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BLS Be 4/4 No 171 on the rear of the railtour at Schlatt. ALL PHOTOS: Robin Oxborough

Advertised as the “Brugg and Zurich Avoider” this railtour set off on the 30th August from Interlaken Ost, with BLS No. 183 leading and No. 171 on the rear. Having picked up more participants at Spiez it went through the yard at Thun and on to Langenthal for its first reversal and a photo stop. The tour moved on to Olten, through Muttentz yard (passing four EWS Class 66s) and took a freight curve up to Basel Bad where No.183 was swapped for No.465 007. A reversal and it retraced its route through Muttentz yard continuing through Rheinfelden, then the Brugg



avoiding line and on to Othmarsingen for another reversal. With No.465 007 now leading it travelled via Regensdorf, taking a freight-only curve at Seebach, on towards Winterthur and Schaffhausen, slowing at the side of the Rhein Falls for the view.

Travelling on via Schlatt, from where a friend and I were fortunate to have a cab ride along the shores of the Untersee to Konstanz, the tour passed OeBB steam loco No.2 that was at Etzwilen. Another reversal, then through Kreuzlingen to Romanshorn where we went about half a mile past the station to reverse and take the avoiding line towards Weinfelden, then through Wil, Wattwil, Uznach, Pfaffikon and on to Arth Goldau. The last reversal of the day took us on to Erstfeld where Day 1 terminated.

Rebranded for Day 2 as “The Gotthard Pass and Ticino Limited”, with No. 485 001 leading and No. 465 007 on the rear, the train set off south travelling via several goods loops en-route to Bellinzona and Taverne-Torricella where it headed up the freight-only line to Lugano-Vedeggio.

OeBB steam loco No.2 at Etzwilen.

Returning to the main line and continuing to Mendrisio the tour was hauled down the line towards Stabio by the Club di San Gotthardo's shunting loco No.500-2 with both of the BLS locos still either end of the train. The necessary reversal was followed by an attempted photographic run past for the benefit of the waiting photographers but confusion prevailed and the train simply moved forward to pick up those who had disembarked before returning to Mendrisio. Continuing south, and leaving the main line at Balerna, the tour headed into the Swiss part of Chiasso Smistamento yard.

After photos and a reversal the tour started back to Göschenen, again using several goods loops, and on to Erstfeld for loco No. 465 007 to run round and be added to the front along with waiting No.171 forming a triple header. We set off towards Arth-Goldau, Rotkreuz, and Lenzburg to a stop at Aarau. The train continued on via the Berne avoiding line to just outside Ostermündingen where it was held for a while to allow an engineers' train to pass. Now almost 20 minutes late (the first time in two days) it headed for Spiez and its last loco change of the day where the three locos were exchanged for Nos.173 and 181. Unfortunately the departure was delayed to let an ICE through resulting in lost connections for some participants at Interlaken Ost and taxis being used to complete journeys. Thus ended an enjoyable two day railtour with some fast running, plenty of good photo opportunities and generally excellent time keeping throughout.

MIDDLE: BLS 465 007 leads the train at Schlatt.

BOTTOM: BLS Cargo 485 001 pauses for a photo stop at Wassen.



ABOVE: BLS staff and tour stewards pose on BLS Be 4/4 No 171 before it leads the triple-headed railtour.

