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The Later Years

by M.South

Continued from page 17 March 1991 issue

Now back to the ex-Mitropa cars. With the complete collapse of the foreign tourist trade in Switzerland due to the Second World War, the Bernina Mitropa Dining/Parlour Cars B^{4U} Nos.161-162, together with the 4-wheeled Kitchen Car X^U No.31 were withdrawn in 1940. Additionally, dwindling traffic and consequent financial difficulties had caused the RhB to take over management of the BB from 1 January 1942. Full amalgamation of the two systems into a unified RhB took place on 1 January 1943.

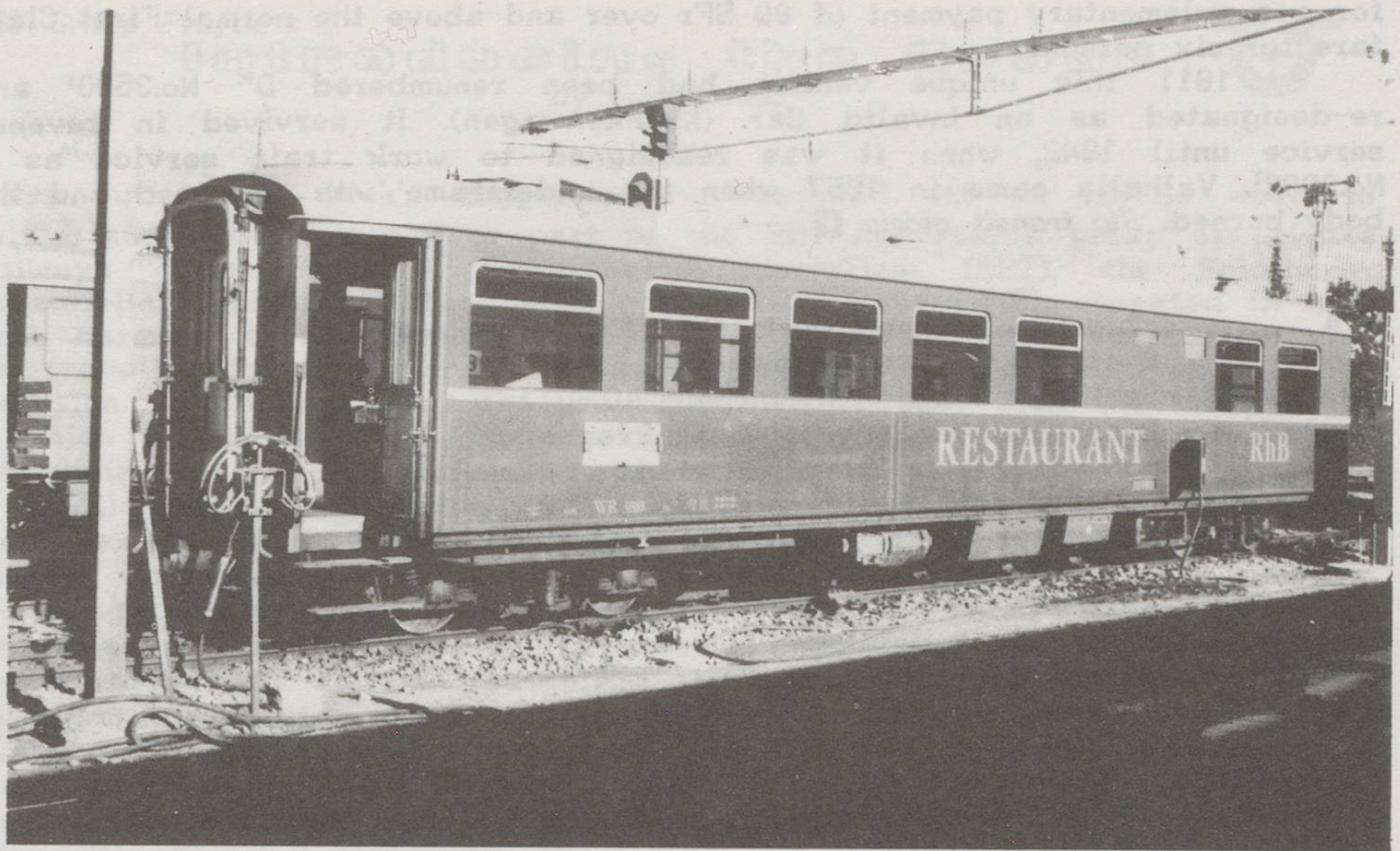
During 1940, the Kitchen Car X^U No.31 was rebuilt into a single ended electrically powered twin-rotary snowplough, initially numbered X 1003 in the BB's stock lists. Power is taken from a pantograph, originally of diamond pattern but now of the single-arm type. With the RhB takeover in 1943, this snowplough was renumbered X^E No.1115 until 1950 when it was again renumbered Xrote No.9215. At first allocated to Pontresina depot, by January 1973 it had been relegated to reserve status at Landquart.

