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NOTEPAD - Edited by Nick Freezer

STANDARD GAUGE

Schweizerische Bundesbahnen (SBB)

As expected the full implementation of sectorisation did not come in at the start of the summer timetable. This is most noticeable on the Gotthard line, where pairs of Re460s can still be found on freight and both Re6/6s and Re4/4^{III}s found on passenger workings. Apparently, two Re460s would be required to work EuroCity trains over the Gotthard line in place of a single Re6/6.

The electrification of the Rhein crossing between Koblenz and Waldshut was commemorated by a Bahnhoffest at Koblenz. Visitors included a double deck IC set powered by Re 460 034 in Zugkraft Aargau livery, and B3/4 1367 on the heritage set. Both trains ventured across the border to Waldshut, the steam train being piloted on the return working by the Koblenz TeIII. Waldshut now sees two through trains a day each way to Zürich!

The project to complete a second track on the line along Lake Neuchâtel between Yverdon and Neuchâtel has seen the commissioning of the second line through the 2250m Sauges tunnel between Gorgier - St. Aubin and Vaumarcus. Beyond Vaumarcus the line remains single track to halfway between Concise and Ollens, with a loop at Concise. Works for the remaining double track is well advanced in most places; planned for commissioning is in spring 2001. The former roundhouse at St Gallen has been converted into an art gallery.

The SBB freight sector has taken on responsibility for wagonload traffic throughout Switzerland from the timetable change on 30th May. Off the SBB proper, the private railways generally keep responsibility but not over the MittelThurgau network, where the company's tender was judged too high.

The reopened line between Luzern and Immensee via Küsnacht am Rigi has been downgraded to take local services only; all IR and EC services between Luzern and the Gotthard continue to be routed via Rotkreuz. The now hourly Voralpen Express service to St Gallen has reverted to run via and call at Küsnacht. Signalling on the section has been simplified - all trains now cross at Küsnacht which has been resignalled in such a way that all trains have to stop there!

Local services in the Luzern - Zug area now follow the following routes: Luzern - Zug; Zug (Sundays Rotkreuz) - Muri - Olten; Luzern - Arth/Goldau via Meggen; Arth/Goldau (Zug on Mondays to Fridays peak periods) - Erstfeld. This last route restores a regular service to the Uri cantonal capital at Altdorf.

The service between Villeneuve, Lausanne and Yverdon is being marketed at REV (Réseau Express Vaudois), with suitable lettering carried on the NPZ train.

The first of the 50 new Adtranz tractors Tm 234 000-8 was observed at Zürich at the end of June in use on construction works connected with the new Zürich - Thalwil tunnel. As expected it has a platform mounted hydraulic crane.

Bern-Lötschberg-Simplon (BLS)

Re 465 003 has had DB Cargo branding applied. It continues to be used on passenger services in west Switzerland, being noted on the BLS - powered workings on the Rhône Valley line.

Despite the best intentions of the BLS, not all local workings on the Bern - Neuchâtel section (Bern S-Bahn Lines S5 / S55) are being worked by the new RABe 525 NINA units - standard RBDe 565 units work the

remaining diagrams. The Bern - Neuchâtel Regio Express service is generally worked by BLS Re4/4 Pendelzug formations, for which 1970-built Bt 950 -953 are being refurbished.

By the end of June only five of the RABe 525 NINA units were in service. Each unit carries a set number at each end corresponding to the last number (prior to the check number) of the full number.

A subway is being constructed at Zweisimmen station this summer; hopefully, the station reconstruction will make finding your connection at this rather disorganised station much easier.

Die Post

A large amount of parcels traffic is now being carried in (yellow) containers to, from and between the sorting centres at Daillens (Lausanne - Yverdon), Härkingen (Olten - Oensingen) and Frauenfeld. These are carried on a fleet of 250 two axle flat wagons (type Lgnss) hired from the Ahaus Alstätter Eisenbahn in the Czech Republic (UIC Code 68)

Postal traffic on the metre gauge is now reduced to the Brig - Zermatt, Luzern - Engelberg and Meiringen and Chur - Arosa, Davos, Disentis, Scoul and St Moritz sections of the BVZ, LSE, SBB and RhB respectively.

