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Autor: Jesson, John
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The SBB in HO (again)

The continuing saga of the Nitpicker

by John Jesson

Back in 1985, the then Editor of *Swiss Express*, Alan Ramage, persuaded me to write something for the magazine. What developed was known as the *Nitpickers Guide to a Better Bahn*, a critical look at the SBB stock available in HO gauge, with suggestions as to what could be done to make it a little better.

Our current editor, Cyril Freezer, has commented, both in the magazine and to me, that he is perpetually short of model material, and I sort of promised to do something about it. This, then, is intended to be the resurrection of the *Nitpickers Guide*, an occasional series dedicated to the modeller of the SBB in 1:87 scale.

For the benefit of more recent members, the original series covered, mainly, coaching stock, as listed here:

Part 1, Vol.1, no.4, Roco EW-II stock

Part 2, Vol.1, no.5, Lima EW-II BDt

Part 3, Vol.1, no.6, Lima BLS-Schlieren stock

Part 4, Vol.1, no.7, Liliput & Jouef RIC stock

Part 5, Vol.1, no.8, Liliput Leichtstahl stock

Part 6, Vol.2, no.1, Lima EW-I stock

Part 7, Vol.2, no.3, Liliput EW-III *Swiss Express* stock

Part 8, Vol.2, no.5, Lima Re 4/4 *Swiss Express*

Although not published as parts of the *Nitpicker's Guide*, the following could have come under that heading:

Vol.1, no.9, Lima RAe TEE set

Vol.1, no.11 & 12, Lima Re 6/6

The passage of years has brought developments, some good, some bad, so this instalment will look at those developments and update the original articles.

ROCO EW-II stock

The main development has been the introduction of the AB composite vehicle, to complement the Liliput NPZ EMU set.

This was originally available in NPZ green/green, NPZ blue/grey and SBB green with new logo and inscriptions. Since then, the NPZ green/green version has been discontinued, but a version with the earlier inscriptions has been briefly available as a special run.

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The A, B and D vehicles are only listed with the new logo and inscriptions, but can be found in Switzerland in the earlier livery, and also (A & B only) with the turquoise stripe along the lower bodyside, denoting a refurbished vehicle. The postal van (Z) is only available in its current livery, with the SBP serial number and Swiss Cross on a cream bar.

LIMA EW-II BDt

This model has been re-introduced with much better bogies. Those now fitted are those from the EW-I stock, which are still incorrect for the vehicle, but look at least half right. The height has also been reduced, and I would now do little to the model apart from the painting described in the original article.

Two versions are available; new inscriptions with green driving cab, and new inscriptions with red cab.

LIMA BLS-Schlieren stock

The original coach is still listed by Lima, and still has incorrect bogies and the old style of inscriptions. However, two other versions have been introduced, both HUPAC couchette vehicles. One version is finished in pale blue, the other is in white. Both are fitted with EW-I bogies.

The 1994 Nürnberg Toy Fair has brought the standard 2nd class coach fitted with EW-I bogies. This removes the bulk of the work done to the original coach, but it remains to be seen if the coach height is better than the old model.

LILIPUT & JOUEF RIC stock

Developments with this stock are mostly bad. The only good point is the introduction by Jouef of the Dms luggage van. The other Jouef vehicles, after a spell out of production, returned with interiors and a hefty price rise. Liliput, as is well-known, went out of business a couple of years ago and, since then, various firms and individuals have been chasing the moulds around Europe. Many (but, it is believed, by no

means all) of the moulds are now in the possession of Kader who, through their subsidiary, Bachmann UK, are re-introducing some of the ex-Liliput models. The rest of the moulds are reputed to be still Austrian-owned and may appear eventually under a new name. Bachmann would seem to have the moulds for the RIC stock but have, so far, only announced the couchette vehicle in the latest "moon & stars" livery.

The February 1994 issue of LOKI contained an article on this stock and the HO models available.

LILIPUT Leichtstahl stock

Bachmann are to re-introduce this stock, including the restaurant car.

LIMA EW-I stock

When the original article was written, only one coach was available from Lima, the EW-I B, and in only one livery, the later version with red/white logo. Since then, just about every variation has been introduced. Now available are:

9518 - B with full-size drop windows in old livery

9516 - A with full-size drop windows in old livery

9268 - B with full-size drop windows in new livery

9297 - A with full-size drop windows in new livery

9520 - B with half-windows in new livery

9272 - B with standard doors in NPZ livery

9670 - B with flush doors in NPZ livery

The same coaches are also available, with different roof mouldings, for the BLS and Bodensee-Toggenberg and, announced at the 1994 Toy Fair, for the Gürbetal-Bern-Schwarzenburg and Sensetalbahn.

Other variations have been available, but are now discontinued:

B with half-windows in old livery

B with standard doors in NPZ livery

B with standard doors in green/green NPZ livery

One of my original criticisms was the wobbly wheels. I said at the time that I may have got a bad one, and that seems to have

been the case, as other examples I have are fine.

LILIPUT EW-III Swiss Express stock

The 1st and 2nd class vehicles are being reintroduced by Bachmann, but only in the current livery. The restaurant car is being reintroduced in the new purple/white/pink *Le Buffet Suisse* livery. The AD has not been announced for reintroduction so far, but this is not surprising, as there would be little point without reintroducing the coaches in their original livery.

LIMA Re 4/4" Swiss Express

The base model for this version is no longer available from Lima, but the Re 4/4" is still available. If anyone wished to do the *Swiss Express* orange/grey loco, the green version (8157) would be best, as the red version (8398), as well as an improved motor and chassis, has the new rectangular headlights.

LIMA RAe TEE set

In addition to the TEE-liveried set, the EC version is now available. The original model contained window-mounted destination signs for the *Cisalpin* & *Gottardo* services, while the EC "grey mouse" is listed in the catalogue as *Manzoni* & *Flèche d'argent*.

LIMA Re 6/6

Of the four models originally produced, only the green 11605 *Uster* is still listed. However, two new red versions, with rectangular headlights and new pantographs and 5-pole motor, have been introduced:

8409 - 11672 *Balerna*

8397 - 11611 *Rüti* with chrome trim at one end.

The question you will no doubt be asking is, where do we go from here? There is still some passenger stock to be covered, and plenty of locomotives. Freight wagons are an almost bottomless pit, and there are one or two conversions and rebuildings cluttering up my workbench which might be of interest.

Subject to the tolerance of the Editor and you, the members, the series could last for rather a long time, but will probably miss an issue here and there.