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INTERNATIONAL

To mark 100 days of operation of Swiss Rail Cargo Köln, the SBB / HUPAC / HGK joint venture, Re482 000 was named 'Köln' in its 'host' city on 29th October. SRC Köln were expected to reach the 100 trains per week level on the Köln – Basel – Gotthard – Chiasso axis by December 2002.

Trials of dual voltage engines of FS class E412 class have been carried out in the Bellinzona area from 18th November, using E412 003 / 004.

SBB CFF FFS

Heavy storms closed the Simplon tunnel for 15 hours on 16th / 17th November. As the same storms washed out the Simplon Pass road between Gondo and Iselle, the SBB provided a substitute road transport shuttle between Brig and Iselle until early December.

Reliability of the ETCS Level 2 cab signalling on the Sursee – Zofingen line continues to be poor, with failures averaging over one per day. This failure has prompted the SBB to signal the Mattstetten – Rothrist NBS line with conventional signals, a decision that will reduce the capacity of that line when it opens in December 2003.

The new bls Re 485 on handover day at Spiez, see the bls section for full details. Photo: ©bls

Two coaches of a Milano – Geneva IR service derailed at Sion at 11.55 on 17th November. Services were quickly restored, but single line operation was required between Sion and St Léonard for the next two days.

A 1600 metre long diversion of the Olten – Bern between Roggwil-Wynau and Langenthal, parallel to the Mattstetten – Rothrist NBS, came into use on 21st November. Four days later, the overhead came down between the two stations!

Passenger services over part of the Geneva – La Praille line started with the timetable change on 15th December, with eight return trips daily extended from Cornavin to a new halt at Lancy-Pont Rouge. Other halts opened on 15th December are at:

Emmenbrücke Gersag, between Emmenbrücke and the junction of the Seetalbahn with the Luzern - Olten line;
Längenbold: Luzern – Rotkreuz line, between Gisikon-Root and Ebikon;
Klingnau: Baden – Koblenz line, between Döttingen and Koblenz.

The refurbished Seetalbahn uses tramway style signalling between Hochdorf and Lenzburg, with a reduced loading gauge to allow better road – rail separation along the roadside sections. Despite the end of goods traffic in this area, sidings are still in place at remodelled stations such as Beinwil am See.

RABe 520003 was named *Eschenbach* at 'home' on 24th October.

Approval has been granted to lift the disused lines between Wildegg and Lenzburg Stadt (Seetalbahn) and Herzogenbuchsee and Solothurn.

SBB Brünig

Stadler AG are constructing 3-coach EMUs for the local services out of Interlaken and Luzern. These will be similar to the BVZ order but will not be rack equipped.



Ae4/4 252 has been once more – and this time, it seems, finally – been withdrawn. First choice replacement for its diagram on Spiez – Zweifelden RX services has been 1959-built Be4/4 762. Also 'new' for the autumn is the use of blue / cream Be4/4 761 as first choice for the Spiez – Reichenbach local service.

The bls Gürbetal line is being upgraded in connection with the Bern S-Bahn project. In order to provide additional capacity and more reliable and flexible operations some sections are being doubled: Fischermätteli to Weissenbühl, Kehrsatz Nord to Kehrsatz, Falkenhaus to Belp and Toffen to Kaufdorf. Some short term delays are inevitable until completion and to help reliability during peak hours the stop at Kehrsatz Nord is being omitted on certain times. In the long term however, by December 2004 to be precise when a new nationwide timetable comes into effect, the S3 and S33 services between Bern and Belp will be integrated into a 15-minute service for most of the week.

bls Cargo has taken over from Lokoop the contract for operation of oil traffic from the refinery at Cornaux to Birsfelden Hafen and Glattbrugg. To shunt the refinery sidings, they have acquired DB 345 164 (former DR type V100), which now carries the number Em845 001.

The first Re465 arrived at Spiez on 26th November and was formally handed over on 3rd December. 465 001 is painted in a silver grey livery with apple green cabs, and is undergoing tests in conjunction

with sister engine DB 185 086. (See picture above) The long-standing hire of SBB Ae6/6s finally finished on December 14th. From the following day, Re465's regained diagrams on passenger trains.

The appointment of a woman to a senior post within the bls was reported in a previous issue of SE. The bls has continued this enlightened policy with another appointment, that of Dr. Ursula Good-Widmer who has become, from November 2002, head of Communications. Dr. Good-Widmer, who is only 35 and did her doctorate in economics, previously worked at the MThB and Lokoop AG. Her immediate role will involve the changes required as the bls changes its operating strategy over the next few years. She in turn replaces Sonja Bietenhard-Ritter, who has moved to a new post within the mobile communications industry.

