

Zeitschrift: Swiss express : the Swiss Railways Society journal
Herausgeber: Swiss Railways Society
Band: 6 (2000-2002)
Heft: 6

Rubrik: Notepad

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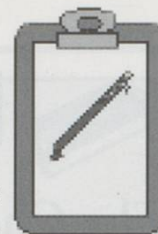
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INTERNATIONAL

The TEE Rail Alliance (Germany, Austria, and Switzerland) is ordering some 116 train sets based on the SBB RABDe 500 design for international service. The first visible product of the alliance is a 'family card' for inhabitants of the three countries, allowing children to travel free if accompanied by their parents or grandparents.

Work by FS to enlarge the loading gauge on the Simplon south ramp has been delayed by poor geological conditions as well as the autumn floods.

From the start of the new timetable DB will be running an ICE-TD (Tilt-Diesel) type 650 from München to Zürich with stops at Buchloe, Memmingen and Lindau. Arriving in Zürich at 12.27 it leaves at 13.33 and is back in München by 17.48. Offering a panorama lounge, information system, and in 1st class leather seats and laptop connections the units will provide a high level of comfort. The units are built by Siemens and Bombardier, are 107 metres long and have seats for 195. Pictures would be welcome of the units travelling in Switzerland.

HUPAC

Hupac services over the Lötschberg – Simplon axis between Freiburg im Breisgau and Novara are expected to start from 11th June. Hupac have hired the Austrian – designed 1116 901 from Siemens for use on services between Basel and Mannheim; the engine is based at Basel.



SBB CFF FFS

The latest Bahn 2000 enhancement opened on 19th April, with the diversion of the Yverdon – Neuchâtel line through the 1975m long Vauderons tunnel. With the commissioning of the second track through the section on 25th April, this completes the double tracking of the Lausanne – Biel – Olten route.

In association with the widening of the Däniken – Dulliken section from three to four tracks, a replacement halt is being constructed at Dulliken to replace the old station.

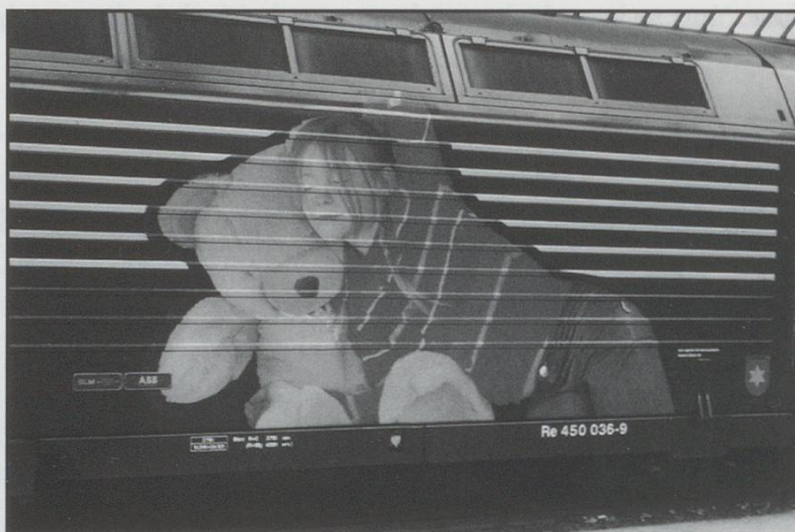
The initial stage of the Seetalbahn upgrade will be

commissioned from the June timetable change. This is the restoration of the passing loop at Waldibrücke, now the first station on the branch beyond the junction at Emmenbrücke. The original loop was removed without replacement when the station was repositioned in 1998 as part of the realignment to eliminate the reversal at Emmenbrücke.

In the Geneva area, the extension of the RER service from La Plaine to Bellegarde is now planned for September 2001, while December 2002 is pencilled in as the date for extending the Nyon – Geneva local service to a new station at Pont Rouge on the (currently freight only) line to La Praille yard.

The first refurbished EW IV coaches have emerged from Olten Works.

Three coaches of the overnight Brussels – Milan passenger train derailed at Rodi-Fiesso shortly after midnight on 12th April. The line reopened at 14.00 that day; during the blockage, the normal diversions via the Simplon and Lötschberg were put into place.



Zürich S-Bahn Re 450s and coaches are receiving increasing amounts of advertising on their sides. The 'girl and teddy bear' dates from the 10 years of the S-Bahn celebrations last year. Other images etc. are widespread. (See the pictures above and next page top by Steve Barnes taken in Feb. 2000.)



