a mixed traffic locomotive and I would not be surprised if they are replaced by more Class 188 TRAXX 3 from Railpool.

After the Revision Dates on 1313, 1319, 1323, 1343# 1348# & 1354#  
[# In Salzinnes Works].

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

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

1333 has a new nose recovered from another 13 and is getting a repaint.

1343 is at Salzinnes Works for an Intermediate Revision.

1348 is at Salzinnes Works for an Intermediate Revision.

1354 is at Salzinnes Works for an Intermediate Revision.

## HLE 18/19

Interested in the Intermediate Revision dates on  
1841, 1843#, 1845, 1847 & 1924 [# In Salzinnes Works].

In recent months this column has been reporting the large number of HLE 18s going into Salzinnes for "ETCS works". This upgrade to ETCS Baseline 3 is what has been happening and the locomotives upgraded have a red dot in the front window with F3 in it. You can see this sticker in the left hand window in the bottom left hand corner.



Photograph by John Hajdasz on 23rd September 2025

### **HLE 28/29/186**

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

186 507 is back with Lineas.

We have some news this week.

Lineas has announced officially that the D/B/F TRAXX it leases from Railpool and Alpha Trains [186 252 - 186 255 & 186 346 - 186 350] will be returned between January and April 2027.

From January 1st 2028, there is a requirement for vehicles to be fitted with ETCS Baseline 3 in Belgium. Alpha Trains has decided that it is not financially worthwhile to upgrade the five locomotives of this type at @ €500 000 each. The HLE 29 / D/B/F TRAXX are different to standard D/A/B/NL TRAXX and even things like the start up procedure is different. Akiem own a number of D/B/F TRAXX which they lease to Hexafret which they use on cross border freight to Belgium.

The D/B/F TRAXX which are owned by Alpha Trains are sat on standard bogies and there will be standard TRAXX parts on them. So they may be worth a lot of money to Alpha as spare part donors. 186 346 to 350 were revised in 2025 and are sat on revised bogies for example.

The nine D/B/F TRAXX at Lineas will be replaced by eight Class 188 TRAXX 3 which can go a lot further that Germany, Belgium and France, a lot further.

## 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.  
7707 is at Brouwer Technologie BV Roosendaal for installation of ETCS.  
7709 is in Salzinnes Works for the fitting of ETCS and repainting into Infrabel Blue.  
7710 is in Salzinnes Works for the fitting of ETCS and repainting into Infrabel Blue.  
7743 is at Salzinnes Works for ETCS fitting.  
7759 is at Salzinnes Works for ETCS fitting.  
7761 is at Salzinnes Works for ETCS fitting.  
7763 is at Salzinnes Works for ETCS fitting.  
7765 is back in service after ETCS fitting.  
7774 is at Voith Turbo, Kiel for Revision.  
7775 is at Salzinnes for Revision.  
7787 is at Salzinnes Works for ETCS fitting.  
7810 is at Brouwer Technologie BV Roosendaal for installation of ETCS.  
7815 is back in service after installation of ETCS.  
7831 is back in service after installation of ETCS.  
7832 is back in service after installation of ETCS.  
7843 is at Brouwer Technologie BV Roosendaal for installation of ETCS.  
7849 is at Brouwer Technologie BV Roosendaal for installation of ETCS.  
7855 is at Brouwer Technologie BV Roosendaal for installation of ETCS.

### Another Day, Another Tractor, Another Break Unit

421 hit a tractor on a level crossing with the resultant score of Tractor 0 – Break 1.



The collision was on Friday 26th June at Schulen on Line 35 with 421 and 435 on IC 4909 09:17 Antwerpen – Hasselt.

At the close of play it was one very bent tractor.



## DBC Belgium Class 6500

On Thursday 25th June 6512 caught fire at Hoeselt. Let us hope that there are no chemicals in that water as that is what completely f\*\*ks up a locomotive big time. What kills most railway vehicles after a fire is the Fire Service putting them out – not the damage from the fire.

Those doors are usually kept closed **specifically** to keep the water out.....



On Friday 26th 6511 caught fire at Hove on an Antwerpen to Bressoux service. This picture does not do the fire much justice. The locomotive is very, very badly damaged inside and I would not be surprised if it is withdrawn. In a scale of 1 to 10, 6511 is a 14.

The 6400s are not a new design and 6511 was placed in service on 24th June 1994. So 6511 caught fire two days after it's thirty second birthday.