OTHER STANDARD GAUGE



Chemins de fer du Jura

Both the company and the Jura Canton have expressed opposition to SBB Cargo's proposal to take over operation of freight traffic over the standard gauge Porrentruy – Bonfol section.



There has been a major renumbering of railcars and driving trailers as follows (new numbers first):

Railcars: 220 ex 261, 221-226 not renumbered, 227" ex 281, 230-233 not renumbered, 234 ex 227', 235 ex 228, 236 ex 229, 237-240 ex 262-265, 241-242 ex 282-283, 250 ex 201, 256-257 ex 235-236, 258-259 ex 266-267.

Driving trailers: 911 ex 941, 920 ex 961, 921-926 not renumbered, 927" ex 981, 930-933 not renumbered, 934" ex 927', 935-936 ex 928-929, 937-940 ex 962-965, 941-942 ex 982-983, 950 ex 901, 990 ex 934", 991 ex 952.



RORSCHACH - HEIDEN - BEROBAHN

Extra trains were provided for the Christmas Market at Heiden on 1st December. Motive power was provided

by DZeh2/4 22 of 1930, at the valley end of a set of coaches. 'Radio control' between the conductor at the head of the train and the driver was used on uphill working, as the engine is not equipped for multiple working. The service train was passed on the dead-end siding at Wienacht-Tobel.

Having hired out RM Re456 152 / 153 to the SBB (see THURBO section), the SOB have been using historic engine Be4/4 11 (ex BT) on the lunchtime Romanshorn – St Gallen postal train.

The status of SOB Ae 476.468 is unclear. It was certainly not renumbered Ae 012 042 as shown in the December issue but has been renumbered (date unknown) to Ae 476 012

THURBO AND

mittelthurgaubahn

The Mittel Thurgau Bahn was formally dissolved on 15th December. From the same date, THURBO, now purely a SBB / Canton Thurgau collaboration, took over the operation of the north-eastern regional network. The company has taken direct responsibility for the former MThB multiple units, but is only hiring RBe 540 and RBDe 560 units from the SBB. However, the hired units will also carry the THURBO branding.

The MThB and Lokoop engines have been disposed of as follows:

Re4/4 21 has been taken into SBB Passenger stock as Re4/4^{II} 11172 (the number formerly carried by a 1979 accident victim).

Lokoop Ae477 (ex DR 142) are now SBB type Ae411. In the autumn, most of the 16 strong fleet were in store, the only diagrams remaining being for the postal train between Frauenfeld and Chur, and for a goods train between Singen and Horn. By December all but one of these locomotives were stored at Etzwilen. The remaining loco, 477 915, was the last to be in traffic (on a postal train on 14.12.02) and is currently stored at Samstagern. It is reported that it is likely these locos will go for scrap. None have received their allocated SBB numbers

Re486 651 – 656 have been taken into SBB Cargo stock as Re481 001 – 006 but as late as February were not in service. They have moved from Schaffhausen to Basel and being fitted with German-type pantographs.

Re416 625 – 628 have been returned to Classic Rail and are stored at Bodio. As partial replacement, SBB are sub-hiring RM Re456 152 / 153 from the SOB.

METRE GAUGE.

AAR Bus + Bahn

This is the new trading name for the combination of the WSB and the BBA bus company. (AAR is apparently not an acronym: it represents Aargau, Aarau, Aare.) The trains still state in smaller text "Wynental and Suhrentalbahn"; they also bear the slogan "Warum Nicht?" (Why not?)

On 15th December, the diversion of the line from Reinach to Menziken using the formation of the ex-SBB Beinwil am See - Beromünster branch was opened. Menziken new station has been constructed in such a way that the line could easily be extended further towards Beromünster in future.



13 new Be2/6 railcars are on order for the Forchbahn. The first will be delivered in September 2003, with the remainder following between January and November 2004.



Ferrovia retica
Vialier retica

Heavy rain causing landslides in Graubünden on 16th November caused major disruption to rail services in the Canton.

On 17th November, the Ilanz – Disentis – Sedrun line was blocked, as was the Albula line between Thusis and Bever and the Arosa line below St Peter-Molinis.

Although the Albula and Arosa lines reopened on 18th November, the Thusis – Filisur section was closed again that evening following further rain. The Chur – St Peter-Molinis section closed again on 26th November, reopening on 30th but closing again on 1st December due to a further landslide in the Verbrunnenwald above Lüen-Castiel. The Arosa line finally opened throughout on 5th December.

