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RhB's 100 YEARS BEVER - SCUOL

A combined report from Glyn Jones, Alan Conway and Tony Cutler on the celebrations



Ge 4/6 No.353 with a vintage set of coaches. Photo: Tony Cutler

2013 marked the centenary of not only the opening of the RhB's Engadin line, but also of the introduction of electric propulsion on the network. This line was electrified from its inception at 11kV, with the rest of the network being electrified by 1922. This was the highest mountain valley line in Switzerland and opened for business on 28th June 1913. It was initially planned to extend the line across the Austrian border to Landeck, but the start of the First World War the following year ended those plans.

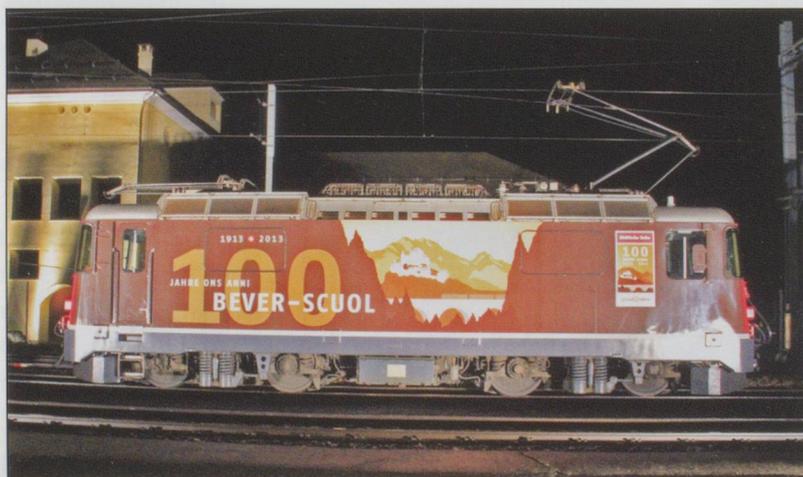
The RhB decided to celebrate these two events over the weekend of 29th/30th June, the nearest date to the actual centenaries. Celebrations were planned at Bever, Zuoz, Lavin and Scuol with the usual Swiss mixture of drinking, eating and music to keep the visitors happy. There was a 'Rolling Big Band' playing in an open wagon that moved around the venues during the day, at each of which the RhB had an information stand selling goodies. Zuoz featured an 'Allegra' driver simulator mounted in No.3507, there was a model

railway exhibition at Lavin, and Scuol was the venue for various exhibitions. The venues were linked by the usual hourly scheduled train service, but this was interspersed by the Alpine Classic Pullman Express (ACPE) pulled by Ge 6/6 I No.414, and the historic train pulled by the preserved Ge 4/6 No. 353, sister to No.351 that headed the official inaugural train in 1913. There was a special ticket price available for travel on the line over the weekend.

The electric loco parade was scheduled to take place on the Saturday evening at Bever, starting at 21:50 after the departure of the last scheduled train. Unfortunately the day had been cold and wet, but there was a good crowd entertained by music as they awaited the start of the loco parade, whilst the beer tents were doing good trade! Alan and Tony were amongst quite a crowd of photographers stationed on the goods platform, out of the rain and hoping for a good view. Unfortunately for them, a four-car Allegra unit arrived and disgorged the official party who took over the sheltered vantage point. Alan, Tony and the others were then allowed to stand on the running track platforms behind some barrier tape. At 22:00 a large screen situated at the far side of the station started a presentation that described

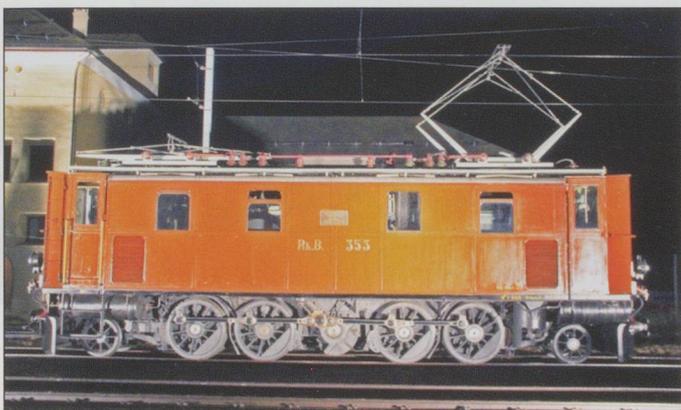


Logo - courtesy of RhB



Ge4/4 II No.620 "Zernez" in the centenary livery.

Photo: Glyn Jones



TOP: Ge6/6I No.414 brings the "Alpine Classic Pullman" from Samedan heading to Scuol. There was no supplement for travel over the weekend. Photo: Glyn Jones

MIDDLE: Ge4/6 No.353 under the spotlights. Photo: Glyn Jones

LOWER MIDDLE: Ge6/6I No.415 in Bever station Photo: Glyn Jones

BOTTOM: Gmf4/4II No.28701. Photo: Tony Cutler

the history of the line and introduced each of the locos with a commentary in German. Starting with the Ge 2/4 a loco from each preserved or working class was paraded into the station in chronological order, where theatrical lighting was used to show them off. The Ge 4/4 II in the parade was No.620, 'Zernez', which was painted with the logo of the centenary. Coming up to date the Allegra paraded was No.3104, one of the 4-car, single voltage units, scheduled for use on Chur commuter services, which at that time were not ready for regular service. This was not

the end of the parade as the RhB had decided to display some of their service vehicles commencing with the "Tyrex" track maintenance train, powered by Xmf4/4 No.9919. This was followed by one of the new snow blowers Xrot 95403 pulled by one of the railway's Gem locos. The parade ended with the RhB's brand new Gmf4/4II locos No.28701, the first of the four to be delivered. These will be used on works trains and snow clearing work throughout the network. It had to be towed by Ge 4/4I No.605, as it is not yet certified for use on the network. The finish at about 22.45 was just in time for people to catch the 22.45 to St Moritz (hailed by Ge 4/4" No. 650), plus a well-patronised "Extrazug" which left Samedan at 23:10 for Chur, and another 'Extrazug' to Scuol-Tarasp at 23.35.

Fortunately, Sunday dawned dry and bright and we were blessed with warm and sunny weather, much to the relief of the stallholders at the various venues, especially those selling ice cream! There were plenty of photographers at Bever awaiting the arrival of the ACPE from Samedan, quickly followed by the scheduled "Albula Experience Train" from Landquart, both preserved 'Krocs' in the station, one after the other. There was a stall on the station shared between "Mirawo" selling modified Bemo models and "Perren Films" selling their Cab Ride DVDs that are stocked by the SRS. Lavin consisted mainly of a local market alongside the beer tent and there were not too many visitors. There was a large modular RhB based model railway in the local community centre, plus a film show about the anniversary. Ge4/4II No.620 in its celebration livery was heading services along the line. It is understood the weekend saw some 2,000 visitors. The next RhB centenary takes place in 2014 for the Chur-Arosa line. The celebrations are scheduled for 13th/14th December at Arosa when the rebuilt station will be opened. ☑

Editor's Note. The three SRS members visited the celebrations independently. I have combined their reports.