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International

10 SBB Cargo Re4/4^{II} and Re460 are due to be equipped with DB pantographs, cab signalling and radios for services into Germany. This working will be in conjunction with BASF - a chemical firm based at Ludwigshafen - who have acquired DB Class 145 locomotives from the Adtranz production line to fulfil their requirements.

The combined SBB and FS cargo business will be known as Cargo SI (for Schweiz Italia!).

Schweizerische Bundesbahnen (SBB)

Daily Gotthard line freight traffic topped the 150,000 tonne level for the first time on 25th November 1999, and broke the 160,000 tonne barrier on 16th February 2000.

A new Zürich S-bahn station at Glanzerberg, between Schlieren and Dietikon, will open on 28th May, to be served by S3 and S12 services.

The St Gallen area acquires an S-bahn service from 28th May. Six routes of different lengths will operate at hourly intervals, ranging from Altstätten SG - Wil (S1) to St Gallen - St Gallen Hagggen (S6)

Breakthrough in the 5.6 km tunnel from Zürich to Thalwil was achieved on 9th December 1999, 15 months after tunnelling began. The line is not planned to open until 2003.

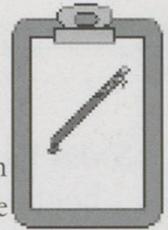
In a press release on 28th April the SBB announced that they are ordering 17 2.6 metre wide GTW 2/6 units from Stadler/Adtranz at a cost CHF 101 million. The units will be equipped with closed toilets and air conditioning - both new features for regional traffic in Switzerland - and will enter service in 2002 on Seetal line services as well as those from Aarau to Brugg and Brugg to Muri AG.

In conjunction with Kiosque SA and Migros, the SBB have launched a company who plans to replace ticket offices with coffee bars, which would act as a corner store branded "avec" where customers could also buy railway tickets. The concept is undergoing trials at Brugg BE, Mettmenstetten and Schüpfen.

Since April 3rd, Grey Mouse set RABDe 1055 has become an office suite in the Rue des Près, Biel / Bienne. This hire is expected to last until 2003. It is planned to use the unit as a donor vehicle for the restoration of at least one of the other two surviving units of the class.

The overhead has been removed from the freight-

NOTEPAD



only line between Solothurn and Büren an der Aare. Residual traffic on the line (which has been cut near Solothurn to accommodate a road scheme) is now worked by a Tm^{IV} tractor.

BLS Lötschbergbahn

Serious proposals have been made for the merger of the BLS with the SBB.

ABDe4/8 747 has been withdrawn and cut up. Green driving trailers 940 and 941 are being repainted in modified BLS blue and white colours, styled similarly to SBB EW IV Bts.

The company is seeking approval for the purchase of a second series of NINA railcars.

BLS are to operate four or five return car carrier trips between Kandersteg and Iselle over holiday weekends (Easter, Whitsun and Summer).

At the end of January 2000, all BLS goods business was transferred to a subsidiary company, BLS Cargo AG.

Other Standard Gauge

Mittel Thurgau Bahn (MThB)

The company has ordered six new locomotives, taken off the Adtranz production line for the DB Class 145. The first was due at the end of February and they will be delivered monthly. They are to be numbered Re486 651 - 656.

GTW ABe2/6 526 684 was demonstrated to the MO, GFM and TRN in the period 1st to 5th November 1999.

Oensingen Balsthal Bahn (OeBB)

The line has formally acquired Em2/2 24 (RACO 1699 of 1966) from the Von Roll works, Klus. This locomotive was new to Von Roll, Gerlafingen and moved to Klus in 1974. The OeBB have maintained it since 1994.

Voralpen Express (VAE)

The current EW IV coaches owned by the SOB (1 A, 3 B) and BT (2 A, 6 B) will be transferred to the SBB (apart from three Bs from the BT fleet which have gone to the BLS) once the full fleet delivery is in place. As an aside to this BLS 2nd class EW IV coach (ex BT) B 50 63 21-73421-8 was seen on 15th April at Interlaken Ost still in BT green and cream but with standard BLS Lötschbergbahn lettering in green!

Mobility impaired group Coach at Thun - June 1999. Formed as part of the "EC" train "Matterhorn" to Brig. Photo: Malcolm Bulpitt



The following infrastructure changes to the VAE route are planned:

Double track - 2.2km from Degersheim towards Mogelsburg (BT section), St Gallen towards St Gallen Hagen (no distance quoted), Lichtensteig - Wattwil (conversion of existing parallel single lines to normal double track), Pfäffikon - Hurden.

Uznach and Wattwil will be rebuilt with adequate platforms and subways, replacing the need to cross tracks when changing trains, while the remaining mechanical signal boxes on the SBB section (Lichtensteig, Wattwil, Kaltbrunn, Uznach and Schmerikon) will be replaced.

Metre gauge.