## Some Late News



NMBS - SNCB

Ik bergijp dat je u zorgen maakt 08:43

Ik leg het je graag uit =>

Mag iemand het perron op zonder reisticket, gewoon om treinen te bekijken of te fotograferen?

Dat kan, maar we vragen je dit eerst te melden:

Commercieel gebruik (foto's, video's, sociale media): via het aanvraagformulier op <https://www.belgiantrain.be/nl/about-sncb/contact/shootings>.

Studenten, kunstenaars of frequente trainspotters (zonder commercieel doel): op dezelfde pagina kan je een jaarlijkse toegangsvergunning aanvragen.

Eenmalig of heel occasioneel: dit is toegestaan, maar bij een controle op het perron kan een regularisatie worden opgestart. Je kan nadien contact opnemen met onze klantendienst.

08:43

From the 1st July 2024, NMBS/SNCB will be controlling and enforcing an already existing rule. There will be no access to the platforms without a valid ticket or pass.

People will still be allowed to accompany their partner/children/mother/father/friend onto the platforms and wait for them to help with luggage. You will have to explain this during the extra controls and checks that will be starting in July.

As a rail enthusiast it is allowed to be on the platforms without a ticket or pass. However if you have a difficult Controller you might get a fine. This can be rescinded if you send it in to Customer Service although this is not guaranteed. You can also ask for a rail enthusiast licence and by doing this you will be following the guidelines and be in possession of a valid pass.

## Engineering Works

### Verviers Central and Welkenraedt

Between 3rd and 23rd August there is a engineering blockade on between Verviers Central and Welkenraedt. It does look as if the Oostende - Eupen trains are running via Montzen and will not run to Eupen.

Most IC trains Kortrijk - Brussels - Welkenraedt do not run further than Leuven on 3rd, 4th and 5th August. From 6th August they will drive no further than Verviers Central.

### Charleroi Central and Couvin

Every day from Saturday 1st to Sunday 23rd August, Infrabel is working on the renewal of the infrastructure.

Because of these works, there are no trains between Charleroi-Central and Couvin.

If you are going over for the Bocq and fancy a trip on the CFV3V, it is a Bertie.

## Class 3000

3005, 3007, 3009, 3010 & 3015 turned up in Iași, Romania on 25th June 2026.  
[please note that it is an I and not an L].

Quote on Facebook they are there for two operators, RailForceOne and Ferotrans. A number will remember Ferotrans who bought some of the ex-NS DM 90s in a protracted sale. These DM 90s were subsequently sold to SKPL after being stored in Holboca yard which is just up the line from Iași.

