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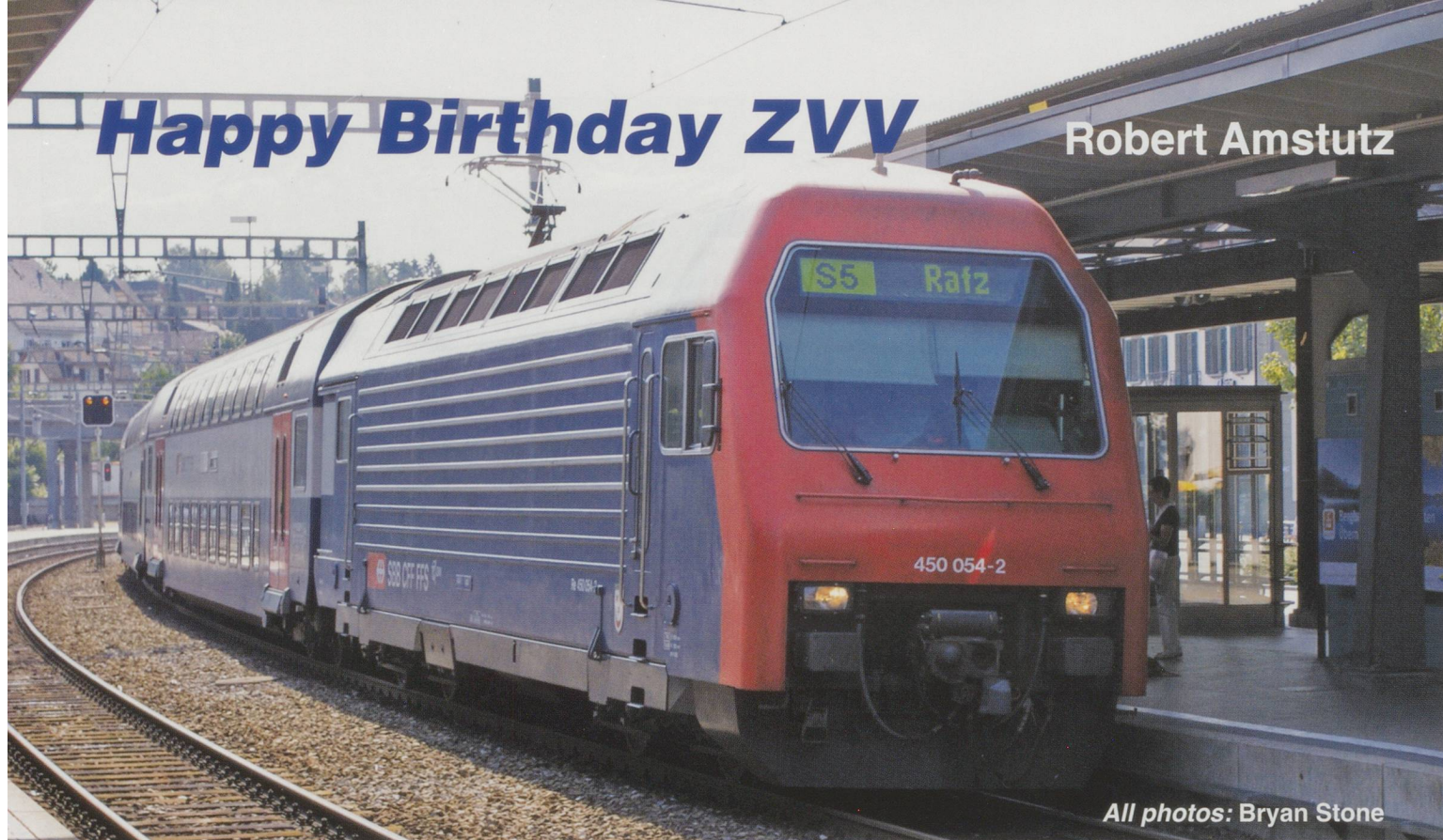
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Happy Birthday ZVV

Robert Amstutz



All photos: Bryan Stone

On May 31, 2015 the Zürcher Verkehrsverbund (ZVV) celebrated its 25th birthday by offering a whole day of free transport on all trams, trains, buses, boats, funiculars and cable car railways operated under the ZVV name. A further part of the celebration was an open day at the SBB Service Centre in Oberwinterthur, where people could see and hear what is required to provide each day a clean, safe and punctual service to ZVV customers.

