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BLS News Peter Marriott reviews recent developments on the popular private standard gauge railway company.

The rebuilding work at Spiez station is almost complete. At the Thun end of Platform 1 there is now a distinctive glass building of the Spiez tourist office. During winter this was open only on weekdays.

The Spiez Park and Ride (P + R) "Bärengraben" station car park at below platform level is now open. The charges range from 3SFr for up to three hours to 8SFr to up to 24 hours when purchased with a rail ticket. The car park is on six floors and has capacity for 200 cars and free places for 250 bicycles. The pedestrian exit of the car park on platform 1 features a display of BLS signalling and track infrastructure equipment.

The new BLS travel centre (BLS Reise Zentrum) is open at Genfergasse 11, Bern is open between the hours of 07.30 and 18.00 Mondays to Fridays and 09.00 and 12.40 on Saturdays. It is closed on Sundays. The centre is just a few minutes walk from Bern Hauptbahnhof and in addition to offering ticket sales and information. It has a full range of BLS souvenirs.

Near to the car loading area at Goppenstein there is an AlpTransit pavilion which contains information and diagrams of the proposed

AlpTransit Lötschberg route. Watch out for the AlpTransit workings on the left hand side of the Lötschberg line as you approach Goppenstein.

I can thoroughly recommend the cheese and ham rosti at the station restaurant at Spiez! A hearty good meal and reasonable value at 14SFr.

BLS trains to and from Interlaken will probably be busy on Saturday 5th September when the Jungfrau Marathon takes place between Interlaken and Kleine Scheidigg. The event starts at the Grand Victoria Jungfrau Hotel at 08.45 to Wilderswil, Lauterbrunnen, Wengen to finish at Kleine Scheidigg. There are expected to be 3000 participants.

The first NINA Bern commuter train is expected to be tested in Autumn 1998 (see Swiss Express June 1997).

ADtranz prototype 12X locomotive 128 001-5 has been used on various test trains on the Spiez to Frutigen section of the Lötschberg line over the winter months.

Watch out for the BLS carriages carrying Internet, BLS ships and Lauchernalp liveries.