Berner Oberlandbahn

The BOB ABeh 4/4 309 left in mid-January for Bussnang. "STADLER" will rebuild the motorcoach and send it further to Garmisch.

Frauenfeld-Wil Bahn (FW)

Be4/4 205 has been withdrawn and will be used for spare parts to keep sister Triebwagen 206 operational.

CF Lausanne Echallens Bercher (LEB)

The extension from Chauderon to Flon will open on 28th May.

MOB group

The MOB's Blonay - Chamby - Montreux service will be withdrawn from May, due to disappointing loadings. With schedules biased to the Montreux end of the line, and using steam timings over the BC section, this is scarcely a surprise. A different result might have been achieved if the service had been based on Vevey.

Adjustments to the MOB Panoramic services will take place from the May timetable change. The Golden and Crystal Panoramic Expresses in their present form will disappear. The trains are to be split and reformed into a two-class formation sandwiching a 800x class locomotive, making three round trips a day, branded as Golden Pass Panoramic. Presumably, the Golden Panoramic coaches will provide the second class section of the train. To signal this launch, Ge4/4s 8003 and 8004 have been turned out in an black livery with question marks (8003) and Japanese symbols (8004).



The new loop at Fuchsenwinkel in the Prättigau (between Schiers and Furna) was commissioned on 11th November.

A halt at Chur West between Chur and Felsburg will open on 28th May.

The new Ge4/4^m 650 - 652 feature joystick traction control rather than the traditional Swiss hand wheel. The first of the new Panorama coaches for the Bernina express were rolled out by Stadler on 30th March. The fleet is due to enter service from the end of May.

Trams

Transport Public Genévois (TPG)

The cantonal council have proposed the introduction of a tram-train through service, particularly aimed at the Annemasse corridor. Unlike existing German operations, this would involve stock capable of running on metre and standard gauge tracks, not exactly the most normal combination! Apparently, a vehicle of this type was put into service in Japan in 1998. The announcement was made, not on 1st April but on 29th February!

Städtische Verkehrsbetriebe Bern (SVB)

Following the prototypes successful trial last summer, the SVB has ordered 15 Combino trams from Siemens for delivery in summer 2002.

Trailers 341, 342 and 343, bought from Basel five years ago have been returned to their old system. They retained the dark green BVB livery throughout their stay in the capital.

Preservation

C5/6 2969, plinthed at Winterthur since 1969, has been moved to a private site at Romanshorn where it will be used as a donor machine.

The Verein Historische Seetalbahn groups Ed3/3 3 Beinwyl was transferred from its old base at Beromünster, to Bremgarten West (Bremgarten - Dietikon) on 2nd February.

BOXING DAY STORM - ROUND UP

The following additional line closures and diversions have been reported

International

On Boxing Day evening, the only rail routes out of Switzerland to the south and west were via Geneva and Domodossola. International Gotthard line services were diverted via Bern, Puidoux/Chexbres and the Rhône valley; the Zürich TGV services were diverted via Geneva until 29th February.:

NOTEPAD is compiled by Nick Freezer. Contributions this time came from Brian Hemming, Beat Feller, Steve Horobin, Geoff Turner, members of the SRS London Branch and probably some others too.

SBB

Langnau - Trubschachen (until 29th December)

Zofingen - Safenwil (until 31st)

Suhr - Hunzenschwil (until 5th January)

Appenzeller Bahnen (AB)

Herisau - Gossau (until 5th January).

BLS

Bümpliz Nord - Kerzers (until 30th)

Niederscherli - Schwarzenberg (until 31st)

Chemins de Fer du Jura (CJ)

Following the Boxing Day storm, services on the metre gauge section were reduced to the Tramelan - Saignelégier section only, with a bus service between Tramelan and Tavannes. Long term closures were: La Chaux de Fonds - La Ferrière (until 4th January) Saignelégier - Glovelier (until 11th January)

LEB

Echallens - Bercher (until 31st)

LSE

Wolfenschiessen - Engelberg (until 5th January) - around 1.5 km of overhead on the rack section was brought down.

MC

Les Marécottes - Le Châtelard (until 6th January)

MOB

Zweisimmen - Lenk (until 5th January)

Rougemont - Zweisimmen (until 7th January)

Blonay - Chamby (until 11th January)

Les Avants - Montbovon, Château d'Oex - Rougemont (until 14th January)

Montbovon - Château d'Oex (until 19th January)

RM

Huttwil - Wolhusen (until 28th)

Konolfingen - Thun (until 28th)

SZU

The diesel-powered service to Uetliberg after the Boxing Day storm, described in the last Swiss Express, was actually only provided on New Years Eve and on Sundays. Normal electric service was not restored until 28th January.

Other section closed were:

Sihlwald - Sihlbrugg (until 28th January)

Uitikon - Ringlikon - Electric services from 5th January.