The Bernina Mitropa Dining/Parlour Cars B^{4U} Nos.161-162 were rebuilt in 1943 with Kitchen accommodation as WR Nos.3813-3814, thereby reducing their seating capacity from 36 to 30. Unfortunately, since rebuilding neither car seems to have been run on the Bernina line, being used only on RhB main lines and, from 1969 onwards, when new rack brake gear equipped FFA bogies were fitted, on interworkings with the Furka-Oberalp Railway.

The RhB Mitropa Restaurant Cars D^{4RU} Nos.10-12 were purchased from Mitropa by the RhB in 1944, but did not acquire their present numbers, WR 3810-3812 until the mid 1950s. In the late 1970s their kitchens were extensively modernised with microwave cooking facilities, the external windows of the food preparation area being somewhat altered in the process.

Apart from special workings, all five cars concentrate their time on express workings between Chur and St.Moritz as well as on the much expanded *Glacier Express* services as far as Andermatt on the FO. Services (plural) because by the mid 1970s, the Swiss had come to realise the immensely marketable cachet which now attached itself to the "world's slowest express train". In 1984 the RhB took delivery of WR 3815, a 21 tonne, 36 seat, 18.5m over couplers brand new Restaurant Car from FFA. Body profile, with tucked in ends and corrugated roof, is similar to previous standard FFA coaches for the RhB and other Swiss metre gauge systems. However, there is only one end vestibule, with supplies to the kitchen area being passed through small bodyside hatches below the waist, and the main windows at 830mm deep are somewhat shallower than the standard 950mm FFA coach windows. The need for this car was occasioned by the canny RhB and FO managements realising that increasing numbers of tourists wanted to ride the prestige *Glacier Express*, to the detriment of loadings on other through Zermatt-Chur trains. Hence, from 1985 all the through trains on this route were labelled *Glacier Express*. The principles and principals outlined at the start of the first part are clearly alive and well, even if the target market has shifted slightly!

And still the *Glacier Express* continued to grow, with the "narrow gauge dining car experience" as a very important part of the total package. So towards the end of 1987 the RhB put into service a new 34m overall twin-car Restaurant set from SWA, WR 3816 is the 20.6 tonne Kitchen Car, with WR 3817 the accompanying 36 seat, 18.4 tonne pantograph equipped Dining Saloon. In winter the set runs between St.Moritz and Scuol-Tarasp, whilst in summer it is to be found on the *Glacier Express(es)* diagram working as far as Disentis. Externally they are painted in the striking modern RhB red with



RhB Restaurant Car at Chur, 17 February 1988.

