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INTERNATIONAL

ETR 610 units started operation over the Gotthard line from the timetable change on 12th December, on EC 153 and 158 between Basel SBB and Venezia SL; as use of the tilt facility has yet to be authorised, they cannot maintain timings and are losing approximately 20 minutes in Switzerland. (See 'Pendolini Problems on P.19')

Services on the Paris – Genève line have been completely revised to make use of the newly reopened line between Bourg en Bresse and Bellegarde. The standard journey time is now just over three hours.

SWITZERLAND

SBB

Once low floor coaches are infiltrated into the Zürich DOZ fleet, the redundant vehicles will be reformed into sets which will normally be top and tailed by engines from the Re4/4II 11201-11230 series.

With the completion of the third track between Zug and Baar, Zug Route S2 has been revised to run from Baar to Arth-Goldau hourly, with an extra hourly service on Mondays to Fridays between Baar and Walchwil; this extra service (only) will serve the newly opened halt at Walchwil Hörndli. On the other side of the Zugersee a local service, provided by SOB, has been reintroduced between Rotkreuz and Arth-Goldau, providing three journeys each way in each peak.

The commissioning of a third track between Lenzburg and Gexi on 6th September means that all Aargau Südbahn services now serve Lenzburg; the Othmarsingen curve is once more reduced to Zürich S Bahn peak services only.

The completion of the 20-year programme to rebuild Aarau station was celebrated on 22nd and 23rd October.

BLS

The Lötschberg base tunnel was closed throughout 27th, and until 07.30 on 28th November, after the failure of the point at the start of the single track section at Ferden. Services were diverted via Kandersteg with the inevitable delays.

ZENTRALBAHN

The new Engelberg tunnel eventually opened with the traditional celebrations on 11th December, with normal services commencing with the timetable change on 12th December. Services over the original line through Obermatt ceased on 7th December to facilitate full commissioning of the new alignment. The new tunnel is rack equipped throughout; the gradient is now compatible with standard Brünig stock allowing two HGe101 / ABt8 Pendelzug formations to work the hourly service. (See 'December Changes' on P.10)

The summit section was closed between 25th October and 14th November; the maintenance program included the reconstruction of Brünig-Hasliberg station to provide a platform on both loop tracks. There are now only three tracks through the station; Track 2 has a platform accessible via a foot crossing at the Lungern end of the station.

ASm

A new station has been built at Niederbipp, with one of the platform tracks (track 11) being extended in front of the SBB station building over the erstwhile SBB Track 1 to provide access to the Oensingen extension, due to open in December 2011. A bay platform (track 12) replicates the crossing functionality of the erstwhile station in the SBB station forecourt. ASm still provide standard gauge freight facilities at Oberbipp, thus the through platform track is mixed gauge.

FART

ABe4/6 55 to 58 of 1993 are being stretched with a low floor centre section and retrofitted with air conditioning. Renumbered 45 to 48, they will be used on Domodossola services. Multiple working will not be contemplated as two units would be too long for the loops.

MGB

Two new panorama coaches have been ordered from Stadler to replace Ap 4022 and 4032, written off after the July 23rd derailment near Lax.

MIB

From 6th December, MIB services have operated from Track 13 in the main station at Meiringen. (See 'December Changes')

RBS

Unit 71 is the first of the two-class ABe4/12 unit to be refurbished.

A short low floor centre section is being inserted into 'Blue' units 81 to 89 for their use through to Fischermätteli on the joint Route 6 with Bernmobil. The new classification is Be4/10; these units will cover most of the diagrams on the new Route.

RhB

ABe4/4 44 and 45, the last of the 41-46 series of Berninabahn ABe4/4 Treibwagen, were taken out of passenger service on 24th October, having lasted only a year longer than the series they were bought to replace 45 years ago. As described in the last issue Nos. 47 to 49 (dating from 1972) will be converted into works Treibwagen to replace Xe 4/4 9922-4 which were converted from original 1911 Berninabahn railcars 36, 37 and 38. Nos. 41 to 46 were despatched to Chur for scrapping during November.

63-year old Ge4/4I 601 Albula was withdrawn on 31st October and has been broken up at Landquart.

