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Visit to the MOB

by Les Heath

On the 29th March a new locomotive was delivered to the MOB at Zweisimmen, it arrived on a narrow gauge transporter wagon from the works of SLM. It had been rumoured to be a dual voltage engine to pull the panoramic expresses from Montreux to Meiringen on the Brünig line, via Speiz and Interlaken West and Ost. This is after the third rail has been installed between Zweisimmen and Interlaken Ost, (the company is confident this will happen when the money is available). On a recent visit at the end of April, I was fortunate enough to be allowed to photograph the new loco Ge4/4 8001 in the mountains above Montreux where it was undergoing tests coupled to GDe 4/4 6002 near to Les Avant. It is the first of four new Ge4/4 locomotives for the MOB. It is single voltage at present, but there are arrangements to return the locomotives to SLM for the electrical equipment to be modified to the BLS/SBB system under which it would have run to Interlaken Ost.

I was also allowed to photograph for the Swiss

Above: Ge4/4 8001 on right and 8002 in Chernex works.

10th May 1995

Photo: author

Express, the work being carried out in the workshops at Chernex. The super panoramic express coaches and driving trailers are being completely stripped down and re-furbished. They are being painted in similar colours to the Crystal Panoramic Express, dark blue top and cream bottom, ready for the NEW Golden Panoramic Express. All the vehicles that pass through the workshop are leaving fully compatible to the electrical and brake systems of the Brünig, BOB and LSE rolling stock and locomotives, (the pipes and connectors on the same sides). The couplings are of a block system that can be removed overnight and the Brünig type of automatic couplings fitted.

Having ridden in the super panoramic coaches I can highly recommend the trip as the comfort is superb, the coaches are very light with roof windows allowing excellent views of the magnificent scenery that rolls past. There is also an excellent bar car supplying coffee and stronger refreshments. This was my first trip on



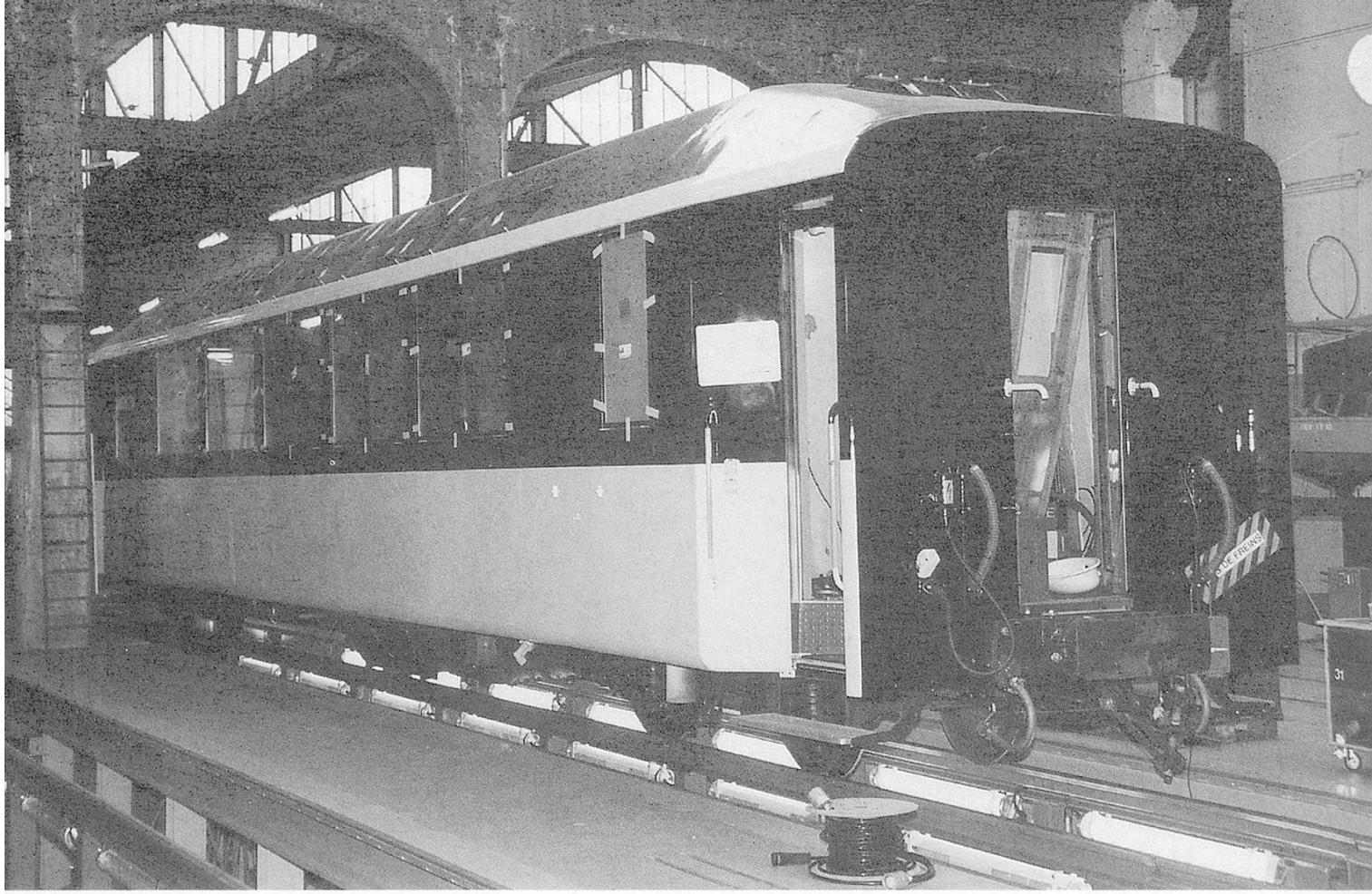
Above: Ge4/4 8002 on its way from SLM seen here at Zürich Seebach station. Photo: Beat Feller.

