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Mailbag

The Trains Still Run

I have just returned from a week at Wilderswil, just south of Interlaken. On the last day of my holiday (17 May) I travelled on a Regionalzug from Spiez at 14:15 southwards to Mullen where I detrained and took the funicular to the top of Niesen Kulm. I do not know whether this is old news or not but in *Swiss Express* Vol 3/1, March 1991 there is a statement to the effect that the BLS were to replace the local services between Spiez and Frutigen with buses.

G.W.Fitzpatrick
Shipley

News from Graubunden

I have recently returned from my 1993 trip to the RhB, herewith a few notes which may be of interest to Society members.

The winter locomotive diagrams show three weekday turns for Ge6/6¹ Nos.411-414 (although 415 is still running around it doesn't get a mention). One operates Landquart - Disentis and back, the other two work the Samedan to Scuol line; there is no diagrammed passenger work. Having said this 411 worked light engine from Landquart to Chur about 19:30 on Monday 19 April.

The line was shut at Klosters for a week until 26 April for the new bridge to be swung into position and the station trackwork remodelled in conjunction with the Verinia tunnel work. As a result of this, freight traffic was diverted via Filisur causing shunting problems there, stock being attached to the rear of the Davos - Filisur - Davos shuttle. The best formation was seen on 20 April when the 17:25 Davos - Filisur was loaded:

BDt 1731, B 2340, AB 1517, B 2339, Ge4/4¹ 607, Gbk-v 5533, Gb 5910, Z° 80, Uah-v 8159, Uah 8174, Uahr 8165, Uah 8175, Uahk-v 8122, an excellent demonstration of the versatility and hauling power of a Ge4/4¹.

On Monday 19 April WR 3816/7, WR 3811 and WR 3810 were sent to Davos for a special train, marshalled at the front of the 17:06 Filisur - Davos. On arrival at Davos they were transferred into a train containing two of the

new FO Panoramic coaches, also present were two BVZ Panoramic coaches and to finish off a number of RhB saloons, three or four.

To round off, on 20 April the following train turned up at Samedan, ex Scuol, behind Ge6/6¹ 413:

Gb 5519, Gb 558?, Gb 5056, Gb 5802, Gb 5046, Uce 8012, Uce 8076, Uce 8023, Uce 8002, Uce 8072, Gak-v 5419, Gak-v 5418, Kk-w 7372, Gb 5814, Gb 5026, Gb 5039, Gbk-v 5570, Uahk-v 8150, Haik-qy 5175, Kk-w 7323, Kk-w 7385, Kk-w 7337, Kk-w 7312, Haik-qy 5164; a total of 24 wagons.

And finally, of all the Uce cement wagons seen during the trip, only two remained in the old small numbered livery.

Glenn Allen
Chatham

Industry at Ste.Croix.

The article on the Yverdon-Ste.Croix Railway prompts me to point out that a world-famous precision engineering company, Paillard SA, had large factories at Yverdon, making Hermes typewriters and at Ste.Croix, initially making musical boxes, later gramophone motors and, most famous of all, from about 1930, Bolex cine equipment. The latter is still considered to set the standard by which others are judged, and Pailliard were probably the largest manufacturers of such equipment in the world.

Following market saturation in the 1960s, Pailliard curtailed the manufacture of cine products and the main factory at Ste.Croix, directly opposite the station exit, once the pride of the company, is now rather a sorry sight.

I was interested to see the figures for recent traffic growth on the line, which coincidentally match the growth of precision manufacturing at Ste.Croix, where the musical box industry, trading under the name of Reuge, has been revived.

Fred Marriot
Brighouse

Observations

We would like to pass on the following observations to fellow members following our

recent visit to Switzerland:

- 1) The PTT have introduced a charge of SFr. 5 per person for travel on Postbuses on *Tourist Lines*. This appears to relate to the main alpine routes. The surcharge is shown in the small print in the Kursbuch. However, when we took the postbus from Andermatt to Airolo and continued an hour later to Oberalp, we were only charged the one supplement each. We can only think of two reasons for this:
 - a) The journey forms part of the *Dreipass-rundfahrt*.
 - b) It was the same crew on both journeys.
- 2) The SBB *Bureau de Change* are now charging a 1% commission fee for changing Swiss Franc Traveller's Cheques. This is a recent imposition as their banks are now charging them for processing such items.
- 3) The Sihlthal-Zürich-Uetliberg-Bahn (SZU) is closed between Sihlbrugg and Sihlwald, the first station up the valley, and a bus service is in operation.