Photo Alan Pike

black window stripe and silver waistline livery. The only jarring note is the large silver block capitals **RESTAURANT** which spreads over the two cars which clashes badly with the Helvetica Medium of the RhB "flying snail" logo. This poor choice of face is shared with the other new and modernised RhB Restaurant Cars. What a pity they could not have used the imaginative coffee cup, croissant and wineglass logo carried by the cars of the Bodensee-Toggenburg-Bahn. But then I am a heretic who still prefers the Belle Epoque squared off lettering used to such effect on the original *Mitropa* cars!

To round off our story, two other vehicles should be mentioned. First there is WR-S 3820, a single open-end platform bogie Bar Car (Bar Wagen), based on Chur and used for hockey-fan specials. It was converted in 1981 from Postal Car Zo 80, first built by SWS in 1913 and then drastically modernised in 1960. It is painted in the overall two-tone advertising livery of a local brewery, *Calanda Brau*, including their golden lion rampant logo on all four sides.

Our final vehicle, A⁵ No 5, would make a most unusual conversation stopping model, it is nothing short of a tragedy that the prototype was not preserved. It was a four-wheeled combined Saloon and Sleeping Car (Sclaf und Salonwagen), built in the workshops of the RhB constituent, the Landquart-Davos-Bahn, in 1894/5 on an existing freight wagon underframe. The interior consisted of two sections, a sleeping compartment with one bed and two chairs, plus a full width saloon with six well padded seats, the two sections being divided by a communal lavatory. The interesting feature of the car was the roofed, yet open sided walkway alongside the sleeping compartment, which did not run down to the full width of the car, as did the saloon compartment. Passengers making their way down this walkway were prevented from falling off by a waist high open wrought iron scrollwork screen. Presumably introduced to cater for wealthy, if weary personages arriving at Chur to take the Alpine cure, the car could be booked by anybody

for a supplementary payment of 80 SFr over and above the normal First Class fare for six persons.

By 1911 this unique vehicle had been renumbered D^K No.3500¹ and re-designated as an Invalid Car (Krankenwagen). It survived in revenue service until 1942, when it was reassigned to work train service as X No.9032¹. Valhalla came in 1957 when the underframe was scrapped and the body burned. *Sic transit gloria* ☞

Key

FFA	Flug-und Fahrzeugwerke AG of Altenrhein, Switzerland, later became
SWA	Schindler Waggon Altenrhein AG
Ringhoffer	Ringhoffer of Smichow, near Prague
SIG	Schweizer Industriegesellschaft of Neuhausen am Rheinfall, Switzerland
SWS	Schweizer Waggon und Aufzugfabrik AG of Schlieren, Switzerland

Scale models of the Cars mentioned

RhB Saloon Cars As Nos 1141-1144

BEMO	H0m	Plastic RTR, red/cream livery and green/cream livery+
Ferro-Suisse	H0m	Brass RTR, red livery*@
Ferro-Suisse	Om	Brass RTR, red livery*@
Fulgurex	Om	Brass RTR, red livery* and green/cream livery*

RhB Restaurant Car WR 3810

Ferro-Suisse	H0m	Brass RTR, red livery*@
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RhB Restaurant Cars WR 3813-3814

Bemo	H0m	Plastic RTR, red livery
Ferro-Suisse	H0m	Brass RTR, red livery@
UTZ	Om	Plastic RTR, red livery

RhB Restaurant Car WR 3815

LGB	G scale	Plastic RTR, red livery, underscale length
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MOB Pullman Cars AB4u Nos 103-106

Fulgurex	H0m	Brass RTR, blue/cream livery*
Fulgurex	Om	Brass RTR, blue/cream livery*

MOB Electric Locomotives FZe 6/6 2001-2002

Fulgurex	H0m	Brass RTR, blue/cream livery*
Fulgurex	Om	Brass RTR, blue cream livery*
Lemaco	G scale	Brass RTR

* Out of production + Limited edition @ Also as a kit

Markin produced a tinplate version of A¹ No.5 from 1909-20. Editor

BEMO H0m restaurant car.

Photo C.J.Freezer

