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INTERNATIONAL

Zürich Hbf. took-on a thoroughly international appearance this summer, with through services to Austria being provided by ÖBB Railjet sets, with Class 1116 motive power adding to the DB ICE sets and SNCF EuroDuplex TGVs. In addition, ex ÖBB 2143 007, on hire from RTS and modified to reduce emissions, was used Durchmesser Line tunnel works trains.

On 25th September, the first refurbished TGV POS unit for the Lyria services between France and Switzerland was launched in Paris. Unit 4413 is the first of 19 units which will take over both the through TGV services to Zürich, Basel, Bern and Lausanne, and also the SNCF services from Genève to the Mediterranean coast and a weekly 'Snow Train' from Lille to Brig, providing a connection to and from London.

Work on the Simplon axis intensified in August, with the tunnel reduced to a single bore throughout August and September, with a complete closure of the Iselle – Domodossola section between 11th August and 2nd September.

SWITZERLAND

SBB

Due to a large number of Re6/6 locomotives having become defective, SBB Cargo has been forced to replace 'Re10/10' formations (Re6/6 + Re4/4) with 'Re12/12' formations (3 x Re4/4).

Four-car Regio Dosto units of class RAe511.1 have been deployed on IR services between Genève and Lausanne, replacing five-coach Re4/4II Pendelzug sets. This is the start of the Swiss Romande restructuring.

As reported disputes over the provision of disabled accommodation in the new IC double deck EMU design, combined with concerns about the structural integrity of the Bombardier design, will delay their entry into service. It is now confirmed that will be as much as two years late.

The maintenance depot for these is being built at Zürich Herdern.

A number of coaches are being modified for use for football specials. The windows are being modified to only lower a small distance, presumably to stop bottles, etc. being thrown out.

ZB

Ex LSE Class 140 BDeh4/4 No.2 (built 1964) was withdrawn in May and broken up in June, along with previously withdrawn No.8 Engelberg station is planned for reconstruction over the next three years, as rail traffic to the resort has increased by 9% since the new tunnel opened. The first of the new Class 150 'Adler' units for the 'main line' services arrived at Meiringen on 16th July.

BLS

Following the 20th March roll-out of the first KISS unit for the Bern S-Bahn network, RABe 515 001, (reported upon the June's NOTEPAD, a limited testing in public service was planned to commence in September, with deployment in normal operation from the December timetable change.

Although normally operated by Re465 or EW III Pendelzug formations, the late night services on the Bern – Luzern via Langnau IR services are being provided by RBDe 565 NPZ units.

RB

As planned (and reported upon in SE 110) during the summer the Vitznau line was closed above Romiti-Felsentor for the reconstruction of Kaltbad station. Steamer passengers for the Rigi were advised to disembark at Weggis and catch a connecting bus to the Kaltbad cablecar. Unfortunately, what was not mentioned on the boat and in some publicity, was that they would then need to

walk to Klösterli or Wölfertschen on the Arth line for a train to the summit!

ASm

As we note elsewhere in the magazine the AS line from Niderbipp to Oensingen is being re-opened after a 69 year hiatus. The new station in Oensingen is being built adjacent to the OeBB run round loop near the road crossing. An intermediate halt is at 'ASm Haltestelle Industrie' in Neiderbipp. Formal opening was on 19th/20th October, with a festival based around Neiderbipp on the Saturday including steam trips from Oensingen to Balsthal.

CJ

Standard gauge Ee 936 153 arrived at Tavannes on 23rd March, after overhaul at the CJ's Tramelan works, behind Gem4/4 401. Transfer to its native environment was carried out by ex PTT Ee3/3 No.10, which was then taken to Tramelan for its own overhaul after which it will emerge as CJ Ee 936 152.

CJ / SBB

With the 8th stage of the Tour de France finishing at Porrentruy on 8th July, services over the Glovelier – St Ursanne, Glovelier – La Combe-Tabellion and Porrentruy – Alle sections of line were suspended at various times during the afternoon to avoid obstructing the race at level crossings. A half-hourly park and ride service was provided between Porrentruy and the Swiss Army logistics terminal at Bure-Casernes, using two Class 521 series Flirt units.

MGB

Upgraded tunnel rescue trains were unveiled in a ceremony at Oberwald on August 7th, bringing the support fleet for the Furka tunnel up to date and replacing equipment dating back to 1982. Proprietary fire-fighting and rescue equipment has been used, but the vehicles themselves have been converted in the MGB workshops.

TMVR

Former CEV Te 82 was observed on a works train at Vevey on 22nd September in a fresh coat of brown paint with no obvious painted identity. Its number was deduced from the presence of Te 81 in faded livery on Chernex works later the same day.

RhB

Work formally started on the reconstruction of Davos Platz station in April. The station is largely unchanged following the installation of block signalling and main line point control in 1959. Ramp access will be provided to all platforms and the subway extended to serve the Jakobshorn cable car. Completion is planned for 2014. It should be noted that the track layout will be renewed between April and June 2013, when the Klosters – Davos Platz section will be closed to facilitate relining work in the Klosters tunnel.

Originally built in 1947 Ge4/4I No.603 *Badus* has returned to service after traction motor repairs, while sister loco No.605 *Silvretta*, from the 1953 batch, is restricted to shunting at Samedan. Both locos were subject to rebuilding between 1986 & 1992.

