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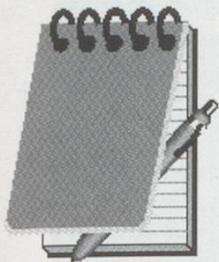
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23rd October 2004 - Olten 520-016-7 on special service to Olten Depot as part of the celebrations surrounding the opening of the NBS mentioned below. There are more pictures of this event elsewhere in SE
Photo: Duncan McKay



INTERNATIONAL

SNCF class BB 37000 took over operation of freight trains between Mulhouse and Basel RB from class BB 20200.

SBB CFF FFS

With three Bt coaches damaged in the side-on collision at Oberwinterthur on 10th June, a 'long' DPZ set, with a formation of Re450 / B / AB / B / AB / B / Re450, entered service in August on Route S8 (Pfäffikon – Thalwil – Zürich – Winterthur)

The first public services over the Mattstetten – Rothrist NBS section operated on 23rd October in conjunction with a Rail Fest at Olten. An hourly service was provided between Bern and Olten, also between Solothurn and Olten over the spur from the NBS at Inkwil.

To accommodate traffic for the Payerne air show on 4th and 5th September, and which was heavily promoted on the SBB website, all services serving the Fribourg town were heavily strengthened. In morning and afternoon, an hourly express service was operated between Yverdon and Fribourg calling at Payerne only, two extra trains ran from Lausanne and all local services were strengthened

TA Kirow rail crane fell over during track maintenance outside Aarau during the night of 26th / 27th June, blocking two of the four tracks completely and damaging cables in the area. All services through Aarau were suspended from start of traffic on Sunday morning, with Bern - Romanshorn services being diverted via the Aarberg

NEW TECHNOLOGY TICKETING

SBB has announced plans to sell tickets over the mobile phone network next year. Its President, Benedikt Weibel, told the media that the system could allow for the introduction of differentiated pricing. According to Weibel, travellers will be able to buy their tickets by sending an SMS - indicating their departure station and destination - to a special number. They will then receive a message that can be used as a ticket. Weibel said that using mobile phone technology for ticket sales would offer new opportunities. But he also suggested that prices might vary in the future according to the time of day and when the sale was made and added that the railways price structure could, in future, be modelled along the lines used by low-cost airlines and telephone companies. He did say that, for the time being, the current pricing system, which guarantees access to all trains, would remain in place.

INTERNET

SBB has also introduced full-blown sales via the Internet enabling customers to print their own tickets at home. Previously, travellers could only order their tickets on the web, which were then delivered by mail up to three days later. Under the new system, customers must pay using a credit card before the ticket data is sent to them. They can then print out the ticket on a standard sheet of paper. To travel with the ticket, they must show conductors an identification card, since Internet passes are attributed to one person. Other improvements are on the cards for travellers. Connections will be announced on board the Federal Railways' newest trains. Weibel could not say whether all the rolling stock would be upgraded, but he did promise that advertising would not be broadcast on trains.

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loop, Zofingen and Suhr with non-stop Bern - Zürich services routed via Pratteln and the Botzberg line. Signalling was restored at 0900 and main line services resumed on two tracks; some local services resumed after the third line reopened at 1600 but the fourth track was not reopened until 0820 on 29th June.

MThB Re4/4 21, for the past two years officially SBB Re4/4^{II} 11272 but which retained its old livery and identity, was transferred to Bellinzona Works on 9th September for overhaul and repainting into standard SBB Passenger livery.

↔ SBB Brünig

A temporary platform at Kriens Mattenhof, which will become part of the Luzern S-Bahn network from December 12th, was specially opened on 21st and 22nd August to help serve the Wrestling and Alpine festival at Luzern Allmend. Trains only served the halt from the Hergiswil direction in the morning and towards Hergiswil in the afternoon.

Brienz station has acquired (outside) platforms and been reduced to two through tracks. As opened, access to the lakeside platform is only available from the level crossing, which still provides the access to the steamer pier.

Zentralbahn trains will apparently be branded "Luzern Engelberg Interlaken"; the original proposal to use "Luzern Engelberg Brünig" having apparently fallen foul of the sensibilities of the Berner Oberland

bls

To allow driving trailers Bt 950 - 953 from the Bern - Neuchâtel - La Chaux-de-Fonds RX services to be refurbished, the BDt from the Simmental RX set was transferred to Neuchâtel for the period mid July to the end of August. The Simmental diagram was operated with the Ae4/4 running round at both Spiez and Zweisimmen, except for trains 2380 and 2383, which were worked top and tailed by two engines (the trailing engine being dead) to accommodate the four minute layover at Spiez between trains 2383 (arrive 1758) and 2386 (depart 1802). Work was shared between Ae4/4's 257 and newly reinstated 258.

The Golden Pass Pendelzug set has been diagrammed for Ae4/4 251, which carries a HAG sponsored commemoration of its 60 years of service. The set changes to Re4/4 haulage at weekends; on Sunday evenings the set has been used as a relief IC service from Interlaken Ost to Bern for train 1937, the (notoriously heavily loaded) 1739 departure from Interlaken Ost.

Due to the potential collapse of a (two years old!) tunnel on the Kandersteg road at Mitholz, Lötschberg road traffic had to be routed over the unmade service road for the NEAT construction site from 23rd to 30th July until a diversion could be built. The BLS responded by extending northbound car shuttles between 26th and 30th July to a temporary terminal on track 1 at Frutigen; due to the lack of a reception area there, the shuttles returned empty to Kandersteg to pick up cars there.