the line, but not my last. One interesting point to note is the large assortment of goods vans in advertising livery that brighten up the stations as you pass through.

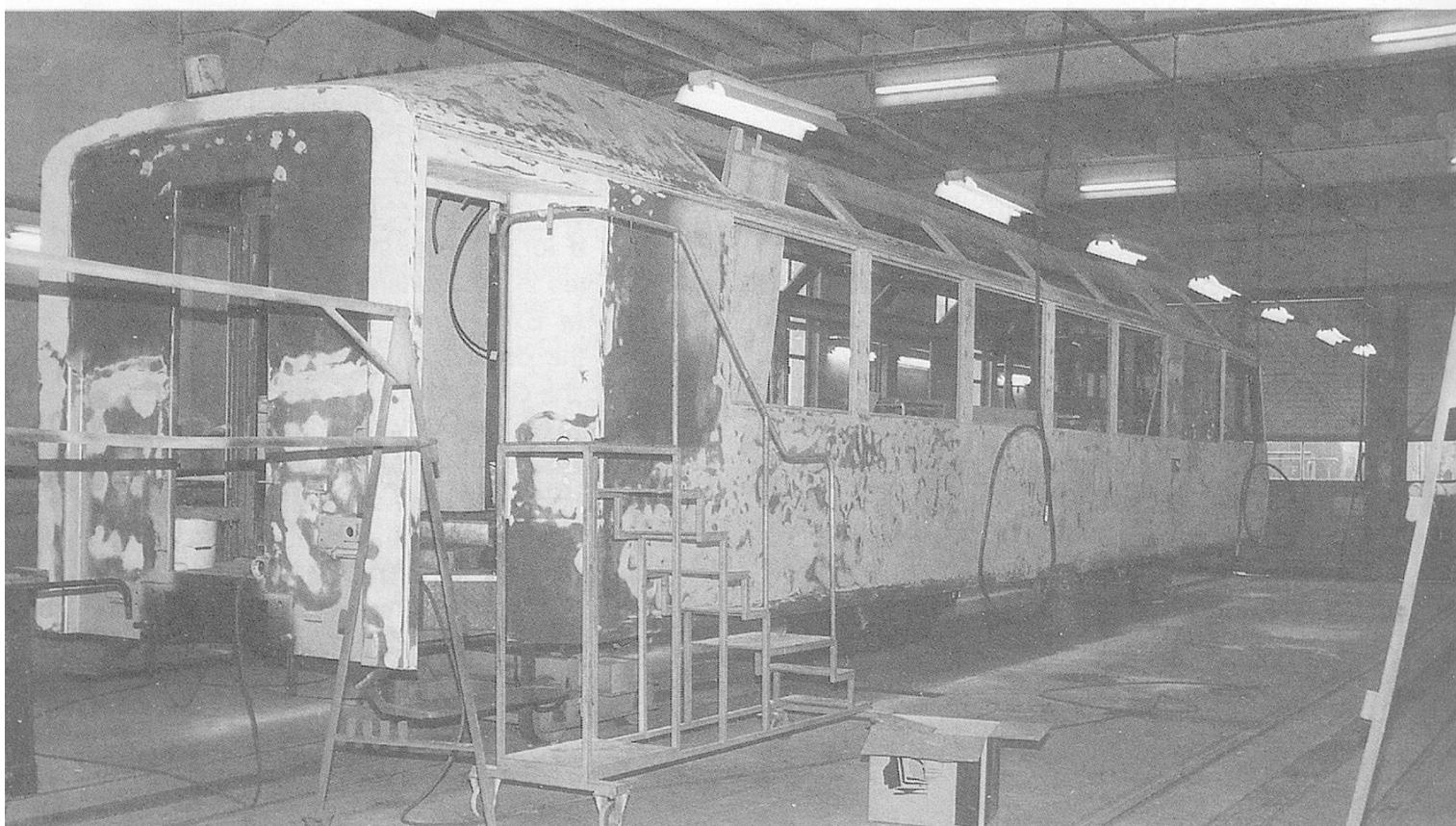
Getting back to technical matters, with the introduction of the 8000 series locomotives, it caused a problem as they have no luggage compartment unlike other locomotives and railcars on the MOB. The answer has been to convert two of their old balcony end coaches B205 and B206, also a great deal cheaper than buying new coaches. The original chassis were lengthened for the baggage compartment at one end, and plug doors are fitted at the other end for access to the second class compartment. These have now been classified BD205 and BD206, also a toilet compartment has been added. The baggage compartment is equipped to handle bicycles, they are also fitted with a speaker system for the driver or guard to talk to passengers or play music if used in private charter.