The seven replacement trainsets for the Chur – St Moritz service ordered from Stadler in December will comprise 6 car fixed formation loco-hauled sets, but were described as EMUs on the press release! When RhB announced their massive new stock investment programme several years ago it was planned that these should be EMUs so policy must have changed – without telling the Press Office. (See 'Sidetracks' on P.27)

The station building at the old station at Serneus was demolished in October, the first stage of a redevelopment plan which will see the loop lengthened and a curve in the direction of Saas realigned.

From December 13th, the morning Landquart – Vereina – St Moritz goods has been redesignated as a mixed train, leaving Landquart at 04.56.

SZU

Six 3-section articulated units have been ordered from Stadler for delivery in 2013. Although ordered for the Uetliberg section, they will have dual voltage capability allowing use over the Sihltal section.

TPC / LEB

Shortage of stock for the ASD section, with three units out of service for planned overhaul and collision repairs, has seen services to Les Diablerets operated by AL section BDeh4/4 301 + Bt 352, and by Be4/4 26 and Bt 151 hired in from the LEB.

INDUSTRY

Stadler have purchased Tem 45 and 46 from BLS for shunting at the Bussnang works and the newly completed stock commissioning centre at Erlen.

TRAMS

BERN

The Bern presence on joint route 6 to Worb will be provided by stretched Combino Be6/8 751/2, 760-5. There are two SVB diagrams on Mondays to Saturdays, and only one diagram on Sundays. The last Combino XL unit was delivered to Burgenzli depot on 11th November; the units are numbered Be6/8 651-671 and will be deployed on Routes 8 (Brunner – Saali) and 9 (Wabern – Guisanplatz).

GENÈVE

New Route 18 was inaugurated on 12th December between Coutance (adjacent to Cornavin station) and Avanchet. Although this route at present only relieves pressure on Routes 14 and 16 over this section, it will be extended to Meyrin Village in May 2011.

ZÜRICH - GLATTAL

New Tram Route 12 opened on 11th December, linking Zürich Flughafen and Stettbach via a new, surface, line between Auzelg and Stettbach via Wallisellen Bhf and Glattzentrum. Around 70000 passengers travelled on the first day. To maintain a 5 minute interval service, rather than the normal 15 minute interval, buses were drafted in! The full route is 12 km long with the 5.2km new

section, which features a 1.2km long viaduct near Wallisellen, being used for testing and training from 4th October. This CHF650m development is operated by "Cobra" trams.

HERITAGE

BC

Berninabahn ABe4/4 35 was transferred from Châtel St Denis to Chaulin on 29th October, where it will be overhauled prior to re-entering service at Easter 2011.

DBB

Much of the group's stock, including E 3/3 853 and ex EBT Te 157, was transferred from Burgdorf to the new workshop site at Konolfingen on 28th August by Ce4/4 307.

DLM / EUROVAPOR

DB 23 058 is being converted by DLM to burn light oil for use on services in the Netherlands from July 2011. Its last working as a coal-fired engine was on 21st November between Romanshorn and Schaffhausen.

RhB

A Pianobar coach, WRs 3820, has been completed for use in the Alpine Classic Pullman set.

