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Closing lines?

by Steve Horobin

Photographs by the author

Last April, while touring Germany, I made a short diversion for a few days to Switzerland to travel over and photograph lines threatened with closure which had been previously reported in *Swiss Express*.

I reached Switzerland via the Rhine route, arriving at Basel on the Eurocity *Verdi* and walked straight across to the adjacent platform for a Schnellzug to Olten. From there I continued on to Solothurn and changed for the threatened line to Lyss. The service was operated by Re4/4¹ no.10048, and was well patronised as far as Arch. After this it ran nearly empty to Buren an der Aare, after which passenger number increased at all stations to Lyss.

At Lyss I spent some time observing the general railway scene before travelling to my hotel in Oensingen the long way round via Murten, then the GFM to Fribourg, where the SBB bahnhof is undergoing major reconstruction. I had dinners in the Spiesewagen on a Genève Airport - Zürich Intercity train, finally arriving at my hotel close to midnight.

Koblenz BDe4/4 1640 and DB 793 railbus 8 April 1994.

The next day I went to photograph the street section of the Aigle-Ollon-Monthey-Champéry (AOMC) at Aigle and found a good spot by walking through the main street and turning right, arriving at a road junction by a petrol station with the AOMC on one side and the Aigle-Sépey-Diablerets (ASD) on the other side. If you arrive here just before the hour you can photograph trains on both railways within a couple of minutes of each other.

On the final day of my visit I went to Laufenberg via Olten and Basel. At Rheinfelden there is a purpose-built railway station for the Feldschlössen Brewery railway, which operates chartered steam specials.

A change is necessary at Laufenberg for the threatened section to Koblenz. This was operated by BDe4/4 railcar No.1640, dating from the 1950s. This stretch of line runs close to the Rhine and I was interested to see that world War II defences were still evident. One can easily imagine the tension that existed in this border region during the war; I almost expected to see a British prisoner-of-war swimming to freedom!



Koblenz is one of those places where everything happens over a ten minute spell and then all is quiet for the next fifty. SBB trains arrive and depart in four directions, while Koblenz is an international station with a line to Waldshut in Germany, operated by a DB class 798 railbus.

I bought a single ticket for Sfr.3.80 and boarded the railbus, which was well patronised by workers who had arrived on the Baden service. On leaving Koblenz the railbus crosses over the tracks of the Bulach line, then curves round some 90 degrees through a tunnel, recrossing the Bulach line before passing over the Rhine on a long steel bridge and thence into Germany.

In the 1994-5 Kursbuch, through trains on the Koblenz-Laufenberg line have been replaced by buses and trains only run as far as Buren an der Aare from Lyss, the remainder of the service to Solothurn is again by bus.

It has been suggested that the Oensingen-Balsthal-Bahn (OeBB) might operate a service to Lyss, so hopefully in the near future this service will be reinstated to its full length.

AOMC; BDeh4/4 No 1 *Vaud* in Aigle 7 April 1994

Cover Picture

The ICE trains are now a familiar sight at Zürich and, with the start of the summer timetable, one of the daily Berlin to Basel runs will be extended to Interlaken and a weekend Hamburg to Basel service will extend to Luzern.

An ICE journey that is unlikely to be repeated recently took place. A set commissioned for publicity purposes ran alongside Lac Lemán and was posed near Château de Chillon for photography. The following day it was to be found at le Bouveret, when our cover photo, kindly supplied by a good friend in the SBB, was taken, we believe from the overbridge at Collombey which carries Aigle-Ollon-Monthey-Champéry line over the St.Maurice-le Bouveret line. Our thanks go to SBB Archiv for this photo which, we believe, has not been published elsewhere.