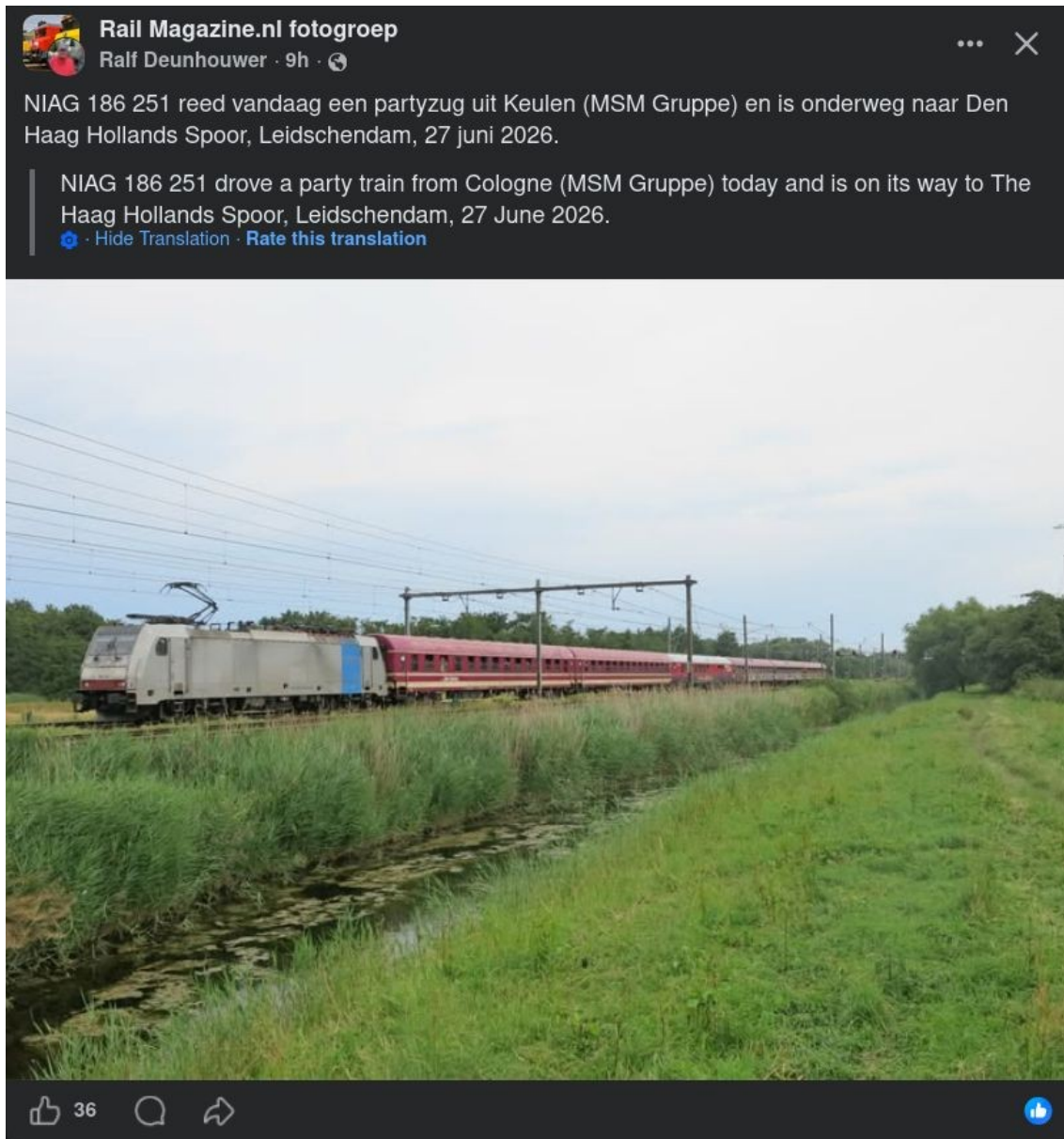


Photograph by Adrian Lupascu and posted to Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100078343425378>



## 186 251 on Charter



Sometimes these charter trains feature in the Spoor Agenda page on Treinposities. I have sent stuff in before to the compiler of the list and he has ignored it.

<https://treinposities.nl/spooragenda>

## NS Units

### ICNG

I did think we were due another ICNG and 3214 turned up on Sunday 28th. I also think that we are due more ICNG units in the near future. All the 31xx, 32xx and 33xx units are finished and it is desnagging them that is the only hold up. The bottleneck is that there are only space for two units in the test house.

### ICNG

In Service are 77 examples. As with all things ICNG, "Service" is open to interpretation.

|        |                                                                 |                                                    |                            |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ICNG-5 | 3101, 3102, 3103,                                               | 3105,                                              | 3107, 3108, 3109, 3110 [8] |
|        | 3111,                                                           | 3113, 3114, 3115, 3116, 3117, 3118, 3119, 3120 [9] |                            |
|        | 3121,                                                           | 3123, 3124, 3125, 3126, 3127, 3128, 3129, 3130 [9] |                            |
|        | 3131, 3132, 3133, 3134, 3135, 3136, 3137, 3138, 3139, 3140 [10] |                                                    |                            |
|        | 3141, 3142, 3143, 3144, 3145, 3146, 3147, 3148, 3149 [9]        |                                                    |                            |
| ICNG-8 | 3201,                                                           | 3205, 3206,                                        | 3209 [3]                   |
|        | 3211, 3212,                                                     | 3214,                                              | 3219, 3220 [4]             |
|        | 3221, 3222, 3223, 3224, 3225, 3226, 3227 [7]                    |                                                    |                            |
| ICNG-B |                                                                 | 3304, 3305, 3306, 3307, 3308, 3309, 3310 [7]       |                            |
|        | 3311, 3312, 3313, 3314, 3315, 3316, 3317, 3318, 3319, 3320 [10] |                                                    |                            |
|        | 3321 [1]                                                        |                                                    |                            |

Accepted [owned by NS] and ready for Passenger Service is 3201.

In Commissioning/Acceptance/Testing are 3214, 3351 & 3352.

3136 returned to Watergrafsmeer on Monday 29th June after for retrofit work.

3201 has been accepted and will enter passenger service soon.

3214 arrived on Sunday 28th June and should be out on test on Tuesday 30th June.