Three new Stadler locomotives, Tm 237 916-918 (P16-18), have been taken into stock for use at the new depots at Daillens, Härkingen and Frauenfeld respectively. Also reported is the hire of a diesel locomotive Am 837 915 (P15) "Güsti", at Daillens. Em3/3 5 has moved from Zürich Mulligen to Härkingen. The former PTT Schoema diesel, Tm 12, remains at the Ostermundigen site, which is now Swisscom property, although the sidings are apparently out of use.

OTHER STANDARD GAUGE

CF Lausanne Ouchy (LO)

The east (Vevey end) subway at Lausanne CFF has been extended to provide a level link with the downhill end of the Ouchy-bound platform. In conjunction with the lifts in the subway, passengers (and their luggage!) can now have a step-free transfer between main line trains and the lake shore at Ouchy.

Falling into the very unusual category is LO He 2/2 298 821-10 which carries the two-digit check digit as shown (it should be 298 821-0Ö) Incidentally, all three LO locomotives carry computer numbers on the body side and the original number (121-123) on the uphill end of the locomotive roof.

Gruyère-Fribourg-Morat (GFM)

At the end of June Te2/2 52 and Tm2/2 81, withdrawn in 1998, were still intact in the siding of a scrapyard at Givisiez.

Mittel Thurgau Bahn (MThB)

The final stage of modernisation of the Seelinie between Romanshorn and Schaffhausen saw the modernisation of Kreuzlingen station with new interlocking and island platforms. During the rebuilding period changing trains there was even more fraught than normal with English visitors finding it only too easy to fail to recognise their connection!

The MThB has taken on the traction provision for packet post traffic between Frauenfeld and St Gallen. Due to weak bridges on the Sulgen - Gossau section, the company has acquired four Re4/4I from Classic Rail (10002/9/16/39), now running as Re 416 625 - 628. These are also used on post trains between Chur and Frauenfeld via Buchs SG, St Gallen and Gossau SG.

Oensingen Balsthal Bahn (OeBB)

The former SBB BDe4/4 Triebwagen now carry numbers 641 and 651, and work with driving trailer 900. The trailer still carries internal notices from the Vevey - Puidoux/Chexbres line, its previous base!

The triebwagen not coupled to the driving trailer (641 on 5th July) is used for freight workings, replacing Ce2/2 102 and 103.

The OeBB will celebrate its centenary over the weekend of 27th to 29th August. Advertising for this event has been painted by the local schoolchildren on the side of a van at Balsthal,

Regionalverkehr Mittelland (RM)

It is proposed to sell the company's five Re436s (111-113, 141, 181) to the SBB in exchange for Ae6/6s. The RM locomotives would go to the Gotthard Line to join the other Re4/4^ms with which they are almost identical.

Südostbahn (SOB)

The SOB has taken over operation of the Gotthard north local services between Arth/Goldau and Erstfeld. Two SOB Kolibri units are required for the service.

BDe 576 484 was hired to the MThB at the end of May to provide extra traction passed for the Sulgen - Gossau line while the lines around the Bodensee were flooded and not all that company's Re4/4^ls had entered service.

Sihltal Zürich Uetliberg Bahn (SZU)

SBB Ae6/6 locomotives are regularly hauling freight trains on the SZU to and from the Allmend-Brunau construction site close to Brunau station.

Wohlen-Meisterschwanden Bahn (WM)

The line between Villmergen and Meisterschwanden is being lifted.

METRE GAUGE.

Bremgarten Dietikon Bahn (BD)

Be4/8 25 has been fitted with a drinks machine and is being marketed as the Bistro Zug

Bergbahn Lauterbrunnen Murren (BLM)

This line was another badly affected by the snow in February, being closed due to the collapse of a bridge over the line at Winteregg. Traffic to Murren had to travel

by post bus to Stechelberg and the cablecars via Gimmelwald, with no service after 18.00. All three triebwagen have been modified with a baggage area and reclassified BDe4/4.