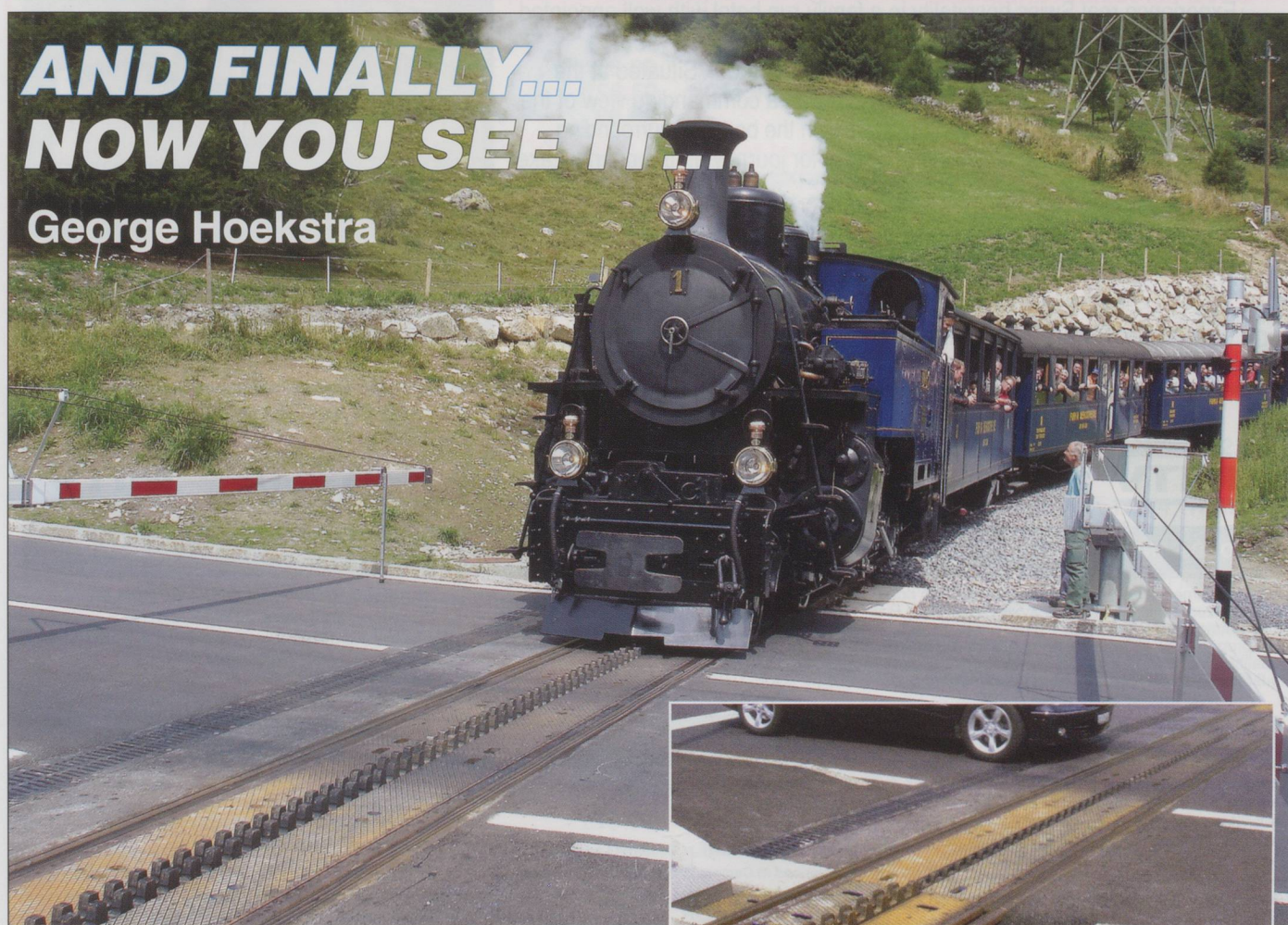
Tm2/2 15 and 26 have been sold to the CF Baie de Somme.

SOB

The centenary of the Bodensee Toggenburg main line and the Rickenbahn between Wattwil and Uznach was celebrated on 18th September with a Bahnhoffest at Wattwil. Among the visiting locomotives were the three serviceable BT Be/4's, home-based 11, 14 from Eurovapor and 15 from DVZO, 'Churchill-Pfeil' RAe4/8 1021 shuttled between Wattwil and Uznach, while the Amor Express set worked to Nesslau, top and tailed by BT Eb3/5 9 and Be3/4 43, as there is no suitable runround loop at Nesslau.

ZMB

Ex-SZU 576 592 has been outshopped by Stadler Winterthur, restored to original Sihltalbahnhof livery as BDe4/4 92.



AND FINALLY... NOW YOU SEE IT...

George Hoekstra

As the rebuilt section of the DFB from Gletsch approaches Oberwald it has to cross a road. In order to avoid hugely expensive over- or underpasses and associated earthworks this is crossed on the full incline and thus with rack. The rack would rip open every tyre of any vehicle trying to cross it, so a retractable section had to be created. In the first photograph one of the Locos rescued from Vietnam, pulling the first timetabled public service from Gletsch, has almost reached Oberwald on the 20th of August 2010. As the train is going downhill and the loco is in counter-pressure mode: hence the white smoke, also the safety valve is blowing off! The second photograph shows that after the entire train has passed the rack is lowered again to below the road surface allowing the barriers to be opened. Road traffic can cross the line without danger of ripping the tyres to shreds. As the full weight of the train rests on this rack, it is vital that it is not pushed in the downhill direction. To ensure stability, the red bar clamped to the rack in the bottom left of the picture (circled in red) is anchored in concrete and can withstand a lateral pressure of hundreds of tons. 