3223 went back into service on Wednesday 24th June after retrofit work.

3225 is at Alstom Brugge for retrofit work.

3308 is out of service due to fire damage in the toilet on 16th May 2026.

Usually one unit is taken to Brugge and one unit is taken back to the Netherlands. On Monday 29th June, the train went empty to Brugge and 3136 was brought back.

# Blast From The Past



It is a Rob Dale photograph of 6333 at Gent St. Pieters. 6333 was involved in a collision in Zelzate on 21st November 1997 and cut up in 1998.



# Belgian Can Can

50 / 144



This week it is the turn of 2126 to be in the Can Can and is seen here in the company of 2368 and 2726 on 22nd March 2003.



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/davybeumer/48453534941>

Photograph and original words by Davy Beumer and modified by Iain Dobson.

Schaarbeek has undergone a great many changes in recent years.

For instance, the role of the WDT Schaarbeek has been phased out. It was once an important place where many locomotive drivers began their careers. This was not just on diesel locomotives as for a long time, electric locomotives were also based there, which were then deployed in freight transport or on the many 'p' trains.

It was there (in the former P depot) that I once came across these three veterans:

2368 entered service on 5 December 1956 as 123.068. It was taken out of service on 12th November 2012 and scrapped just a few months later, in February 2013.

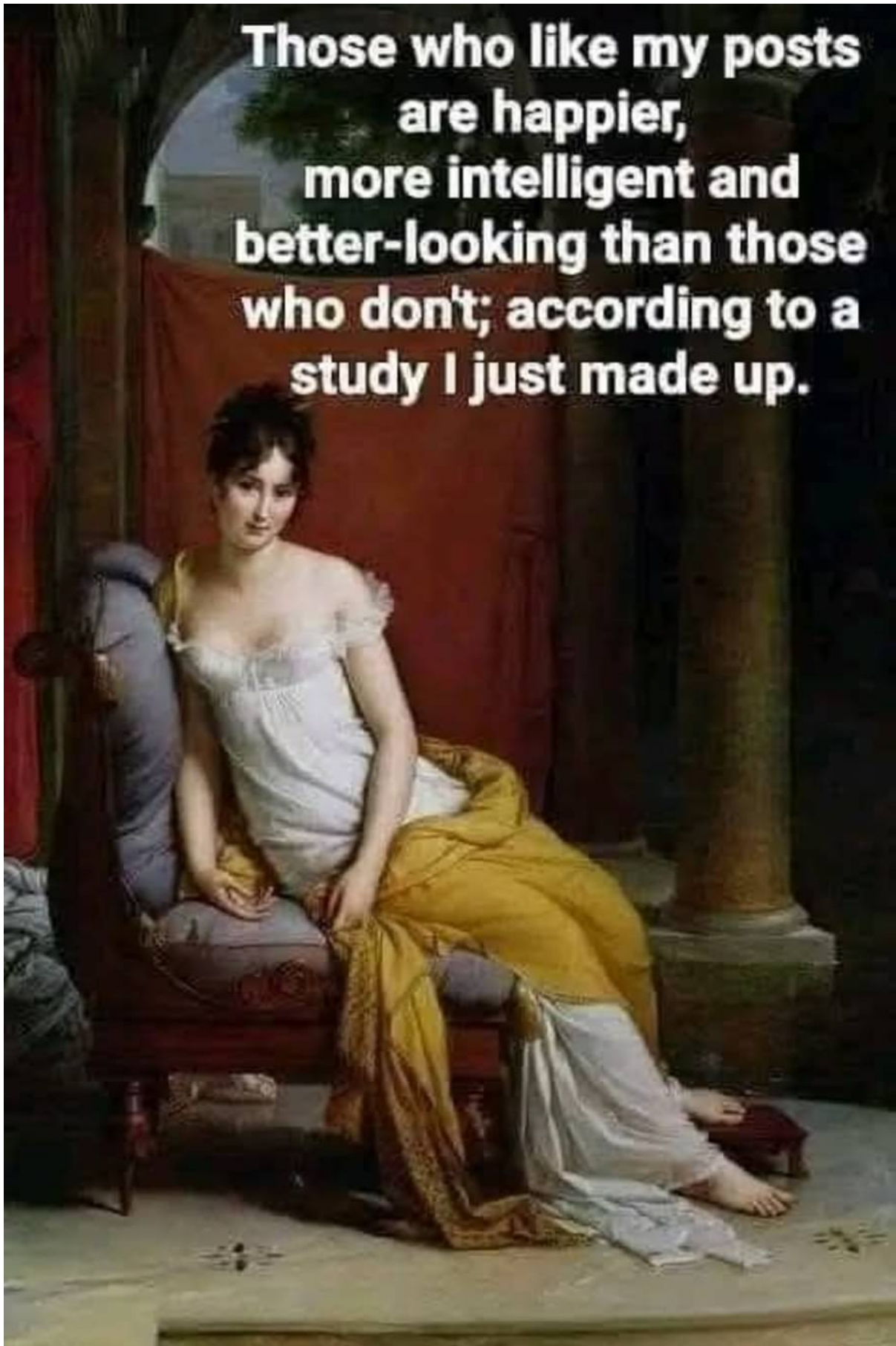
2126 was delivered to NMBS/SNCB on 12th July 1985; it is therefore considerably newer, but its role in Belgium has also come to an end. On 6 May 2014, it was placed in storage and on 8 May 2018 it left for Poland and I suspect was cut up in the first few months of 2026.