Bernese Oberland Bahn (BOB)

The second line between Zweilütschinen and Wilderswil is now in use.

CF Bex Villars Bretaye (BVB)

Through services between Villars and Bex CFF station resumed on Saturday 22 May. These services had been starting at the Pont Neuf halt, with a bus connection to the main line station since August 1998 due to massive reconstruction work along the river bank and adjoining streets into the town centre. The Bex - Bevioux tramway had operated only a single morning weekday service during this period. The opportunity has been taken to repaint Be2/3 No. 16 has been into the modern TPC style during the suspension of the tramway service.

Brig Visp Zermatt Bahn (BVZ)

On 29th June, the remains of an avalanche were still lying in the Matter Visp just above the BVZ bridge at Kipfen in the gorge between Kalpetran and St Niklaus; new ballast and overhead masts were in evidence in the area.

Frauenfeld-Wil Bahn (FW)

Freight working ceased from 30th May 1999.

Furka-Oberalp Bahn (FO)

Gm4/4 71 has moved to Oberwald to act as station pilot there. Its uses include attaching strengthening stock to Goms local services; on 2nd July train 547 (13 15 Göschenen - Brig) was strengthened by a driving trailer, a bike van (Gbv 4465 repainted into a white Rent a Bike livery and a luggage van.

Tracks into the old workshop at Brig have been lifted, leaving only the FO stabling shed and half the old BVZ shed in use for short term stabling in the station area.

Gornergrat Monte Rosa Bahn (GGB)

The station building at Zermatt is being demolished - presumably the new structure will be complete before the ski-ing season starts! Tickets are being sold from a portacabin in the BVZ station square.

Montreux-Oberland-Bernois (MOB) group

One of the driving trailers of the Crystal Panoramic Express was dedicated on Friday 21st May to the round-the-world balloon Breitling Orbiter 3. The balloon pilots, Bertrand Piccard and Brian Jones travelled on a special service which left Montreux at 15.15 for the balloons launch site at Château d'Oex, where special events and a meal had been arranged. The Rochers de Naye line was closed between Montreux and Glion during late May. A replacement bus service left from the MOB area of Montreux station, although from notices posted there it appears the Police were not too happy

with the arrangement and bus drivers had strict instructions where to wait! A through service operated over the holiday weekend (22nd to 24th May), with bus services restarting on the morning of Tuesday 25th May.

Out on trials from Chernex Works on 1st July was the newly completed Train des Etoiles for the Vevey - Les Pleiades line. This stylish twin car unit is a credit to the MOB's workshops; the only obvious link to the donor vehicles (BDeh4/4 71 and Bt 223) being the resistance units on the motor coach's roof! Upholstered 2+2 seating is fitted, lining up with the window pillars, with plug doors and a small low floor area in the driving trailer. The train's public launch is scheduled for Veveys Fête des Vignerons at the end of July, its part in the programme being evening gastronomic trips to Les Pleiades.

'Train des Etoiles' leaving Chernex on a test run - July 1st 1999. See notepad Photo: Cyril Freezer



Regionalverkehr Bern-Solothurn (RBS)

Bern RBS station has been modified with glass partitions and low gates giving access to the local (Worb and Jegenstorf) platforms 1 and 2.

Following the reorganisation of Swiss wagonload traffic, standard gauge freight traffic over the mixed gauge section of the Worb line between Worblaufen and Diesswil is being worked by the SBB using Class Am 841 locomotives in place of RBS De4/4.

Rhätische Bahn (RhB)

Trial operation through the Vereina Tunnel started in May.

Early morning mixed train 4505 (05 10 Chur - St Moritz) is booked to carry 2 post vans and 8 postal container flats, the only scheduled working of these vehicles on a passenger train in Switzerland.

