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New RhB Locomotive

As briefly reported in *Swiss Express* 4/1 the first of the new Rhaetian Railway Ge4/4^{III} locomotives has arrived in Graubünden and has been undergoing trials. These, are aimed at establishing the true guiding forces on straight and curved tracks, the drawbar load, the functioning of electrical and mechanical components, the braking power and the savings to be obtained by the regenerative brake on the long steep descents of the Albula and Davos-Landquart routes. Moreover drivers have to be familiarised with the new technology incorporated in these locomotives. The tests, we understand, should be now complete and the rest of the class will be rolling off the production line and entering revenue service in the immediate future.

The class will comprise nine locomotives:

641	<i>Maiefeld</i>
642	<i>Briel/Brigels</i>
643	<i>Vals</i>
644	<i>Savognin</i>
645	<i>Tujetsch</i>
646	<i>St.Maria/Val Müstair</i>
647	<i>Grüsch</i>
648	<i>Susch</i>
649	<i>Lavin</i>

The locomotives are similar in electrical concept to the well proven standard gauge machines on the BT, EBT and SZU. Self-steering radial adjusting wheelsets have been adopted. It is hoped to have six of the class in service this year.

When the class is fully in service, two of the machines will eventually be allocated to the car carrier trains through the Vereinia Tunnel. The rest of the class will be put onto the more prestigious and heavily laden passenger services, eliminating the need for double heading. The Ge6/6^{II} articulated locomotives will then be largely used for freight services, while the refurbished Ge4/4^s will be mainly used on pendulzug duties, with some of the class going to the Arosa line when the new route into Chur has been built and the line converted to ac traction. The Ge4/4^{II} will continue to be the railway's mainstay, heading passenger trains and substituting for failed locomotives elsewhere. The remaining Ge6/6^I *Baby Kroks* will be in semi-retirement for use on special trains.

A full description of the new locomotives is in preparation by our President.

Out in the Branches

With summer almost here thoughts must be turning to holidays. No doubt Swiss Railways will be on member's minds with possibilities for visiting old favourites or going somewhere completely new. There can surely be no better way of getting ideas on new places than by attending a meeting of your local Branch.

At the London Branch there are to be specific railway talks on the BLS and the Jungfraubahn, with more general ones entitled "Switzerland from another angle" and "Swiss trains in the '70s".

In addition there will be member's slide evenings on North East Switzerland, "No Trains" for those who admire the scenery through which the trains travel and the ever popular "Foreign Night" which officially covers countries adjoining Switzerland and Swiss equipment in other countries, but has been stretched to include the Himalaya-Darjeeling on

the grounds that it is a mountain railway with loops.

These evenings are a great opportunity to show off your recent photographs and new photographers are assured of a warm welcome.

Keep an eye open on page 4 of *Swiss Express* and make a note in your diary (London meetings are on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, 18:30 for 19:00 start).

Important Notice

Members' attention is drawn to the change of Membership Secretary. This important post is now held by: Brian J. Hemming, 3 Little Heath Road, Chobham, Woking, Surrey GU24 8RP

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