The 2726 entered service on 11th November 1982. She was taken from service on 6th May 2022 and is currently in Poland at KoL in Sosnowiec Jęzor. Seen there on 06/05/26.



# Other News

**Those who like my posts  
are happier,  
more intelligent and  
better-looking than those  
who don't; according to a  
study I just made up.**





I have complex,  
layered, emotional  
needs, Charles, that  
you'll never  
understand.

Will a  
donut help?

Oh Charles, this is a  
cheese moment. Must I  
explain everything to  
you?

pwasmemes

Artist: So how would you like to be painted, young lady?

Girl: With my favourite fish

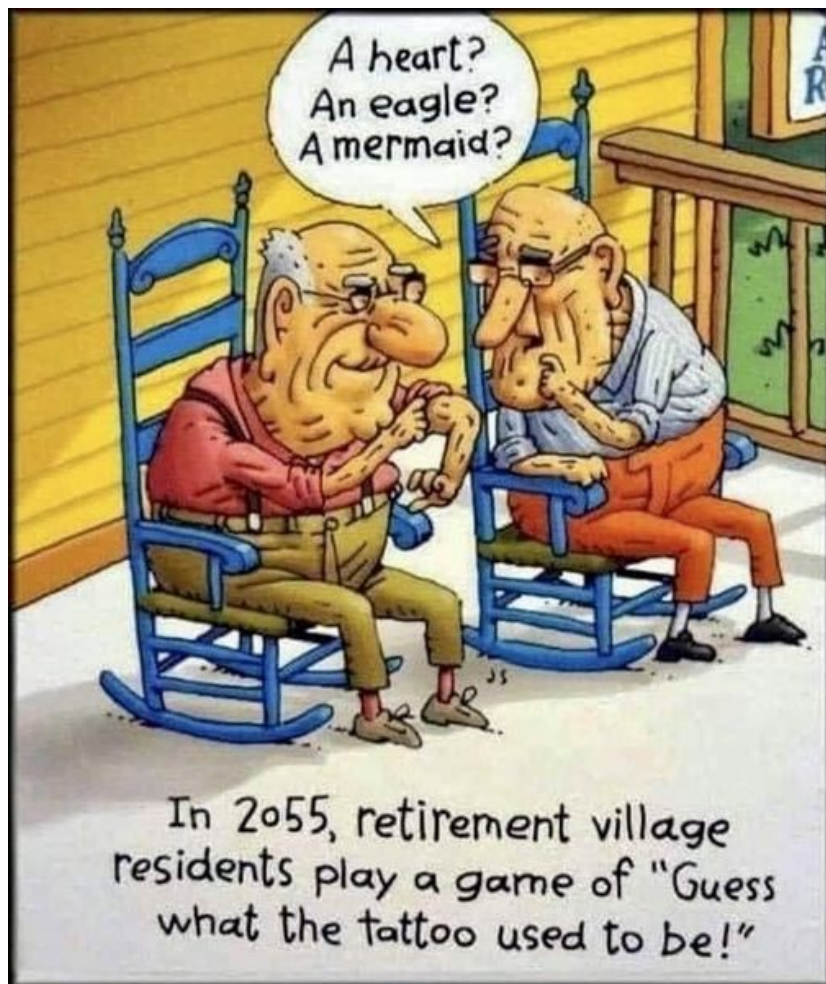