The heaviest damage fell in the Surselva area below Disentis, with major damage between Sumvitg and Disentis and at Trun and Rueun. The FO line from Sedrun to Disentis reopened on 23rd November, as did the RhB line from Ilanz to Tavanasa. The Tavanasa – Disentis section did not reopen until 23rd December.

Damage in Canton Graubünden is reported to have cost SFr 170m.

1960's built twin units 3041 – 3044 are scheduled for modernisation. They will be equipped for multiple working; livery is reported to be brown with a blue stripe, but reports have not indicated if the units' wooden seating is to be replaced!



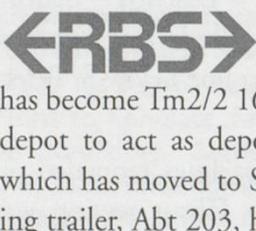
This title is the new name for the combined BVZ and FO companies. The first of the two BDSeh4/8 3-car units ordered from Stadler by BVZ for the Täsch - Zermatt shuttle service was delivered in December, arriving in unbranded BVZ livery. The middle car is panoramic, (looks like a Glacier Express coach but without doors) but the outer ones are not. (Pictures can be found on the MG / BVZ website, which can accessed at www.mgbahn.ch).

Stadler has also delivered a new diesel tractor, HGm2/2 75. It is passed for operation on the BVZ and up the GGB to Gornergrat.



Tunnelling on the new line to replace the rack section

below Engelberg was interrupted in August when the heading struck an underground stream.



Brünig Tm^{II} 596 was sold in August 2002 to RBS where it has become Tm2/2 161. It is allocated to Worboden depot to act as depot pilot displacing Tm2/2 162 which has moved to Solothurn depot. A further driving trailer, Abt 203, has been sold to the BOB.



Ferrovia retica
Vialier retica

Schiers station is to be rebuilt and double track provided between there and Grüschi.

The RhB is celebrating the centenary of the Albula Line this summer, with a special return working scheduled each weekend (except 26th July) between 28th June and 14th October. Diagrammed for a 'Baby Krok', leaving Chur at 10.00 and returning from Samedan at 15.20, the train runs as 'third class' (using the 'steam' stock) on Saturdays and 'first class' (using the Pullman rake) on Sundays. Special tickets are required, with reductions for pass holders. The biennial Bergün Bahnhoffest is booked to take place on 27th – 29th June.

On the Saturday of the World Economic Forum in Davos (25th January) the authorities were (with some justification) expecting significant protester action. The timetable in the area was suspended for most of the day with shuttle services and some bustitution instead. A temporary platform was set up just west of Fideris, adjacent to a "tent city" army/police checkpoint at which all eastbound road and rail passengers who had got through earlier checks at Landquart were checked before (perhaps) being allowed to continue their journeys. There was some trouble and damage by protesters who were prevented from reaching Davos at Fideris, Landquart and (that evening) at Bern.

In January, the Bergün - Preda toboggan shuttle trains were being worked push-pull by a Ge6/6II, centre entrance coaches, modified with longitudinal bench seats, leaving space in the middle for toboggans and a 1721 series driving trailer.



The last remnants of the Bex – Bévieux tram service ended on 14th December, bringing to an end regular service for the three-axle trams 15 and 16.

LIGHT RAIL AND METROS

Transport Lausannois (TL)

A referendum on the reconstruction and extension of the Lausanne – Ouchy line as a rubber tyred Metro was approved by the voters of Canton Vaud on 24th November.



An order for 21 'Cityrunner' trams has been placed with Bombardier, with an option for 17 additional sets. Construction will take place at Villeneuve (former ACMV works) and the former SGP works at Wien. These are required for the expanded city network, of which the first section will open in December 2003 with the extension of Line 13 from Cornavin station to Palais des Nations.



Approval has been obtained for 22 centre sections to lengthen Be4/6 'Tram 2000' units to Be4/8 formation. Planned introduction is from May 2004 on routes 5, 6 and 10.

Troubles continue with the first batch of 'Cobra' trams. Only two of the six strong fleet were in use

on Route 4 at the end of 2002, with the others out of service for modification to the drive gearing. Even the modified sets are suffering regular door failures, fixing which requires a time consuming reboot of the control system. VBZ need to decide by May 2003 whether to confirm the main order for a further 69 trams.