4) There is a bookshop in the underground shopping centre at Luzern Hauptbahnhof selling half price books, including a fine range of railway books.

We tried to use the station restaurants for most of our luncheons and in particular would recommend the following Bahnhof Restaurants:

Rorschach

Rodensdorf - This confirms John Jesson's earlier recommendation.

Waldenburg - This is not part of the station and is on the opposite side of the road, behind a hedge and is easily missed when leaving the station.

Airolo

Ron Dawes
London

Modelling the Bernina line

I have, for the past year, been planning a model layout based on the Bernina line between Pontresina and Alp Grüm. I am however disappointed to discover the lack of suitable motive power at a reasonable commercial price.

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Bemo offer an excellent range of rolling stock, including the Bernina Express and the older short-length rolling stock, but none of the present range of locomotives and railcars could in real life proceed onto the 1000 v dc system from St.Moritz to Tirano.

Could we not persuade Bemo to produce models of the centre-door railcars 41-49 and 51-56 and the diesel/DC electric locomotives 801-2, which operate the trains on this spectacular line? Have any other SRS members found an answer to this problem?

David Arthur

Biggar.

Editor's comment

To put a model into quantity production at the sort of price Bemo charge implies a large run. If we turn the situation around, just as the AC motive power cannot operate over the Bernina line, so, with the exception of the two Gem4/4 electro-diesels, Bernina motive power cannot operate on the same lines as the existing range of AC models. Hence models of the Bernina railcars would have a limited sale, since the essence of HOM is that it mainly appeals to the more discerning modeller who places a very high priority on prototype authenticity. This of course does not apply to the coaches which can and do run over the AC lines and can therefore be hauled by AC locomotives.

As a result, Bernina railcar models can only be economically produced by the more costly method of hand assembly from etched parts, or alternatively, scratchbuilt by the modeller.

David Arthur has come up against a dilemma that is not confined to HOM, but applies over the entire range of the hobby. Put bluntly and in simple terms, if you wish to base a model railway on ready-to-run locomotives and rolling stock you must select a prototype which is supported by ready-to-run manufacturers. Furthermore, even if you are prepared to assemble kits or make use of the more expensive hand-assembled models, you still are confined to what is on offer by the Trade. The only modeller with an absolutely free choice of prototype and period is the scratch-builder.

The Bernina is a superb prototype for the scenic modeller, but it must be understood that

the only item of motive power suitable for quantity production is the Gem4/4, which is not only capable of running over the AC routes, but is almost identical to the FO HGm4/4 and could form part of a linked pair as is the case in Om. However, the forthcoming Ge4/4^{III} is the most likely candidate for early production, since, apart for the bulk order for the RhB, similar locomotives are on order for other metre gauge lines.

Bemo in 1:1 Scale

Bemo have recently introduced a version of their RhB box van with their name and a perspective view of a van on its side. It appears to be another example of a publicity model, rather more adventurously designed than the usual run of such items.

We had this impression until the morning of 22 June when, on a journey from Chur to Landquart we saw the original, as large as life, in the sidings at our destination. Unfortunately we weren't expecting anything special on that side and before the cameras could be swung round, it was out of view.

Truly, there is a prototype for everything.

SBB Stock Changes

New locomotives up to the end of April 1993:

Re4/4 450.061

Re4/4 460.014-017, 035-041, 060

Withdrawn:

Ae3/6^I 10699

Tel^I 34, 46, 50

Tm^{II} 735

Be4/6 1608

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Bemo HOM code 100 track. 1 green RhB coach, 5 MOB wagons. All new & boxed. Phone 043871 6958