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Basel 'Standards'



Neil Wheelwright gives an update on these long-serving trams

As described in some previous articles in *Swiss Express*, Basel is the last outpost of the Be4/4 'Swiss Standard' tram, with the BVB (Basler Verkehrs-Betriebe) still operating a small fleet of these vehicles consisting of the final batch of 20 built in 1967/8. On a visit at the end of May 2014 they were very much still in evidence and could still be seen in many combinations, both on their own and with the later bogie cars. Lines 15 and 16 that loop through the Bruderholz residential area, are the best places to see these trams as the Siemens Be6/8 'Combinos' are not authorised for these routes. Lines 1, 3 and 13 were also predominantly run with bogie cars albeit often with one of the newer series cars leading. However, deliveries of the new Bombardier 'FLEXITYBasel' trams have started; the first

car being delivered on 4th September. This first vehicle will be subject to testing and the governmental authorisation processes before fleet delivery. Tram No.5001 became the first in general service at the beginning of December. It is in the new, lighter green livery and has ergonomically shaped wooden seats, both features of a passenger consultation exercise undertaken by the BVB. Once this process of testing, then introducing the new vehicles into fleet service, is fully underway we can expect the iconic 'Swiss Standard' cars to start to disappear. Whilst in the city I was surprised to see that the BLT (Baselland Transport) Be4/6 articulated cars from the early 1970s (series 101-115) were still very much in use on Line 10. However, here again, new cars are on order. 



TOP: BVB Swiss Standards 457 + 1473 on Line 15 at Aeshenplatz on 23 May 2014.
LEFT: BVB Swiss Standards 465 and trailer and the Fischmarkt fountain on 23 May 2014.

BELOW: BLT 1970s SWP articulated car 103 on the rear of double-articulated 216 near Münchenstein Dorf on Line 10 on 23 May 2014. *Photos: Neil Wheelwright*