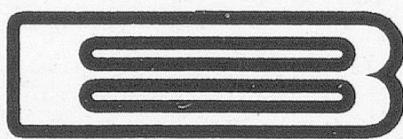
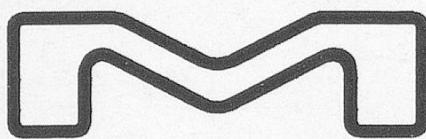
On the 10th May I was visiting Zweisimmen and was told of the arrival of Ge4/4 8002 on the 2nd of May. After a few enquiries, I was told that the 'Swiss Express' would be allowed to photograph 8001 and 8002 in the depot at Chernex - the Swiss Railways Society has gained a lot of respect amongst the railway companies in Switzerland. In the next issue of the Swiss Express we have been allowed to publish the drawings of B203/6 and BD205/6 showing the difference, also photographs of both vehicles, a before and after comparison. BD206 came into service on the 8th May 1995.

For anyone who has not travelled over this line but would like to have an insight into the line and the surrounding area, the MITV video of the MOB can be highly recommended as an armchair look at this most attractive and scenic area, with historic footage of the early locos and rolling stock.



The coaches of the Super Panoramic Express, stripped down and completely rewired and refurbished interiors, to emerge repainted as "The Golden Panoramic Express".





Montreux-Bernese Oberland - The MOB Railway Group

A CONTINUED FESTIVAL ON RAILS

Almost a century has elapsed since the day when the Montreux-Bernese Oberland Railway began to enrich Swiss tourism by its panoramic loops, leading from the blue expanse of Lake Geneva to the snowy peaks of the Bernese Alps.

As a precious link of the famous Golden Pass system, the long transverse railway line linking Montreux to Lucerne via Interlaken in the heart of the Alps, MOB embodies the finest traditions of railway pioneering.

Montreux, the Gruyère region, Chateau-d'Oex in the Pays-d'Enhaut upland, the famous mountain resort of Gstaad, the Simmental valley: since their start, the Panoramic-Express trains have been offering to their passengers the enthralling scenery of unspoiled nature. Twelve Panoramic-Express trains - among them the new Golden Panoramic-Express - circulate daily along the famous railway line. The Crystal Panoramic-Express, co-designed by Pininfarina, with its streamlined supersonic body already promises to add a truly futuristic trait to railway traffic.

Despite its decisive orientation towards the future, MOB further continues to uphold and preserve the railway's glorious past. With their dazzling original look, the "Belle-Epoque" carriages bring back to the delighted passengers (the atmosphere of the famous "Orient-Express" trains) all the splendours of Switzerland's railway tradition. This trend has also been fully upheld by the Rochers-de-Naye Railway, the showpiece of the MOB Group. On the occasion of the lines centenary, it put again into service a steam engine identical to those which opened it a century ago, combining thereby the ravishing geographic sights with a journey into the past.

