

Zeitschrift: Swiss express : the Swiss Railways Society journal
Herausgeber: Swiss Railways Society
Band: 1 (1986-1987)
Heft: 12

Artikel: Swiss liveries - some observations
Autor: Wheelwright, N.P.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-853713>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 25.01.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

The subject of railway liveries can be highly controversial, being at best a personal, subjective view, and at its worst is reflected in the recent affair of the GWR City of Truro restoration. This is a personal view and it would be interesting to hear other peoples views.

These thoughts have been triggered by my first view 'in the flesh' of the new SBB red livery on a recent (May '85) visit to Switzerland. I am pleased to report that my worst fears, resulting from a few pictures of ex-works locomotives, were not realised. Maybe it was a slight weathering or a more natural light and setting giving a more matt appearance, but I found it quite presentable, especially contrasted with the dark green coaching stock, although it will take some time before I am used to it.

The old green livery could seem drab, especially on the Ae 4/7's but it seemed to suit the Re 4/4^{II}'s, especially in ex-works condition. I also feel that the smaller locomotives were suited to their brown livery which reflected their lowly status. I hope SBB is not making a mistake by associating the humble station pilot with main line express locomotives in the mind of the public.

In contrast, I congratulate SBB on the livery chosen for the Mark IV coach; but I wonder if it was chosen with a green locomotive in mind ?

SBB has experimented with different liveries on the prototype pendelzugs which are running with appropriately painted mark II intermediate trailers. The two - tone green livery is excellent except for the bright red doors and front end. The yellow doors on the blue - liveried unit are not quite so bad. Do people have that much trouble finding the doors and, if so, why not extend one colour the whole height, as on the mark IV's ?

In the wider sphere I am wondering whether the range of liveries, one of the attractions of Swiss railways, may be narrowing. The SBB seems to be following the Rhatische Bahn livery; commonly managed groups are using one livery, eg Biel - Tauffelen - Ins, Oberaargau - Jura Bahn and Solothurn - Niederbipp Bahn; the new pendelzugs delivered to the EBT group are all red and it is quite possible that, following the complete merging of SZB and VBW, a common livery will be used.

The use of a common design of rolling stock by several companies can lead to a cost reduction - this is often specified as a condition of subsidy - and the enthusiast must accept this as part of the survival of many lines, but why must the liveries also be identical ? This is noticeable on the metre gauge two-car units in use by the VBW, SZB, SSIF, FLP (Ponte Tresa). There was a time when it seemed Switzerland would be swamped by this orange and white livery. The Aigle - Sepey - Diablerets and Sudostbahn have railcars painted in this livery and many operators received batches of buses and trolleybuses, of a common pattern, in this livery. It appears Bern may be giving a lead in the right direction. The SVB experimented with several liveries on its bus and trolleybus fleet and has returned, due to the force of public opinion, to its original colours. I hope other operators learn from this experiment.

SWISS RAILWAY SOCIETY BOOK SALES

Railways of the Bernese Oberland.	
English. 72 pages. Numerous photographs.	SF 12.60 / £ 4.95
Panoramic Express Vier Sterne auf Schienen.	
German. 56 pages. 80 photographs.	SF 20.70 / £ 7.60
Die Bahnen der HLS Gruppe. Geschichte und Rollmaterial.	
German. 128 pages. 54 photographs.	SF 26.10 / £10.65
SBB Calendar 1988	£ 4.95
Christmas cards (Langwies Viaduct)	£ 0.25 each
(25p sae to accompany all orders)	
Book, Poster and Slide catalogues.	£ 0.15
(All 4 available for 4 international reply coupons)	
Stickers	
Loco 11103, 10101, or a sheet containing 10103 and 11 freight wagons.	£ 0.20 each
Society Ties	
Navy Blue	£ 3.95

Please include an sae (25p) (minimum 9" x 4") with all communications except book orders.

Payments can be made in Sterling or Swiss Francs. Other currencies surcharge equivalent to SF 8.0. £ payments to SRS, other payments to Giles Baker. Postcheque payments to a/c 80-76213-6 Zuerich : Giles Baker.

Sales Officer: Giles Baker, 2 Anderson Road, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 9NL
Tel: Weybridge (0932) 851056.