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INTERNATIONAL

Kanton Schaffhausen has voted in favour of establishing an S-Bahn network in the area; this will involve electrification and re-signalling of the DB line to Erzingen together with two new stations.

Work has started in earnest on the cross - Genève link with the breaking of the first (polystyrene!) buffer stop at La Praille yard on 11th November, followed on 25th November with the closure of the SNCF line from Annemasse to Eaux Vives. A bus service replacement was provided until 11th December, when the line was re-opened as far as the intermediate station at Chêne-Bourg (originally closed back in 1987), from which tram connections to Genève will be available in the morning peak by four workings on line 12 from the turning circle outside the station. See Genève News on P23.

Permission having been granted for their operation in multiple in Switzerland, one daily EC return working between Brig and Basel is now diagrammed for two ETR 610 units, with a single unit continuing to Milano.

With the re-opening of the fire-damaged section of the Simplon tunnel (see *Swiss News*) by the end of November the high tension cable to Domodossola had been replaced, allowing the Railpool 185 loco stationed there to act as a transformer to be restored to normal traffic.

SBB Cargo International has now been established as a distinct unit within SBB, running around 30,000 trains per year, two thirds of which are intermodal. At start up, they became responsible for the following locomotives:

Re420 (31 examples), Re421 (4), Re482 (27), Re474 (12) Re484 (18), BR186 (2), Re620 (27) G2000 (2), G1206 (1), V100 (3). The 186 class are employed between Netherlands and Germany.

SWITZERLAND

SBB

The first Eem923 engine for SBB Cargo was rolled out by Stadler on 14th October; a modified version of the Ee922 'passenger' tractor, it has a maximum speed of 100kph and so is capable of operating trip freights as well as yard shunting, using either 16 or 25kV AC, or under diesel power. See *Swiss News*.

Re460 003 was rolled out of Yverdon Works on 23rd September carrying an advert depicting the Swiss tennis player Roger Federer advertising Swiss National Insurance.

The first HVZ Pendelzug set (2 x Re420 sandwiching 6 double-deck coaches) started work on a morning diagram on the Niederweningen section of the S5 route; in the evening it covers 4 trips on the Zürich - Schaffhausen IR service.

The infrastructure works for the expansion of the St Gallen S Bahn network at the end of 2013 will include the provision of an extra platform at St Gallen Bhf.

BLS

The Lötschberg north ramp between Frutigen and Kandersteg, closed following storm damage on 10th October, did not re-open - and then only on one track

- until 24th October; damage on this stretch alone was estimated at CHF5m to CHF6m. Just two days before the storm struck, part of the high-speed point at Ferden in the base tunnel was renewed; during the 12 hour overnight possession around 20 goods trains and the full passenger service were diverted via Kandersteg. See *Swiss News*.

CJ

The company have taken on standard gauge shunting duties at Tavannes from SBB Cargo, thus ensuring that goods traffic can continue on the narrow gauge. To achieve this, they have bought Ee3/3 9 from PTT to join Ee 936 151/2 (PTT 11/10), acquired in May and September to work chemical waste traffic between Bonfol and Porrentruy. No. 9, renumbered Ee 936 153, has been sent directly to workshops to be fitted for multiple operation and cab signalling for use at Bonfol; as only 936 151 was so fitted on purchase, and 936 152 has been sent to cover the Tavannes diagram pending later modification, Ee3/3 14 has been hired from PTT to cover the second diagram at Bonfol.



Line up at Bonfol of the shunters new to the CJ.

PHOTO: Theo Stolz

TPF

The re-opened Bulle - Romont section is now solely used for an S-Bahn service to Fribourg, calling at Romont only; all the intermediate stations on the branch are now closed. This service replaces the express bus service between Fribourg and Bulle.

Zentralbahn

On 30th September, the ABe130 unit on Train 7418 (0547 Meiringen - Interlaken) ran into a herd of cows near Brienzwiler, suspending traffic until 8.30 and causing 8 bovine fatalities; until the unit was returned to service on 4th October, the second SPATZ diagram out of Meiringen was covered by the reserve Deh110 Pendelzug set.

Ex-LSE BDeh4/4 8, out of service with a failed transformer since the end of 2009, has been broken up.