Lötschbergbahn

From the June timetable change, the EW IV fleet will be reformed into five 9 coach Pendelzug formations, formed Bt, 4xB, WR (SBB), 2xA, D (ex SNCF). Motive power is expected to be an SBB Re



460. The BLS Re 465s will be transferred to SBB Cargo services, as they are the only locomotives that can MU with not just Re460s but SBB Re4/4's and Re6/6s, not to mention BLS Ae4/4s and Re4/4s!

An intermodal service from Zeebrugge (Belgium) to Novara (Italy) over the Lötschberg route was launched on 5th February. Operating under the title Belgium Lötschberg Service, the service was initiated by the BLS. The Swiss transit takes place overnight.

Once the BLS relinquishes responsibility for IC services, it will take over the EW III fleet from the SBB for use on InterRegio services such as Bern – Le Locle, although this is not expected to happen until 2002. The EW IV fleet will go to the SBB.

A landslip blocked the line between Spiez and Leissigen on the morning of 18th March. While one track was reopened that lunchtime, the second track could not be reinstated as the signalling systems had been destroyed. Train operation used the long-standing rules for lines without signalling.

From the June 2001 timetable change ABDe4/8 748 – 750 are scheduled for withdrawal following the 'bustitution' of the Thun – Spiez local service. Ee3/3 401 is out of service at Spiez works.

Be4/4 761 and 762 are to be restored to their original livery as museum vehicles.

It would appear that all of the BLS EW IV coaches are now converted to push pull capability: yellow diamonds on vehicle ends, larger buffers and renumbering.

Work on the southern portal of the Lötschberg base tunnel officially started on 30th November. Reinstated locomotives Ae8/8 273 and 275 are now regularly used on the Lötschberg base tunnel stone trains. It is possible to see both engines heading in the same direction along the Rhône val-

ley – one on the BLS main line and the other on the SBB Rhône valley line!

The BLS have introduced self-service ticket machines at Kandersteg and Goppenstein for the car and lorry ferry traffic. The personnel released are being utilised for traffic management and information. At times of heavy traffic, principally Friday, Saturday evenings and some Sundays ticket cashiers will relieve the situation if required. A webcam is available to review queues for those who have the

time to use it while they are driving(?)! A special Lötschberg Card facilitates the procedure even more. If I have translated correctly it is a smart card.

OTHER STANDARD GAUGE

mittelthurgaubahn

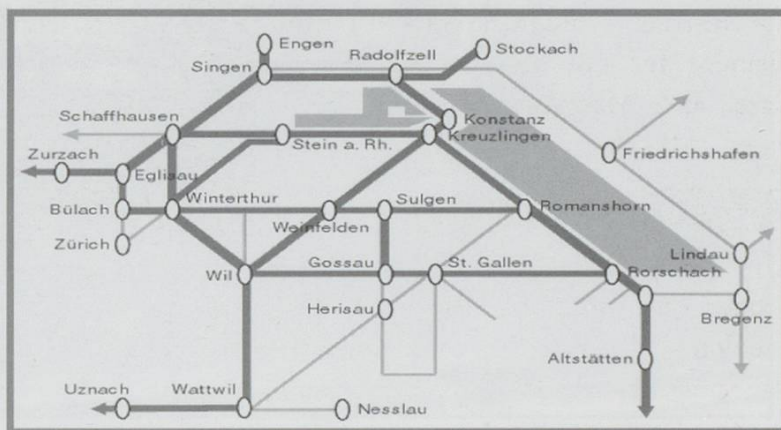
Unterwegs in der Turgau Bodensee



SBB CFF FFS

Mention has been made before of the new joint regional company to be promoted by the SBB and MThB. Both companies are running a joint competition to pick the name of the new company. Not quite sure what the prize is but check the website if you would like to take part!

The intention is eventually to take over all regional services with a fleet of around 120 ABe2/6 (GTW 2/6) plus 140 drivers. Work for about 90 drivers will be bought from SBB and MThB



Diagrammatic map of the new network. Courtesy SBB/MThB

Oensingen Balsthal Bahn (OeBB)

The majority of the service will be 'bustituted' from June 2001, with only two return journeys in each peak period, together with three mixed journeys, remaining as trains.

GOLDENPASS® SERVICES

From the 10th June 2001 the current panoramic services on the MOB, the connecting BLS service and the SBB Brünig Golden Pass services will become totally integrated and known and marketed as the Golden Pass Services.