On the Bernina Line, the siding at Stablini between Alp Grüm and Cavaglia has been converted to a crossing loop, and the loops at Bernina Lagalb and Ospizio Bernina have been lengthened.

At Klosters, the original Landquart - Davos Bahn bridge across the Landquart, used as a footbridge since the station was rebuilt in 1930, has succumbed to old age and been demolished.

Transports Publics du Chablis (TPC)

From 1st January 2000 the four companies within the Group, Aigle-Leysin (AL), Aigle-Ollons-Monthey-Champèry (AOMC), Aigle-Sepey-Diablerets (ASD) and Bex-Villars-Bretaye (BVB) will be formally merged.

TIMETABLES

The 1999/2000 timetable, effective from 30th May 1999, went on sale in mid May in only two parts. The International section was not available until June 19th, which in a press release the SBB stated was due to late submission of information by other railways -

“SNCF and DBAG amongst others”.

The SBB has also announced in a press release that from 2002 the annual date change of the timetable will move to December. This change, agreed by the Forum Train Europe (FTE), will apply throughout Europe and is being adopted to assist in forward planning by the travel trade.

International

The new timetable has three ICE tilt trains in each direction during the day between Stuttgart and Zürich via Schaffhausen. The first morning departure (07.13) and the last evening arrival (20.47) are at the main station with travel in both directions via Bülach (stop). The remaining departures (13.10 and 19.10) and arrivals (10.50 and 14.50) are at the S-Bahn platforms and are routed via Stadelhofen, Effretikon, Winterthur (stop) and Andelfingen. Swiss Passes are valid on these trains between Zürich and Schaffhausen, and on both the 13.10 and 19.10 departures from Zürich arrival at Schaffhausen is 13 minutes before the departure of the southbound ICE.

TRAMS

Basler Verkehrsbetriebe (BVB)

Low floor centre sections have been added to Be4/6 663, 665, 675 and 678 between January and March 1999. Swiss standard car Be4/4 401 of 1948 has been withdrawn and broken up.

Transport Public Genève (TPG)

The weekday service pattern on the TPG tramways is generally at 12 minute intervals on each route, with an extra service on Route 12 between the turning circles at Eaux Vives stations and Place des Augustins on Monday to Friday (07.00 to 18.00) and Saturday lunchtimes and afternoons. Line

12 uses pairs of Be4/6 trams, while Lines 13 and 16 use single stretched Be4/8 trams. Advertising trams are prominent, including Be4/8 846 for Servette Football Club recording their victory in the Swiss League last season and promoting season tickets for the 1999 - 2000 season!

Städtische Verkehrsbetriebe Bern (SVB)

The Siemens Combino tram is in normal service on Line 9 (Wabern - Guisanplatz), providing an interesting contrast with the Swiss standard bogie cars on Line 3. The last cars from the 1947 series (604, 605, 607) were withdrawn in May, with 607 going to the TramVerein Bern group for preservation.

Verkehrsbetriebe der Stadt Zürich (VBZ)

Be4/6 2001 has received an overall livery depicting RMS "Titanic"

PRESERVATION

CF Blonay Chamby (BC)

The BC summer season was fully launched over the holiday weekend of 22nd to 24th May, with two steam services on each day running through to Vevey.

The new buffet at Chaulin museum can be strongly recommended. Its prices are very competitive - with all profits going to preservation as well - and features excellent views over Lac Lemman and of trains on the BC main line. Newly introduced this season is a saloon coach in the distinctive Berninabahn yellow livery. Coach As 2 has been restored to a good approximation of its as-built condition of 1901, but is equipped with a bar capable of serving drinks. Despite its livery, it was actually built for the RhB, but does carry its original number.

In late June the normal service steam engine was ex SWEG Mallet G2/2x2 105, with BFD

HG3/4 3 and BAM G3/3 6 booked for service in August.

Dampf Furka Bergstrecke (DFB)

Snowplough Xk 9104 (ex RhB) has been plinthed by the FO station at Oberwald to mark the planned end of track for the DFB. On its plough, it advertises the intended opening of the Furka - Gletsch section in summer 2000 (scheduled for 14th July).