In 1990 the ZVV and the Zürich S-Bahn came into being. Since Day 1, the Zürich S-Bahn has been known for its striking double decker commuter trains, which together with many modernised stations have been the backbone of the ZVV. Twenty-five years ago the ZVV was the first traffic association in Switzerland and from its inception it has been keeping the citizens of Canton Zürich moving. The ZVV is responsible for the strategy, financing and marketing of public transport within the Canton Zürich. They neither run trains themselves, nor do they own any public transport vehicles. The number of passengers has risen steadily, and today, over 600

million passengers annually use the ZVV services. The Zürich S-Bahn is the main player within the ZVV with over 500,000 passengers being transported daily – this is over three times more than 25 years ago.


The economic development of the greater Zürich area in the 1950s and 1960s brought prosperity and improved life styles to local residents. With it came air pollution, a shortage of parking spaces and a lot of road traffic congestion. In the 1970s the civic authorities searched for a solution and came up with the idea of a U-Bahn for Zürich. Public transport should save the day! However, after a hard fought campaign, the voters of Canton Zürich turned down the project. After a short interlude, the traffic planners proposed the creation of an S-Bahn – a novelty in Europe! Apart from the construction of 12 km of new track, the system would run on existing rails. In 1981 the electorate voted resoundingly for this project. In 1983 construction of the new Zürich Museumstrasse station, and the tunnels to Bahnhof Stadelhofen and Stettbach began. Together with the reconstruction of the SZU line, to allow trains to run into another underground station at Zürich HB, the Zürich S-Bahn was slowly being created.

On 27th May 1990 the Zürich S-Bahn commenced operation. Between 1990 and 2007 the train services were improved in three phases. The half-hourly train service became the norm on many lines and some of the inner city lines went to quarter-hour services. Since 2002 services at weekend (Friday night – Sunday morning) are round the clock. Some 6,500 SBB employees are involved in keeping the Zürich S-Bahn running. The 4th phase of the Zürich S-Bahn expansion will be in



514 030 at Zürich Hbf.

three stages. Already in June 2014 major improvements were made to train services along the lakeside of Zürich. In December 2015 more improvements will come into place with the new timetables, and finally in December 2018 the timetables around Winterthur will be recast, bringing new trains and times to the area.

The first generation double decker commuter trains (Re450) are, in part, still in service. A number have been reconditioned and enhanced by replacing an original 2nd class carriage with a new low entrance carriage, allowing easy access for prams, bicycles and wheelchair users. Some of the carriages that have been replaced have subsequently been marshalled into extra train-sets to increase peak time capacity. RaBe514 units are the S-Bahn's new generation double-deck commuter trains, all with easy access. They have been gradually introduced from 2006 onward and are now displacing the Re 450's on some services. Some RaBe 511 double-deck trains, in service since spring 2012, also appear regularly on some S-Bahn lines. However, they are not only S-Bahn stock and are also used regularly on the 'Flugzug' service between Zürich Airport and Basel as well as on the Wettingen – Olten services. 



SwissTip from Peter Keating

A number of Swiss Railways Society members stay or visit Kandersteg and arrange walks from there. A classic excursion is to reserve a seat in the mini bus that operates the summer-only (June to September) PostAuto route to the end of the Glasterntal at Selden, and then walk back down the very picturesque valley which is famed for its numerous wild flowers and tumbling waterfalls. The road in the valley is largely unmade, very narrow, and has tight overhead clearances as it climbs through tunnels out of the village into the valley. Before making obligatory reservations potential users need to be aware that some of the scheduled departures shown in the Kursbuch (table 31.240) only operate in good weather. 