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INTERNATIONAL

From the start of 2008, BLS Cargo has taken an active interest in transit traffic to and from France, in conjunction with EWS subsidiary Euro Cargo Rail, SNCF Cargo and Trenitalia. The BLS / ECR collaboration includes the Manchester – Piacenza service (hand over at Basel) and a daily service which takes new cars from Turin to St Priest (near Lyon) via Simplon and Genève; the empty wagons then return to Genève before transiting Switzerland to Buchs en route to Tychy (Poland), from where the rake takes another set of new cars to Italy! This duty brings ECR Class 66s to Genève La Praille yard; BLS Cargo is currently responsible for the Domodossola – Genève and Genève – Buchs leg.

SWITZERLAND

SBB

There were two passenger train derailments on the south ramp of the Gotthard in February. On the 16th the leading coach of IR 2286 (14 39 Locarno – Zürich Hbf) derailed at Lavorgo, blocking the line between Biasca and Airolo until the morning of the 17th. On 28th February, two coaches of IC 672 (08 31 Chiasso – Basel) derailed on the crossovers at Pianotondo in the Giornico spiral. Service was again suspended between Biasca and Airolo in both directions until mid-morning on the 29th, with the line closed again on the evening of the 29th to complete the repairs.

The oldest railway tunnels in use in Switzerland, Mormont Sud and Mormont Nord just north of Eclépens station, are to be renovated. To allow double deck trains to use the line, the tunnels will be singled and a new bore built for the northbound line. Budgeted at SwF 48m, completion is planned for 2010.

The carriage pilot locomotives at Basel are now Re4/4II 11101 and 11120, with prototype RBe4/4 1404 in reserve.

SBB/SNCF

SBB and SNCF have created a company called Transfersis, which is tasked with setting up a RER network for the Genève region. The network will comprise the existing system plus the recently authorised CEVA line which will link La Praille and Annemasse by way of a new tunnel to Eaux Vives and reconstruction of the existing SNCF line in a cut and cover tunnel. It is intended that the Genève – Bellegarde line will be converted from 1500V dc to 25kv AC to ensure that only dual voltage EMUs are required in the planned 40 strong fleet. (The lines from Annemasse are already electrified at 25kV.)

Currently, CFF leases three class BB 25500 from SNCF for trip workings between La Praille yard and Vernier-Meyrin, as well as a SNCF push pull rake for Genève – Bellegarde locals, worked by a Genève (CFF) crew.

BLS

Loadings on both Lötschberg base tunnel

services and the RE services via the old line on winter weekends were sufficiently heavy to require relief trains between Bern and Brig, forcing conflicting freight traffic to divert via Kandersteg. The relief to CIS 41 was actually extended through to Domodossola.

On 16th February, the ETR 470 working CIS 51 (17 30 Basel – Milano) failed in the Base Tunnel, fortunately (!) in the double track section between Ferden and St German. Passengers were eventually evacuated via the other bore around two hours later by IC 836 (16 41 Romanshorn - Brig)

SBB / ZB / MIB

The Brünig line Rollschimmel, which are still owned by SBB Cargo, have been transferred from Luzern to Meiringen for cement traffic for Kraftwerke Oberhäsli between Interlaken Ost and Innertkirchen

THURBO

RABe 526 727 was christened 'Napoleon III' on February 21st, celebrating the bicentenary of the birth of the French Emperor at Konstanz.

SOB

The last ex DR 142, Ae476 012, out of service with a defect since October 2007, is back in German hands, rejoining its classmates under Westfälische Almetalbahn ownership on 22nd January.

BDe 576 050 (ex BT 50) took the other ex BT Pendelzug 51 – 53 plus ABt 141 / 151 / 152 to Kaiseraugst for scrap on 7th January.

SZU

The DPZ locomotives being transferred from SBB will be renumbered 456 551 and 552 from 450 067 / 070 respectively. Driver training on 456 551 was due to start on 4th April, going into passenger service from May. 456 552 is planned to enter SZU service in October.