Rive Bleu Express (RBE)

The service between Evian and Bouveret will not operate this year, after the French authorities refused to authorise track repairs. The stock remains in store at Bouveret. Ironically, the French track authority RFF is investigating electrifying the line and reopening it to normal traffic.

INDUSTRIAL

ADtranz

With the withdrawal of ABB from the consortium the legal name of the company is to be changed to Daimler-Chrysler Rail Systems, although the ADtranz name is to be retained. Previously announced plans to close the Zürich Oerlikon plant have been withdrawn and locomotive construction will continue at the site.

Stadler AG

The latest orders for Low Cost railcars are 2 units for the Yverdon - Ste Croix, 4 units for the Chemin de Fer de Jura (metre gauge section) and 8 units for the Regionalverkehr Mittelland (Solothurn - Moutier section). The company is completing an order for driving trailers for the MThB to strengthen the Seelinie units. Low Cost units are currently in service on the MOB (Vevey - Blonay, Blonay / Les Avants - Montreux), OSST (Biel - Ins section) and MThB (Seelinie between Romanshorn and Schaffhausen).

Contributors to this edition include Brian Hemming, Micheal Farr, Trevor Sutcliffe and several others notably members of the London group.

Contributions to Notepad, which is edited by Nick Freezer, should be sent to the Editorial Office, address on page 1.

YET MORE ADVERSE WEATHER

Snowfalls continued to close railways in April - on Friday 16th, for example, the FO was closed between Niederwald and Göschenen / Tschamut, the RhB between Thusis and Tiefencastel, the BLS between Spiez and Interlaken, the BLM throughout and the WAB / JB between Wengen and Jungfrauoch.

In the second half of May, the melting of the winter snow in conjunction with heavy rainfall brought extensive flooding and closures to the Alps. Probably worst affected was the Bodensee, which rose to platform level at Rorschach Hafen (around 2 metres). The following lines were reported as closed during this period (SBB unless otherwise shown).

| Railway | Section | Closed | Reopened | Notes |
|---------|---------------------------------------|--------|----------|--|
| SBB | Kölliken - Safenwil | | | Zofingen - Suhr line |
| | Zug - Walchwil | 13/5 | | About two weeks |
| | Wolhusen - Malters | | | |
| | Hergiswil - Giswil | | | |
| | Rorschach - Horn | | | Until end of July |
| | Fischenthal - Rütli ZH | | | Tossthal line |
| MC | Finhaut - Le Châtelard Frontière | | | |
| BD | Wohlen - Bremgarten West | | | |
| RB | Romiti Felsentor - Rigi Kaltbad First | | | |
| | | 13/5 | 22/5 | |
| LSE | Grafenort - Engelberg | | | |
| MThB | Steckborn - Berlingen | | | |
| AB | Bühler - Gais | | | |
| BT | Haggenschwil-Winden - Roggwil-Berg | | | |
| | | | 22/5 | |
| BT | Degersheim - Mogelsberg | 13/5 | c. 20/5 | |
| RhB | Schiers - Küblis | | | |
| RhB | Chur - Arosa | | | About a week |
| BB | St Margrethen - Bregenz | | | |
| DVZO | Wald - Hinwil | | | Until July, bridge washed out at Neuthal |

The extended closure of the Rorschach - Horn section and its replacement by a bus service is apparently due to the peaty ground on which the Rorschach Hafen area is built. An attempt to run a service using Ae4/7 10905 was abandoned due to the wash from the train threatening to flood the buildings round the station.

COPY DATE - OCTOBER 20TH

THE NEXT SWISS EXPRESS WILL BE PUBLISHED IN DECEMBER 1999. PLEASE SEND YOUR ARTICLES, LETTERS, PHOTOGRAPHS ETC IN TO THE EDITORIAL OFFICE BY OCTOBER 20TH TO GUARANTEE INCLUSION.

THANK YOU