EMU driving trailer ABDt 1716, severely damaged in September 2011 at the old Carrerabach bridge in the Vorderrhein gorge, has been rebuilt at Landquart using parts from coach B 2415, damaged in the same accident. It is the first general fleet vehicle to be turned out in the revised 'Allegra' livery. Also going through Landquart works are the 1980s BDt of the 1721 – 1723 series; these are being modernised with technical equipment to the standard of the 1751-8 series.

Bernina TW 48 entered works train service as Xe4/4 23201 in gold livery during May; the former 2nd class compartment has been converted to transport materials with external doors provided.

Tm2/2 No.15 (built in 1957) has joined the growing fleet of Swiss stock at the CF de la Baie de Somme, while eight wooden-bodied bogie vans from the 54xx series have been sold to the Vivarais group at Lamastre for conversion to passenger stock.

TRAMS

Bernmobil

Route 6 has resumed operation in its entirety, with RBS Be4/10 units once more being allowed to work through from Zytglogge to Fischermatteli.

HISTORIC

SBB Historic

On 21st May, Ae6/6 No.11407 transferred stored stock from the old shed at Glarus to Brugg. This included two locomotives, Eb3/5 No. 5811 (resident since 1976) and Ae3/6I No.10650 (resident since 1993).

AB

Te2/2 No.49, built on the underframe of Sântisbahn Ce2/2 1 of 1912 in 1955, has been transferred to the AG 2 group for restoration in original condition as Ge2/2 No.49. With HG2/2 *Rosa* out of service with a failed boiler, heritage services on the Rorschach Heiden Bergbahn (RHB) section have been worked by 1930-built DZeh2/4 No.22.

BC

CGTE Fe4/4 No.151 has spent the summer in Genève for the 150th anniversary celebrations of that city's tramways, while SEG Mallet G2x2/2 No.105 went to the Harz network for the 125th anniversary of the first section of that network, joining the line's three existing Mallet locos and permitting double-headed specials

with Harz-resident sister locomotive 99 5906, both having been built for Feldbahn service in 1918.

BLS

An association of preservation groups are negotiating to take over the closed Huttwil – Sumiswald and Wasen i. E. – Sumiswald lines, with a view to reopening as a preserved line, possibly as early as 2013. Depots would be at Huttwil and Wasen.

SHIPPING

SGV

The new yacht *Saphir* was deployed on a new Vierwaldstättersee cruise itinerary in 2012, with seven daily trips taking just over an hour from Luzern (Piers 3 and 7), with a call at Kastanienbaum. The traditional cruise trips normally worked by the *Rütli* have been recast this year to permit their extension to Meggen; one unusual feature was that the mid-afternoon sailing started from the Verkehrshaus pier at 15.30, rather than coming right into Luzern.

With the 'Sunset Cruise' (19.12 ex Luzern) booked for a paddle steamer throughout the summer months, there was no afternoon short trip from Luzern to be covered by steam. However, during the autumn timetable the 09.12 sailing (the second paddle steamer working), also normally covered the 17.12 Luzern – Vitznau on weekdays, providing an agreeable teatime (and sunset) cruise when the working is turned over to steam.

On Monday 24th September, the SGV celebrated the 175th anniversary of the first paddle steamer entering service on the lake, by offering free travel throughout the day. A band provided entertainment on the *DS Stadt Luzern* for the 11.12 express sailing. *DS Uri* covered the 09.12 and 17.12 sailings, although the latter was not too well used. On Saturday 22nd September three paddle steamers (*DS Uri*, *DS Unterwalden* and *DS Gallia*) were scheduled for service, with *DS Stadt Luzern* on a charter - a very high provision for a low season workday. ☞

PLAN B John Jesson

BLS, Brig, Bözberg, Birsfelden, Baumschulbahn, Brugg and a few other letters – with pictures from Roger Ellis, Steve Tinsley, Boyd Misstear & from John

This article is dedicated to the memory of the young man who lost his life in the rock fall near Gurnellen.

The best-laid plans can go wrong. So it was for the little group that had planned to spend a couple of days on the Lötschberg north and south ramps, followed by 5 days on the Gotthard. As a result of the rock fall that blocked the Gotthard, the second part of the plan had to be re-calculated. The first part went as planned, Roger leading a group on walks on both the North and South Ramps of the Loetschberg. Being based at Erstfeld, we had ample opportunity to see how the SBB coped with bustitution during our travels. Really, they did well, although they had to be reminded that Erstfeld needs more than just an hourly S-Bahn service. Soon after the start of our stay, it was back to

half-hourly, a connecting shuttle running between Flüelen and Erstfeld. This was formed initially by a single RBe 4/4 railcar, but later was a 3-car NPZ. However, the station yard at Göschenen was never designed to cope with 7+ buses at one time, so got a bit crowded. MGB trains were using track 13 to allow free passage between the buses and the SBB and, most of the time, transferring passengers crossed the tracks to get to and from the island platform, rather than having to use the subway.

So, how did a half-dozen delinquents and layabouts – sorry, fine upstanding members of the SRS – pass the time. Obviously, a "Plan B" was needed and, by coincidence, the letter "B" featured prominently. This started with a trip to Brig and, more specifically, the north entrance of the Simplon tunnel, which is an easy 1km walk from Brig station, suggested by Boyd. A footpath climbs up... ☞

Editor's Note. This is the start of a long and very well illustrated article that would take-up over 1/3rd of an edition of Swiss Express unless it was subjected to severe editing. This is something that would have ruined the item, and not what I wanted to do. With the agreement of the author and the photographers we are placing the whole article on our website for those of you who have access to the Internet to enjoy. We hope to use some of the images in future editions of the magazine.