Stadler delivered a new adhesion-only diesel tractor for works trains at the end of October; it has entered traffic as Gm 105 001. See *Swiss News*

ASm

1966-built unit Be4/4 302 has been transferred from Langenthal to Täufellen as back up for the

Nick Freezer

gravel trains between Finsterhennen and Sutz.

Ge4/4 126 and Bts 151 and 351 are in long term storage at Melchnau.

JB

2012 arrived with heavy snowfall in the Bernese Oberland; on January 6th, trains were only running between Interlaken and Zweilütschinen, with bus substitution to Grindelwald, and no service to Murren or Kleine Scheidegg due to avalanche risk. See *Winter Woes* on P19.

FART

The 1993-built two-car units Nos.55 to 58 have been modernised with a new, low floor centre coach and fitted with air conditioning. Now re-numbered and re-classified ABe4/8 Nos.45 to 48, the refurbished units entered service between June and August 2011.

RBS

Be4/12 44 has become the first 'Mandarinli' unit to be withdrawn following a farewell trip to Solothurn on 23rd October. The motor coach and driving trailer will be stripped at Worbboden works; the low-floor centre coach will be overhauled and returned to traffic in Be4/8 55.

RhB

The modernised station at Zernez was formally opened on 26th November, and the extended subway at Samedan was opened on 16th December.

The 11th September derailment on the old Carrerabach bridge near Valendas, has damaged ABDt No. 1716 and reduced the available Be4/4 51x fleet to four serviceable four-coach sets for four diagrams. If one of the standard sets is unavailable, its diagram is being covered either by the reserve Be4/4 unit - now formed Be4/4 516 / Be4/4 515 / ABDt 1715 - or a Ge4/4I 4-coach Pendelzug set. A replacement Carrerabach bridge was commissioned on 17th November; this had been under construction since autumn 2010 as a flood relief project. It provides a 32m clear span across the stream at a higher level than the original line; the previous concrete bridge of 1981 will be demolished in early 2012.

Ge4/4II 612 Thusis was restored to traffic in mid-October, one cab having been completely re-built after collision damage outside Klosters in April; Ge4/4I 602 'Bernina' was booked to return to

traffic following traction motor repairs in mid-November. Meanwhile, Ge6/6II 703 was damaged on 23rd November in a collision with a works train at Rueun.

The first four-car single voltage Allegra unit, ABe4/16 3101, was delivered to Samedan for commissioning on 2nd December.

Poschiavo works are busy converting ABe4/4 48 to a works vehicle.

TRAMS

TPG

The first of the order for 32 Tango units, Be6/10 1801, arrived at La Praille yard on 15th September, with testing starting from the 19th. The second unit was despatched from Bussnang on 12th October. Both units were present at the inauguration on 10th December of the latest extension to the network, the 6.5km section from Stand via Jonction and Lancy to a Park & Ride site at Bernex; full public service commenced on the following day. From this date, the old 7-line network has changed to only 3; lines 12 (Moilleseulaz - Carouge - Palettes), 14 (Bernex - Bel Air - Meyrin-Gravière / CERN) and 15 (Nation - Plainpalais - Palettes). There are no common sections of line and passengers interchanging between lines will need to do so at Plainpalais, Bel Air / Stand or Gare Cornavin. See *Genève News* on P23.

VBZ

The extension for Escher Wyss Platz to Altstetten Nord Bhf, operated as part of Line 4, opened on 11th December.

HERITAGE

B-C

Berninabahn ABe4/4 35 undertook its first commercial work for the BC group on 30th October with a charter trip from Montreux to Bulle. On the 19th November it travelled to Zweisimmen. See Photo Gallery.

La Traction

The group have now taken possession of BDe4/4 601 and Bt 702 from the LSE, originally built for the CJ in 1953, for restoration to original livery; while the automotrice will retain its original interior, leather armchairs will be fitted to the driving trailer. Return to traffic is planned for Spring 2013. 

Swiss Tip

Reckingen

If you're travelling along the MGB between Brig and Andermatt and have an hour to spare, stop at Reckingen. Not only are there all the traditional Goms black barns and a covered road bridge (with the railway crossing at one end), but the interior of the church is certainly worth a look. It may surprise you. 

PHOTO: Tony Bagwell

