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● WSB in Aarau

Another 3 km of street running disappeared on November 20th. Following the closure of the SBB (former Nationalbahn) connection from Aarau to Suhr the WSB metre gauge trains were diverted from the 'Tramstrasse' in Aarau on that date to run on new tracks laid on the old SBB/Nationalbahn alignment, connecting up in Suhr through a new underpass with the WSB line to Menziken from the 22nd. The flat crossing in Suhr of metre gauge WSB and standard gauge SBB tracks, and elaborate catenary switchgear, will disappear. WSB will take over Suhr station.



WSB line Aarau to Menziken, on the 3 km street running section just before this was replaced on 20/11/2010.

● Double track rack

A CHF9.6m project started in September 2010 will result in a 900m long section of double-track on the WAB above Wengen being available from the December 2011 timetable change. Thanks to the double track the line will be able to maintain a regular half-hourly service and long waiting times at Wengen station should also be a thing of the past.

● Xrail wins award

The Xrail alliance of SBB (Switzerland) CD Cargo (Czech) CFL Cargo (Luxembourg) DB Schenker (Germany, Netherlands and Denmark) Green Cargo (Sweden, Norway) Rail Cargo Austria (Austria, Hungary) and SNCB Logistics (Belgium) has been awarded the Swiss Logistics Award 2010 for innovation. Xrail is designed to increase international wagon load freight traffic by improving efficiency and is planned to be rolled out across Europe progressively. More details at www.sbbcargo.com and at www.xrail.eu

● Rhaetian Railways order more trains

At Samedan on the 20th December 2010 RhB's retiring Chairman Herr Erwin Rutishauser signed a CHF110m contract with Stadler for seven 6-car fixed-formation articulated train sets for the Albula line. The units will have two 1st Class and four 2nd Class coaches one of which will have a wheelchair accessible low-floor section and toilet, another will feature a family/children's area. The units will be loco-hauled hence allowing for additional coaches to be added in busy periods. They are to be delivered from 2013. The contract was signed during Herr Rutishauser's farewell trip, which included setting a new metre gauge speed record of 145 kph on the south side of the Vereina tunnel. This is Stage 3 of the RhB's renewal programme. Stage 1 was for the fifteen 3-car dual-voltage Stadler "Allegra" emus costing CHF 150m, currently being delivered for operation on the Bernina, Arosa and Davos lines. Stage 2 is for five 4-car single-voltage emus for Schiers – Rhäzüns and Chur – Thusis local services. Costing CHF 50m these will come into service in 2012. Delivery of the first Allegras has already led to withdrawal of Ge4/4 No 601, the pioneer locomotive of 1947, and the rest of the class will follow.

Information supplied by: Bryan Stone; Ron Smith; Michael Farr; Bodensee; s'Murmeli; Paul Russenberger; and Swiss Media Sources. 

MEMBER'S LETTER

From "Bramble" – The Doghouse, Switzerland

It was good of you to publish my notes of a Bramble Tour taken by a SRS member. We went out to the Jura, which I like, because Zürich is all streets and Bern is all arcades, very beautiful but nowhere to get comfortable - and I've heard they have Bears there! Les Brenets is pretty remote, but there's room to run around, and lunch wasn't bad. We always look for water, but there aren't the drinking fountains there used to be.

I'm often out on the train like this, because I have an all-year Swiss Transport Dog Pass, valid on trains, trams, buses, boats, wherever my person goes, and in 1st Class as befits a pedigree Irish Setter lady. I meet a lot of friends. That gives me an idea. Any time next year, when you're travelling in Switzerland, if you see me, with my person, and come up and say 'Hello Bramble' you will get a free coffee in the nearest station. Get it wrong, and people will perhaps think you're crazy.

Here's a clue: I'm always around Brienz for the last two weeks in June, when I am often near Interlaken Ost; I spend the summer near Basel; and I go once or twice to Bergün in the winter as my person seems to like it there. He also works with steam trains (wooden seats, just fancy) in the Franches-Montagnes.

I'm campaigning for bones to be sold from the Minibar, but I'm getting nowhere, only coffee and Mars Bars. Can the SRS help? Happy New Year. 