The MOB will use the current panoramic trains but the intention is to present the public with a seamless integrated high quality service and package from Montreux to Luzern. Ge4/4 8001 has been repainted as has a BLS 465 together with an SBB Brünig loco. Some preview photos are attached.. These were grab shots and I hope to have some better ones for the next colour issue. Some coaches (MOBx3, BLSx2 SBBx1) have also been repainted. The SBB will also be introducing 2 Mitropa dining cars on their portion of the 5 times daily Golden Pass service. Cross platform interchange has also been introduced at Zweisimmen as many will already have seen.

The Broc chocolate train will continue much as before although it will be marketed through Golden Pass Services.

More information and pictures in the next *Swiss Express*.

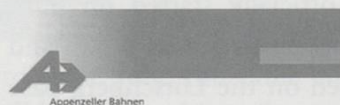


ABOVE: MOB Ge4/4 8001 arriving in Zweisimmen, probably on a positioning movement. It only had three older coaches. 26/05/2001. **BELOW:** SBB HGe4/4 101-967-8 being hurriedly shunted out of sight at Meiringen. 25/05/2001. Both photos by the Editor.



RM SBB Cargo has taken on financing the equipment of the four Re 436 locomotives with multiple unit equipment for use on the Gotthard Line. Re 436 113 was transferred to Erstfeld in November 2000. Eight GTW2/6 'Low Cost' railcars and two driving trailers have been ordered from Stadler.

METRE GAUGE



RJ Bahntechnik, Biel delivered Ast 181 to Herisau in December 2000. Rebuilt from SGA B82 of 1983, the observation coach can be used with any post 1981 formation.



The four metre gauge GTW 2/6 railcars under construction by Stadler will be numbered 631 to 634. One has already been delivered as the Editor saw it behind closed doors at Tramelan depot 24/05/2001.

Frauenfeld-Wil-Bahn

The 1985 units (Be4/4 11-15 / Bt 111 - 115) are being refurbished by the RhB at Landquart; the first set (15 / 114) was transferred on 19th February. During each set's absence, Be4/4 206 (ex Bremgarten - Dietikon Bahn) will be used as cover.



Brig FO / BVZ station is being completely remodelled. The existing island platform is being extended to the junction west of the station, and will be capable of taking two standard trains at each platform face. The old FO locomotive shed has been demolished.



The original Panoramic coaches (currently Bs 220 / 224 / 226) are scheduled for refurbishment. The rebuilt vehicles will be 1.4m longer, include larger windows, new air conditioning and a disabled toilet. B220 is at RJ Bahntechnik, Biel for reconstruction. It is probably these which are being repainted for Golden Pass Services.

MOB - CENTENARY

Over the next few years the MOB will be celebrating their centenary. They have decided to hold a larger number of smaller events rather than one big one. This reflects the staged opening of the line and the railway also wishes to emphasise the use of the line within local communities. The events will take place along the line at suitable points and on suitable dates. I will try to get advance notice wherever possible and trust that we will get some feedback from readers in order to report on the events as they happen.

Regionalverkehr Bern-Solothurn (RBS)

The regular steam specials will operate this year on the following Sundays: August 19th, September 16th and October 14th.



From the June timetable change, an LSE Pendelzug set will work three return trips in the evening between Stans and Sarnen, with connections at Hergiswil to and from Luzern.



The RhB returned record profits of SFr 1.6m for 2000, with an increase of passenger traffic of 10%. The new goods centre at Cho d'Punt, just outside Samedan on the Pontresina line, was opened in December 2000.

Reports have indicated the view from Bernina trains has been restricted this winter - snowdrifts have been regularly up to train roof level!

The rarely-used halt at Sassal on the Arosa line will close from the June timetable change.

CF Yverdon-Ste Croix (YSteC)

The first of the two GTW 2/6 railcars for the line was delivered in February. Appropriately for units ordered for Expo 2002 services in the Yverdon area, they will be numbered 2001 and 2002.

Die Post

From 29th December postal workings ceased over a large area of Central Switzerland, including the metre gauge workings from Luzern to Engelberg and Meiringen. The BLS service is reduced to return workings from Bern to Brig (and then on to Sion), and a Saturday morning working over the GBS line from Thun to Bern; the Interlaken and Kandersteg workings have been withdrawn.

SOB diesel engine Am 864 461 was used from 14th November on postal trains between Zürich Mülligen depot and Baden.