The first production 'Jumbo' articulated twin set entered service in July. Unlike the prototype, the production series only use one EW I coach; a new low floor middle section containing the plug doors and the articulation has been used to 'stretch' the donor coach. The coaches will be used to replace the intermediate coach in the Bern S-Bahn NPZ fleet.

Between 18th and 20th July, electrical interference tests were carried out in the Wimmis area of the Simmental line. Overnight, the line was single end fed from Zweisimmen and tests carried out to check interference levels on modern rolling stock as part of the Lötschberg Base Tunnel assurance program. Included in the tests were SBB Re450, 460 and ICN (RABDe500) vehicles, BLS classes Re465, Re485, RABe525, also a RM GTW unit and an ÖBB 'Taurus' loco of Class 1116.

Spiez - Interlaken locals are now normally worked by NINA units; the Goppenstein - Brig local service is in the hands of a two-car (RBDe + Bt) NPZ unit.

BOB

ABe4/4 305, damaged in the Gsteigwiler accident, re-entered service on 28th June in the new blue and yellow livery.

The first of five three-section low floor trailer sets, ABt 421, was delivered from Stadler Altenrhein to Interlaken on 13th August.



RM GTW 2/6 526 265 at Solothurn. 07/10/04.
Photo: Mark Barber



A quantity of the now spare 1960's fleet is to go to Madagascar, where the motor coaches will be converted to DEMUs for use on suburban services around the capital. Be4/4 15 and 16, together with Bt 101 / 103, are the first of the series to be transferred.



A near miss was reported on the afternoon of 23rd August, with both train 907, 1002 St Moritz – Zermatt and train 112, 1710 Zermatt – Brig, in the Randa – Herbiggen section at the same time. Fortunately, speeds over rack sections are slow and a collision was avoided. On schedule, the two trains should have passed at Herbiggen.



The service suspension between Nyon CFF and Les Plantaz ended on 4th July with the opening of the new underground station at Nyon. (Photographs of the new station are overleaf)



The Wrestling and Alpine festival at Rigi Staffel on 18th July saw practically the entire fleet in service. Loco He 18 was given the most critical diagram, taking the beer up from Vitznau to Staffel in the morning! 18 then ran light to Arth-Goldau to collect B2 7 and 14 for return traffic in the afternoon.



The last GTW unit was delivered on 13th August.

THURBO

Repairs to the Emmersberg tunnel between Schaffhausen and Feuerthalen overran dramatically due to unforeseen geological complications. Instead of the line reopening on 7th August, the closure actually extended from 12th June until 29th October.

Ex-MThB ABDe4/4 16 + Bt 204 has been sold to TRAVYS for use on their Vallorbe – Le Brassus services. This set is third hand, having run as GFM ABDe4/4 171 + Bt 371 from 1966 to 1983.



TROGENERBAHN The first of the pair of Stadler built articulated units has been delivered, due to enter service during November. Track spacing in St Gallen has had to be widened to accommodate the new units.

The line's three trailer coaches B 11 – 13, originally built for the Lausanne – Moudon line of the Tramways Lausannois, have been sold to the IRR Museum Rheinschauen at Lustenau in Austria, where they will be run on 760cm gauge bogies.

WAB

The second track between Rohr and Brandegg on the Grindelwald section was brought into use in July.

The two Panoramic sets 141 and 142 have been delivered.



TOP:
NStCM Bt 305 & Be4/4 302. New Nyon
underground station. 2000hrs 01.10.04



LOWER.
NStCM Be4/4 204. A/A. Station still not
quite finished, no seats etc. The connection
to the SBB station is a bit primitive and you
need all of the four minutes to get up, out
and go across to get the Geneva connection!

**RON SMITH SENT THESE PICTURES IN
RECENTLY.
SEE NOTEPAD FOR
FURTHER DETAILS.**



TRAMS



The first of the 21 six section
Bombardier – built trams was delivered to Geneva
on 27th August, and was scheduled to enter service
in October. The 51m long vehicles were built by
the Villeneuve and Wein works.



From early August 15 Combino
trams (out of 28) were scheduled for service.

Around 17.30 on August 18th, a fire broke out in
Wiesenplatz depot, badly damaging the storage
hall, fortunately without any injuries. Written off
were bar car Be4/6 602, 'Edelweiss' trailer B3 702,
the 'Badwännli' open trailer B2 1046 and Bern
tram Be8/8 711, together with a track machine.
Services to Kleinhüningen were suspended for the

rest of the day. Fortunately, most of the historic
fleet was out on city tours or stabled in the main
running shed, from which all the trams, including
stored Combinos, were evacuated and sent to
Allschwilerstrasse and Eglisee Depots overnight.

The five trams leased from Bern have been fitted
with standard trailer couplings and put into service
with BVB B4 trailers on Line 1/14. The sets have
been allocated numbers 351 to 357, subtracting
360 from the Bern running number; however 351 /
711 was written off in the fire at Wiesenplatz depot
on August 18th.

HISTORIC SEFT

Public service on the Misox line restarted on 18th
July. Three return trips between Castione and Cama
were scheduled to operate on selected Sundays up to
10th October.