



## Press release: Maldegem Steam Festival 2026

The annual steam festival at the Belgian Maldegem- Eeklo Steam Railway will be a two day event, to be held at Maldegem, Belgium, on Saturday and Sunday 2nd and 3rd of May, 2026.

This winter, the railway has carried out its biggest ever project, replacement of the two main spans and complete restoration of the well know lifting bridge at Balgerhoeke, which has severed the line for some months. The rebuilt bridge will be back in use, resplendent in a new coat of paint, and with a larger axle load permitted.

Planning is proceeding well. There should be 5 locos in steam on standard gauge including, the railway's resident Austerity 0-6-0st WD196 "Errol Lonsdale", 1893 St Leonard built 0-4-0t "Yvonne" which will be working frequent trains to Eeklo double headed with La Meuse built 0-6-0t "Bebert", celebrating her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. The large Krupp Built "Hannibal" class 0-6-0t "Tom", which is now entering her fourth year on loan to Maldegem from the suspended Ijmuiden Steelworks steam train in Holland, will also be a mainstay of services to Eeklo, together with La Meuse built 0-8-0t loco AD09 visiting from the 3 valleys railway (CF3V) at Mariembourg. In addition to the steam locos, resident Class 55 Co-Co diesel 5508 will be present together with a selection of visiting mainline diesel locos from Infrabel and private operators. It is the intention to use some of these to work some services on the preserved line.

On the narrow gauge line, Maldegem's own Hanomag 0-4-0wt "Yvonne", from 1906 will operate a frequent service on the narrow gauge line, together with Kerr Stuart 0-4-0st "Peter Pan", once again crossing the channel to visit from Leighton Buzzard Railway.

This makes a total of 7 steam locos plus diesels in operation.

As usual, there will be an international selection of trade stands and model displays present as well as the popular food and beer terrace outside the workshop.

Maldegem lays about 14km from Bruges on the Belgian –Dutch border and can be reached by train to Eeklo or De Lijn Bus route 50 from Bruges station, both of which offer an hourly service.

For groups wishing to attend, transport from Bruges or Aalter railway station or elsewhere can be arranged by preserved bus.

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