TRAMS

Basler Verkehrsbetriebe (BVB)

The first Combino tram of the BVB order, 7-section Be6/8 301, was launched on 21st December. Deliveries are expected at 2 units per month until summer 2002. These trams will be restricted to routes 6 and 8 until widening work on other lines has been completed.

Verkehrsbetriebe der Stadt Zürich (VBZ)

The first of the six - strong prototype batch of

'Cobra' trams is scheduled for completion in July, series completion being planned for November. Test running will be on Line 9 and is expected to last a year. The intention is to have 75 units in service by 2010.

The VBZ are opening (April 17th hopefully) a coffee bar in the waiting area at Goldbrunnenplatz, and offering a 7 day a week service of drinks, sandwiches, confectionery etc. It will be operated by a Swiss company, Selecta, which in turn is owned by the British company Compass Group. In time an ATM may be installed. Although it has been tried before on this occasion alcohol will not be available. In previous examples such as Limmatplatz this had become controversial and caused problems with the local councils.

FUNICULARS AND CABLE CARS

Transports Neuchâtelois

As far as the Editor is aware no report has yet been made of the new funicular opened 27th April 2002 in Neuchâtel between the station and the university. Known as the 'Fun'ambule' it has an unusual design and is murder to photograph. Alan Pike has written an article which will appear in the next edition

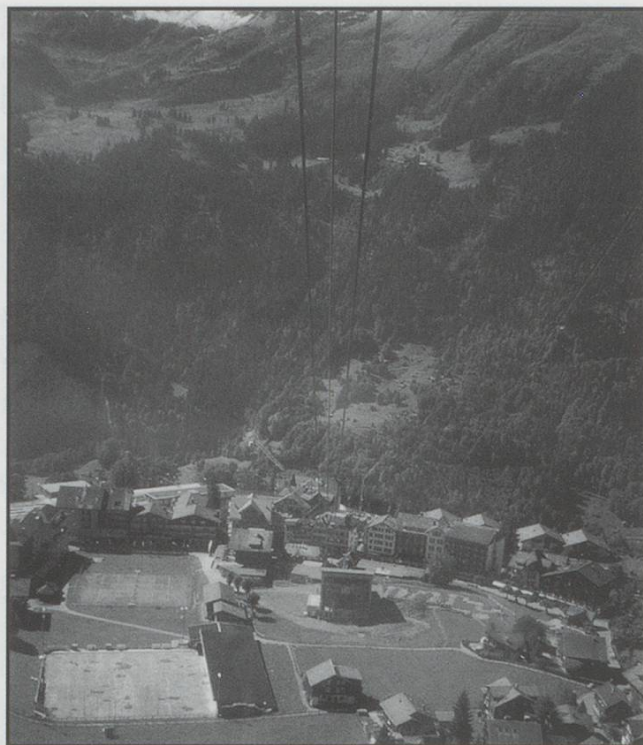


ABOVE A side view of the new WM station with a car leaving. **ABOVE RIGHT** A view from an ascending car towards Wengen showing the station in relation to the village. Summer 2000.

Photos: Maureen Stainton

LWM -Wengen

Maureen Stainton wrote to the editor some time ago about the repositioning of the base station of the Wengen-Männlichen cableway. Peter Brunner of the company says that after the avalanche the insurance company refused to finance a station on the old site.

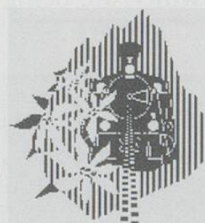


The new station is just off the main street and patronage has increased sharply.

PRESERVATION

Classic Rail

Four motive units – EBT Be4/4 101, BLS Ce4/4 311 and 316, and BLS De4/5 796 - have been transferred to industrial sidings on the RVT at Couvet.



The FO will be celebrating the 75th anniversary on 3rd July of its opening between Gletsch and Andermatt in conjunction with the DFB. This will include a through service from Andermatt to Gletsch, the first passenger working over the new link line between the FO and DFB at Realp. Also planned is a 'heritage' working from Disentis to Andermatt, using a FO HGe4/4 I on a DFB set. All this is subject to good weather on the day, not to mention the completion of repairs to the DFB line, which was badly damaged in the autumn floods.

Riffelalp Tram (RiT)

This 450m long, 600mm gauge line, starting at Riffelalp station on the GGB, will reopen for the summer season of 2001, 40+ years after its enforced closure following the destruction by fire of the original Riffelalp Hotel in September 1960. The original stock of 1899 has been overhauled by the GGB at Zermatt and equipped for battery traction; the original three phase AC overhead has not been restored.