The 59x series motorcoaches are reaching the end of their life. Single-cab 576 595 / 596 are due for withdrawal after the Euro 2008 tournament finishes in July.

AB

The new depot on the RHB line at Heiden was formally opened on 7th February. Situated alongside the platform at Heiden, it contains two tracks for train maintenance and facilities to maintain the 100 cars and 20 buses operated locally by PostAuto.

TRN

NINA unit 537 322 was hired to the BLS from March, retaining TRN livery but with 'bls' insignia. This hire leaves the line with no reserve stock at peak periods, with four passenger sets for four duties.

ZB

Former LSE BDeh4/4 6, out of service with collision damage since September 2003, returned to service in November 2007 after overhaul. Now formally numbered BDeh 140 006,

but carrying '6' on the cab fronts, the revised livery is similar to the De110.

ABe130 'SPATZ' units are no longer used in multiple; strengthening is either provided by the new-build low floor ABt8 sets or driving trailers ABt 131 / 132 (ex LSE / RBS) or 901 (ex Brünig) with one ex-LSE B. A further Pendelzug formation (ABt and B Brünig, B LS ex LSE) is kept at Luzern to cover failures.

The four serviceable Brünig De110 locomotives have been concentrated at Meiringen, leaving ex LSE De4/4 121 and 122 at Luzern. One of the LSE pair is diagrammed for the Luzern spare Pendelzug duty, while the other acts as shed pilot at Stansstad. Deh 120 008 is now on carriage heating duties at Giswil.

Tell 202 and Tmll 598 have been overhauled, returning to service as Te 171 202 and Tm 172 598.

BOB

ABe4/4 310 has returned to service following refurbishment after flood damage three years ago, carrying the name 'Matten'

CJ / SBB

Kanton Jura have financed the installation of mixed gauge compatible sleepers during track renewal on the SBB line between Glovelier and Delémont, to keep open the option to extend CJ services to the latter station.

RhB

Panoramic coaches (1 x A, 1 x B) have been added to selected Chur – St Moritz services during the winter period (22nd December to 30th March), running with a SFr 5 supplement.

Cement trains from Untervaz for the NEAT work site at Sedrun are now so heavy that they are being split at Trun and taken up to Disentis (and then on to Sedrun) in two portions. Rostered motive power on the RhB is a Ge6/6II

TPC

For the centenary of the AOMC line in April, BCFe4/4 6 and BC 10 will be borrowed from

the Blonay Chamby to work public excursions.

With the completion of remodelling work at Aigle station, all stock is now maintained at the modern depot at En Chalex on the AOMC line. Most of the tracks in the ASD depot have been taken out of use.

Be4/4 104 and Bt 133 (AOMC line, ex-BLT) have been broken up.

TRAVYS

YSC line Be4/4 4 of 1945 has been withdrawn after a final special run on 9th February to Ste Croix and back in multiple with sister unit Be4/4 4.

TRAMS

BVB

The proposal to extend Route 8 from Kleinhüningen to Weil am Rhein was approved by the Weil am Rhein council on 29th February. BVB / SVB Bern Mobil

With the completion of the Basel Combino overhaul program, the hired Bern Be8/8 trams 712/3/4/7 are no longer required in Basel and will go to Romania

Bern

The formal start of work on the Bern West extension took place on 14th April with work on the ground starting on 16th April.

HISTORIC

BC

Visiting steam locos for the 40th anniversary of the line include DFB HG2/3 6 Weissborn (first used for trials on 7th December), with LEB G3/3 8 Echallens and RhB G3/4 1 Rhätia arriving in April.

BLS

A cavalcade has been planned for 1st June at Dürrenroth between Sumiswald and Huttwil to celebrate the centenary of the Ramsei – Huttwil line, featuring steam and electric power primarily from the BLS constituent companies.

Experimental SBB livery shown on a locomotive in the Rhône Valley.



PHOTO:SBB/CFF