A: Are you sure? It might di--

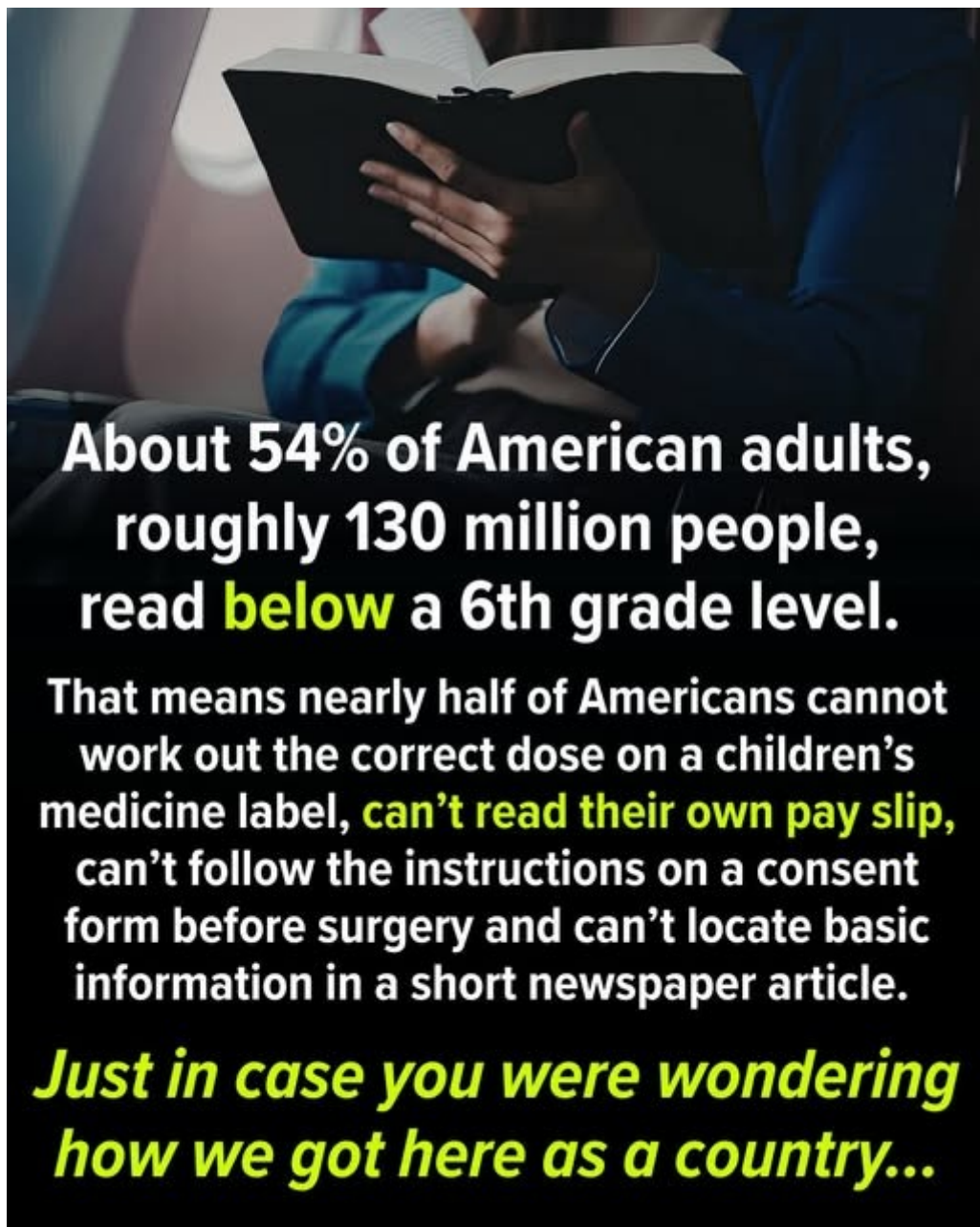
G: WITH MY FISH

A: ... Ok

G: .... And also this drunk cat







**About 54% of American adults,  
roughly 130 million people,  
read **below** a 6th grade level.**

**That means nearly half of Americans cannot  
work out the correct dose on a children's  
medicine label, **can't read their own pay slip**,  
can't follow the instructions on a consent  
form before surgery and can't locate basic  
information in a short newspaper article.**

***Just in case you were wondering  
how we got here as a country...***

6th Grade is 11 – 12 Years Old or Year 7 in England.

Have a nice week

*Iain*