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relevant components took place to ensure that it would be able to run the full distance satisfactorily.

Four spare bogies were kept at Bellinzona and the interchangeability of components between locomotives reduced downtime at depots and works. In 1964, 5.1% of the fleet were out of service in works. This was made up of planned maintenance 1.7%, technical faults 1.9% and accident repairs 1.5%.

No.11401 was given its first R3 at 1,892,084km to provide early evidence of its condition. This showed a reduction of 3-rappen/kilometre in maintenance costs. Subsequent data showed that the cost of lubricating materials was 0.7-rappen/kilometre with 500t loads; 100,000km running produced 1mm depth of wear on the wheel treads; on lightly graded sections of line the power consumption was 0.04kW-hr per tonne-kilometre.

Following crash damage in 1972, No.11430 was experimentally fitted with automatic couplings at Number 1 end. This eliminated the need for buffers; the air pipes and front fender were also altered, the coupling release and brake pipe cocks being on the right hand side. The locomotive ran just one test journey on a freight train!

In 1996 Nos.11474 & 11475 were used to test the braking of a 1500 m long freight train weighing 4055t between Büren an der Aare and Solothurn. Placed at each end, radio contact simulated multiple working.

By 1960 there were 50 units in service to cover 41 diagrams, requiring 82% availability. While intended for the Gotthard, in 1958 the Ae6/6 fulfilled two diagrams between Vallorbe and Domodossola; these were covered by Erstfeld shed, to which the locomotives returned every two weeks for maintenance. When the last units were delivered all, except Nos.11471-11483 at Lausanne, were allocated to either Erstfeld or Bellinzona. Daily diagrams generally covered 660 km, although four on the Gotthard exceeded 1000 km, and reached as far afield as Basel, Buchs and Romanshorn. Although Zürich gained its first allocation in 1975, the delivery of Re4/4lll and Re6/6 classes began the serious displacement from the Gotthard and by 1980 only Nos.11403-17 were at Erstfeld, Bellinzona's units having moved to Basel. The Ae6/6 was now permitted everywhere except Bäretswil – Bauma, Bischofszell Nord – Hauptwil and Thalheim – Ossingen. They really had become 'universal locomotives'!

On a personal note, I was aware of them on my first three visits to Switzerland in 1958-60 as they were the only standard gauge named Swiss locomotives. In the mind of a schoolboy in shorts they were the 'Canton Class' and I had dreams of getting a Tri-ang EM2, renumbering it and giving it a Ticino emblem. The last time I saw one in service was No.11520 at Flüelen on 13 September 2010; now red and bereft of name and emblem it still had something of the majesty I remembered.

Exploring by PostAuto

Martin Fisher seeks your assistance for a future book

Photo: Malcolm Bulpitt

The programme of eight Swiss Travel Guides has been completed this year with the publication of '*Basel and North West Switzerland*'. Emboldened by the success of these Guides, over the next few years the *Swiss Railways Society* will be publishing more books about exploring Switzerland. The first few additional titles are already in the pipeline, but I am writing to seek your assistance with a book that is not scheduled for publication until March 2016. That book will be about Swiss PostAutos and while there is likely to be a bit about the history of the organisation, and a description of the fleet, the main object will be to describe a selection of routes operated by the PTT's ubiquitous yellow vehicles. There are some obvious Alpine candidates for inclusion but I would be very grateful if members could let me have a brief description of routes they have enjoyed over the years, whether in the Alps or in less well known corners of Switzerland. With any submission please add a sentence or two about what made the journey so memorable for you. There have one or two articles describing PostAuto trips that have been published in *Swiss Express* in recent years and with the permission of both the Editor and the authors' I will look at these for possible inclusion. Please email your ideas c/o editor@swissrailsoc.org.uk putting Swiss Express PostAuto in the subject box, or write direct to me at 28 Appletree Lane, Redditch, Worcs., B97 6SE.GB, by the end of September 2014.