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International

The six Re486 locomotives acquired new by Lokoop and now the property of SBB Cargo have been hired to their German partner company in the Swiss Rail Cargo alliance, Hafen und Güterverkehr Köln (HGK). They will be used on the same duties, such as Köln – Basel, as the almost identical Class 145 locomotives, which HGK has hired directly from the Bombardier fleet.

The 1989 – opened 7km long Monte Olimpino II tunnel south of Como, was closed by the Italian infrastructure authority at the end of November 2002; the closure was expected to last until the middle of April. The immediate alternative route via the Monte Olimpino I tunnel has a restricted loading gauge and includes an 18‰ gradient out of Como. Much goods traffic has been diverted either via Luino or via Austria and the Brenner Pass.



SBB CFF FFS

Passenger-kilometres in 2002 were increased by 6.6%, largely attributable to the extra traffic generated by Expo '02. The slump in the European economy saw goods traffic fall by 7.1% over the same period.

Due to the continuing lack of reliability of the ETCS Level 2 signalling system, conventional signalling will be reinstalled on the trial section of the Olten – Luzern line between Zofingen and Sempach. A decision will be taken later this year on whether the trial stretch will be upgraded or removed completely.

Additional loops are to be installed on the Delémont – Laufen section of the Jura main line, to accommodate the revised timetable from the opening of the Olten – Bern NBS in December 2004. The planned crossing point for the Bern – Geneva Interregio service will move from Delémont to Liesberg, where the existing loop will be remodelled and the centre platform (and subway) removed. To allow for late running, a loop will also be installed at Bärschwil. All the intermediate stations on this line were closed to passenger traffic in May 1998(?) when the *Regionalzüge* from Basel were withdrawn beyond Laufen. Laufen to Basel now forms part of the Basel S-Bahn network.

In early January, SBB Cargo carried out tests on extra-long train operation, which will become possible, once the Gotthard Base Tunnel opens. Carried out on the freight-only Laufenburg – Koblenz section of the Rhine Valley line, a train length of 1600m (4300t overall weight) was achieved. Three Re460s were used, at the front, middle and rear of the train.

The 18 Ae477 locomotives taken over from Lokoop have been sold to the Westfälische Almetal Bahn in Germany, who are selling six on to an operator in Berlin. (See FOOC in this issue)

Brünig

A contract has been placed with Siemens to renew all the signalling on the Brünig Line. Replacing the system installed on electrification 60 years ago, this will see all stations controlled from Meiringen, and will include a double track section between the outskirts of Luzern and Horw.

SBB Historic

The SBB Historic division has taken on the old warehouse at Interlaken West for parts storage.

The relaunch of TEE unit 1053 is expected to take place at the end of June following the completion of its overhaul at the BLS Bönigen works. Sister unit 1055, which had been in use as office accommodation at Biel/Bienne from April 2000, was moved to Bönigen on 12th December for part recovery.

SBB / BLS

The SBB depot at Bern was transferred to BLS control on 1st January. This change is because Holligen depot is too small to handle the fleet for the full Bern S-Bahn network, which BLS are due to take over in the next couple of years. Most of the staff based at Bern have also transferred to BLS employment.

The first of a new generation of Tunnel Emergency trains has entered service. Based on the German Cargo Sprinter concept, and designated LRZ 04, this SBB operated example it joins the existing 18 strong fleet (17 SBB, 1 BLS) dating from the mid 1970's and 1990's. The BLS will be acquiring two LRZ 04 units for the Lötschberg base tunnel.

The first EW III Pendelzug set arrived at Bönigen for refurbishment just before Christmas. This will bring

the interior up to modern standards before these trains enter BLS service.

RAlpin

Since December 2002, DB Class 185 locomotives have taken over RAlpin services between Freiburg im Breisgau and Spiez, from where BLS Re465's take over to and from Domodossola. The 185's have been modified to work over Swiss tracks at a cost of around SFr 375,000 per locomotive for the signalling equipment fittings and software modifications.

Due to heavy snowfall, a snowplough wagon (SBB type Rs-v) was included in the train formation between Spiez and Domodossola between 4th and 7th February. The wagon was included to sweep the 'four-foot' to clear the way for the low floor lorry flats!

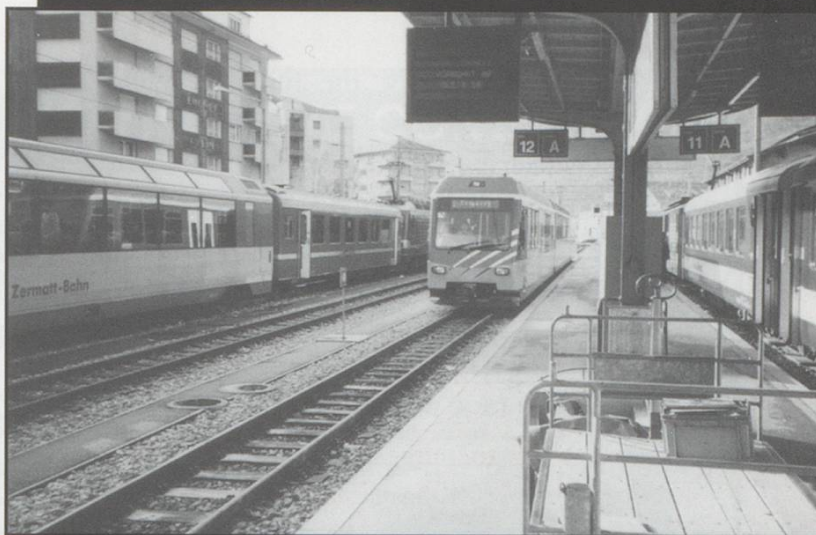
bls Re485 002 was delivered to Spiez in mid March. Re485 001 is being used for artisan and driver training.

