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Locomotive Profile; SBB Re4/4 IV

A brief history of the class and a few notes about the Roco HO model

by Peter Marriott. Photo of model by author.

On 6 December 1987 the Swiss people voted in favour of Rail & Bus 2000 which would provide more direct and comfortable journeys, and better integration between railway and bus services. The intention of the referendum vote was to make public transport more attractive to the travelling public including regular timetabling of trains and faster journey times.

One class of Swiss Federal Railways locomotives to carry the Bahn 2000 livery was the Re 4/4 IV. These electric locomotives were ordered in 1978 and introduced into service in 1982. The electrical parts were supplied by Brown Boveri & Co. (BBC) with the mechanical parts built by Swiss Locomotive & Machine Works (SLM).

The original four prototype Re 4/4 IV Bo-Bo mixed traffic locomotives were intended to form the basis of a class that may have extended to 40 or 50 locos but because political and technical developments had taken place between the ordering and construction of the machines it transpired that the class was limited to the initial production run of four locomotives.

At the time of their introduction upon SBB rails in 1982 they were the most technically advanced of all Swiss mainline motive power. Using thyristors with solid state power control and dc

traction motors a power output of 4960 kW was achieved. Subsequently the Re 4/4 Class 460 introduced from 1990 locomotives have exceeded this.

The Re 4/4 IV class has been adorned in various liveries throughout its 14 year life. Whilst red and white have been the main colours the extent of each colour has varied widely. The large Bahn, Rail, Ferrovia 2000 lettering was carried on the bodysides with 2000 centrally emblazoned on the cab front but this was subsequently replaced by the smaller SBB CFF FFS lettering and a large SBB arrow emblem on the side with the locomotive number on the cab front on the right hand side.

In the last few years members of the class could be seen on the Brig to Bern Lotschberg line and also on the Geneva to Italy, via Brig route. This has now changed because, as reported in Swiss Express, 10102 was tested on the lines of the Sud Ost Bahn (SOB) in 1995 with a view to exchanging the non-standard 4 Re 4/4 VI locomotives with 4 Re 4/4 III locomotives of the SOB. This exchange has now taken place.

Whilst researching these notes I came across an official SBB booklet entitled "Railway Springtime" published in 1990 and it was interesting to see that the Re 4/4 IV locomotive



in Bahn 2000 livery was featured on the front and back covers plus 9 times within 62 pages. At that time it was popular with SBB's publicity department but they have now been exchanged for locos of a small railway company! How times change. At the time of writing the Class 460 locomotive is the motive power flagship of the SBB and is featured in most of their advertising literature.

For HO modellers Roco retail a model of this class in both the bold Bahn 2000 livery and the later SBB red colours with the large arrow emblem. The model is well detailed and as with most Roco products (in my experience) possesses superb running performance. One cab end is fitted with a driver and the instructions provided show how to install a chip for digital power supply. It may be operated from the track or catenary current, and is supplied with a detailing pack which includes transfers of the bodyside shields.

For modellers with a BLS 1980/1990's based layout the SBB Re 4/4 IV would make a welcome change from the usual procession of chocolate BLS locomotives! On a SBB based layout it would provide an alternative to the more familiar Re 4/4 locomotive classes. Being a mixed traffic locomotive its versatility is useful.

Above: Now repainted in SUDOSTBAHN livery, Re4/4 446 448-3 seen here with a goods train in September 1995.

Photo: Les Heath

Faszination Rhätische Bahn

These trips are organised by the Hotel Stolzenfels in Davos Dorf, Andreas & Elisabeth Jenny who have advertised with the Society for many years run these trips, quite a few of our members have been on the trips and have returned with glowing reports of the special coaches, engines etc. that have been used, visits to facilities etc. The Hotel also has a large model railway.

The dates I have are:-

5 - 8 April (Easter)

Gourmet meals on the railway.

31 August - 7 September

Railway photography in Graubunden.

Summer dates also.

Further information from the Hotel Stolzenfels see their ad on page 49 for address.