Bern Mobil

The first Combino has been delivered and is undergoing approval trials

PRESERVATION

Club 1889

This group's latest restoration project re-entered service in the RhB heritage fleet on 19th October. Coach B2 2138, originally built by SIG in 1903 as AB 119 for the opening of the Albula Line, has been restored externally to its original condition (although carrying its 1956 number) carrying the name 'Filisurer Stübl'. Internally, the coach is laid out as a bar coach, with specialities offering a "Filisurer Stübl Teller", not to mention bottles of the 'Filisurer Stübl' beer, brewed at the Monstein brewery!

EARLY FEBRUARY SNOW

Early February saw severe disruption to mountain railways following the heaviest snowfalls in three years. As a snapshot, the closures on February 6th were follows:

SBB Brünig: Brienz - Interlaken Ost

BLM: Lauterbrunnen - Murren

WAB: Brandegg and Wengen - Kleine Scheidegg

MO: Sembrancher - Orsières

MC/SNCF: Le Châtelard

Frontière - St Gervais les Bains

MGB/FO: Niederwald -

Disentis, Göschenen -

Andermatt

RhB: Trun - Disentis.

All these closures were for avalanche risk, except for the SNCF (heavy snowfall) and the RhB where both railway and road between Sumvitg and Disentis

had been blocked by an avalanche at lunchtime. As a measure of the snowfall, the Re460 webcam revealed heavy snowfall in the Emmental region, with snow over the railhead in Langnau station.

Transport Ministers from Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands and Italy have recently signed a new accord designed to move more transalpine trucks off the roads and on to the railways.

The Swiss government have a target of cutting LGVs on Swiss roads by half. This is a very stiff target. One of the interesting comments came from Switzerland's Road Transport Association who saw the accord as a positive move to improve the congestion which regularly turns mountain roads into giant parking lots. This probably would not happen in the UK! The RTA also made the point that international cooperation at minister level needed to be translated into cooperation at the local level between railway companies, customs and administrators.

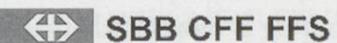
Information from Swissinfo

NOTEPAD is compiled by Nick Freezer. Contributions this time are from: Brian Hemming in particular, Malcolm Hardy-Randall, Duncan McKay, Steve Horobin, George Hoekstra, Rupert Chambers and David Stevenson. Other items are acknowledged as appropriate.

Items for inclusion in **NOTEPAD** should be sent to Swiss Express in the normal way via email/post or whatever method you feel appropriate. Topical pictures are particularly welcome. If you see something interesting take a picture or make a note. We may not use it but if it isn't sent in we will never know.

STOCK CHANGES

Brian Hemming



September 2002

New:	Tm 234 108, 131, 132	RABe 520 005
Withdrawn:	Te ⁱⁱ 69 84 Tm ⁱⁱ 610	Re4/4 ⁱⁱ 10033 Ee3/3 -16333/69 XTm - 91551
Rebuilt &/or renumbered:		Re6/6 11660 to Re 620 060

October 2002

New:	Tm 234 109 - 113	RABe 520 006 — 007
Acquired:	Tm 233 910/11 (ex MThB Tm 236 642/43)	
	Ae 411 001 — 018 (ex Lokoop Ae 477 001 — 013, 015 — 018, 030)	
	Re 481 001 — 006 (ex MThB 486 001 — 006)	
Withdrawn:	Te ⁱⁱ 168 Tm ⁱⁱ 469/87	Tm ⁱⁱ 601/69/92/748
Named:	Re 482 000 K In	RABe 520 005 Eschenbach

November 2002

New:	Tm 234 114 - 117	RABe 520 008 — 009
Acquired:	Re4/4 ⁱⁱ 11172 (ex MThB Re4/4 ⁱⁱ 21)	
Withdrawn:	Tm ⁱⁱ 501	Ee3/3 16331
Renumbered:		Re6/6 11665 to Re 620 065 (to Cargo livery)

December 2002

New:	Tm 234 118, 134	RABe 520 000, 010-012
Withdrawn:	Te ⁱⁱ 92	Te ⁱⁱ 144 Tm ⁱⁱ 650/64/71/7/804/43 Ee3/3 ⁱⁱ 16505
Renumbered:		Re4/4 ⁱⁱ 11276 to 420 276 Re4/4 ⁱⁱ 11371 to 421 371
		Re6/6 11655/61 to Re 620 055/061 (all to Cargo livery)

The renumbering and repainting of Re4/4ⁱⁱ 11276 and Re6/6s 11655/65 sees the disappearance of the short-lived green and white Cargo livery