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THE PROPOSED SWISS TIMETABLE 2008

David Adams



This view of the MGB service to Andermatt waiting to leave Brig will not be possible from 9th December. The locomotives on push pull trains will then be at the opposite end of the train at Brig.

The opening of both the Lötschberg Base Tunnel and the new track alignment between Brig and Bitsch on the MGB will result in several changes to the service patterns in the Brig and Visp area with the Swiss timetable change on 9th December 2007. Visp will become a major interchange point between MGB trains serving both Andermatt and Zermatt and SBB trains serving Geneva and Bern/Basel. With a journey time of only 55/58 minutes between Bern and Visp several new journey opportunities will be created, but of course one has to forego the scenic climb to Kandersteg and the breathtaking views from the BLS ramp to take advantage of these.

The following is an overview of the main changes for the benefit of SRS members who have become familiar with the current timetable. It is not a comprehensive account of every change in service and there will no doubt be some changes that will have escaped my notice so please do not hassle the Editor with any omissions that may come to notice. The information is given in good faith and obtained from the draft timetable which has been posted by the SBB on the internet for consultation (www.fahrplanentwurf.ch). Please ensure you check any planned journeys that you intend to take from 9th December 2008 onwards nearer the time.

Starting with SBB services, Visp will be served by a basic two trains per hour serving stations to Lausanne and Geneva at xx.07 & xx.34 and a local hourly service to Sion at xx.45. In the opposite direction respective arrivals at Visp are at xx.23, xx.52 & xx.12. The basic service via the Lötschberg base tunnel to Bern is hourly departing Visp at xx.57 and in the opposite direction arriving Visp at xx.02. There are also a few additional services. All of these trains serve Basel and there will no longer be any direct

services between Brig and Zürich. The service over the old line via Kandersteg and the BLS ramp is provided by an hourly stopping train that will initially run from Spiez to Brig. Arrival at Brig is xx.25 and departure north at xx.35

Moving now to the MGB, the basic Brig – Zermatt service will still run between those points hourly departing Visp at xx.10 and arriving Visp from Zermatt at xx.47. A few additional services operate, but only between Visp and Zermatt. The new MGB track alignment at Brig will allow through running without the need to reverse and, in the case of the Glacier Express services, the need to change locomotives. The station at Naters will close.

The service covering the Goms will be provided by a regular hourly stopping train between Visp and Andermatt. These trains depart Visp at xx.08 and arrive there from the east at xx.50. One downside to this new service is that through trains from Göschenen to Brig will be no more. The turn around time at Andermatt is insufficient to encompass a trip down to Göschenen and back and that latter station will be served by two shuttles per hour from Andermatt to connect in and out of the hourly Gotthard IR services. With the emphasis on making connections at Visp travellers from the Gotthard route will suffer longer connectional times on journeys to and from the Brig/Visp direction.

Overall changes to services in other parts of the country are of a relatively minor nature, such as a few minutes shaved off the Zürich – Bern times following an increase in line speed to 200 kph over the Rothrist – Mattstetten line.

I reiterate that you must always check your train times before travelling.