BLS Cargo have started running an oil train for Alcan via the Lötschberg to Sierre, using DB wagons. On 5th March, this was powered by Ae6/8 205.

In the 'historic' fleet, ABDe4/8 752 and 754 have been stored defective at Heustrich. With Ae4/4 252 broken up after fire damage, this leaves serviceable three Ae4/4's (251, 257 and 258), one Ae8/8 (273), two Be4/4 railcars (761 and 762) and five ABDe4/8 railcars, three single cab sets (748 – 750) and two double cab sets (752 and 755).

Re465's have returned to passenger duties since the timetable change, being used as motive power for the four BLS EW IV pendelzug sets.

Paul Harpum, who is related to Richard Harpum, an SRS member, was in the right place on Friday 24th January 2003 when the FO and BVZ changed their name. "I was enjoying a stay in the snow at Kandersteg using a Swiss Pass. I had just arrived in Brig from Montreux and was about to catch a train towards Andermatt when I took the attached pictures. The train was full of BVZ and FO Management and Press." I am indebted to Paul for the use of these pictures. Exclusive?



On weekdays since January, the three surviving Ae4/4's have been concentrated on the Interlaken – Zweisimmen 'Golden Pass' and Interlaken – Bern workings. At weekends, two Ae4/4's have been employed on car train duties, using two-axle flats. The Zweisimmen – Spiez RX diagram is now normally worked by a Be4/4 railcar. On Saturdays in February, RX 2365 (10 21 Zweisimmen – Spiez), the normal Be4/4 duty, was extended to Bern as a relief train.

mittelthurgaubahn

Unterwegs in der Region Bodensee

MThB Ec3/5 3 of 1911, along with two coaches, has been sold to the newly formed Historische MittelThurgauBahn group. A promotional tour in the Thurgau region took place on March 1st and 2nd.

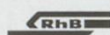


Prompted by the forthcoming delivery of a fleet of two and three unit GTW units from Stadler, the RM have decided to renumber their railcar fleet by design, eliminating the historic division into the nominal EBT, VHB and SMB fleet.

Re436 112 was used on 1st March to haul an Italy – Germany charter train all the way from Domodossola over the Lötschberg to Basel Bad. Bhf.

THURBO

One of the Diesel GTW units used on the Radolfzell – Stockach service was sent to Bönigen works for overhaul on 1st February. It was replaced on service by a unit hired from the Hochwaldbahn.



Rhätische Bahn®

Ferrovia retica
Viafier retica

The World Ski Championships, staged at St Moritz in February, saw all services on the Albula line strengthened to full line capacity. Even the three restaurant car duties were run as pairs, with dining cars coupled to the kitchen cars!

The Engadin Ski Marathon on March 9th gave the RhB its heaviest passenger loading of the year, with extra trains from Chur, Landquart, Davos and Zernez delivering around 4000 extra passengers to the start line in a 90-minute period. Return traffic, from a temporary halt near S-chanf, used a 15-minute interval service towards St Moritz and five trains to Landquart via the Vereina Tunnel.

The turntable at Sumvitg-Cumpadials, relocated

from Disentis, saw its first use on May 11th for a Mothering Sunday steam special from Landquart to Disentis.



The 'AAR' organisation is a marketing grouping rather than a transport company. The WSB remains the infrastructure and operating company for the Schöftland – Aaerau – Menziken lines.

BERN MOBIL

The first Combino, Be4/6 755, entered service on February 8th. The type is currently restricted to Route 9 (Wabern – Guisanplatz) due to the design being too heavy for the Kirchenfeldbrücke.

Brian Hemming

STOCK CHANGES



SBB CFF FFS

January 2003

New: Tm 234 133, 135-138

Re-instated: Te^{III} 144

Withdrawn: Tm 744/72/83/89/822/35
RBe4/4 1403

Renumbered: Re4/4^{III} 11379/97 to Re 421 379/97

February 2003

New: Tm 234 139/40 RABe – 520 013/14

Acquired: Tm - 233 950 (ex MThB, probably 826 641), 236 649 (ex MThB – not yet renumbered into SBB series)

Withdrawn: RBe4/4 - 1402

Renumbered: Re4/4^{III} - 11373 to Re 421 37

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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.

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