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Hupac fleet as well, reflecting the growing importance of this market to the company.

Basel: BVB trams.

Swiss Standard trams in the series Nos.457 – 465 are now history, although No.457 remains as a museum piece. The next series Nos.466 – 476 are only in use until October, as trailing power cars in tram-trailer-tram compositions on Line 3 where the short section from Barfüsserplatz to Musikakademie climbs at 1 in 11 from a standing start, require extra power. The last of the 56 Duwag Be4/6 trams have also been withdrawn. On 24th April the last Duwag ran to Riehen and back on its old Line 6, while another ran a last rush-hour operation on Line 21.

Rail and Road Safety.

In 2015 253 deaths on Swiss roads were recorded, with 3,830 serious injuries. On public transport there were two passenger deaths, both in trams. There were 32 deaths and 124 serious injuries on public transport, most of these being persons who were on the tracks without authority, or level crossing users who overlooked trams or trains.

Matthias Tromp 1946 - 2016.

Dr Matthias Tromp joined the BLS in 1987 as Vice-Direktor for Marketing and Ships. In 1999 he became General Manager and retired in 2008. During his period of office many innovations and milestones were addressed. He saw the Bern S-Bahn established, introduced the 'rolling highway' on the BLS, and implemented the Lötschberg Base Tunnel that opened in 2007. He held many offices in Swiss public life. For some years he had been a member (and President) of the Bern City Parliament and up to 2014 he was in the Bern Cantonal Parliament. His death on 17th April removes from the Swiss rail scene a well-loved and sometimes larger than life personality.

Brussels – Basel.

On the 2nd April SNCF loco No.26166 brought the last 'Vauban' into Basel, and took out its counterpart, putting an

end to the through trains via Strasbourg and Luxembourg. Once ECs, and even for a while TEEs, these trains had in the past also served Brig via Kandersteg, and Zürich, and at the northern end, Ostende for the British passengers. Your correspondent often took the sleeper on the night train Basel – Brussels for a day's work there. The TGV Est, completed to Strasbourg, though delayed by the derailment in test running, is one reason for the change, but they had long been a dejected echo of earlier times. Friend of the SRS, Mario Stefani was there, we were not! But the background is that after the TGV accident in trial running north of Strasbourg, the introduction of full TGV service Strasbourg – Paris Est (which also brings faster connections Basel – Strasbourg – Brussels) begins in June, but the overall timetable change in the Region Est was already far advanced. So there was a gap...



SNCF BB 26166 EC 96 IRIS BASEL BRUXELLES Dernier EC Voyageur Basel SNCF 02-04-2016. Photo: Mario Stefani

Swiss News is compiled by Bryan Stone and includes input from, Michael Donovan, Ron Smith, Glyn Jones Ilkka Houtelin, s'Murmeli, Gordon Wiseman, and others. 

Treib-Seelisberg-Bahn Centenary

Mario Gavazzi

On the 30th May 1916, after several years of construction works, the Treib-Seelisberg funicular was opened, unfortunately during one of the darkest periods of WW1. Although Switzerland was neutral and out of the conflict the tourist traffic, for which building the line was a key element, had withered away. The 1149m long metre-gauge line climbs some 332m from the steamer pier on the Vierwaldstättersee up to the community of Seelisberg, which occupies the top of the promontory between the main body of the lake and the Urner See. Until 1932 the line only operated from Spring to Autumn but since then it has operated on a daily basis, although with a much reduced service (approximately

hourly) in winter. It is an essential link for the community, as it carries a regular flow of residents who commute to work or school in Brunnen and Schwyz, using the ship connections that operate across this narrow (1km) part of the lake.

The two original cars were replaced in 1965 by the two current ones that have a capacity of 90 people. Further renovation work has taken place over the years but much of the original machinery is still in operation and is so reliable that no engineering staff are needed on a daily basis. In 1966 the TSB also became a PostAuto operator and it continues in this role today, operating an hourly service from Seelisberg along the south shore

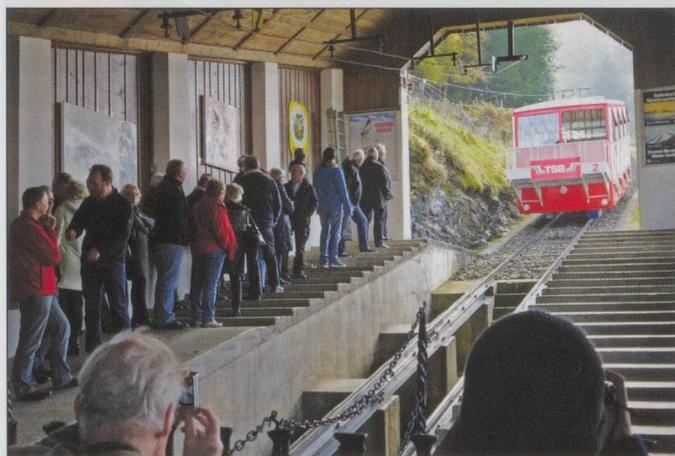
of the lake to Stans giving a rail connection to Luzern. In an unusual development the TSB took over operation of the Seelisburg branch of the Urner Kantonalbank. This is located adjacent to the top station. Between 2005 and 2012 TSB staff worked with the crews of the SGV on-board their ships, whilst the SGV crews regularly operated on the TSB where they were known as the "Bergbahnmatrosen" – "Mountain railway sailors". The TSB carries more than

90,000 passengers annually and is very important both for tourism in the area and also for the people living in Seelisberg. The funicular is well known to many Swiss as it is an essential link in the 'Weg de Schweiz' that leads to the historic Rütli meadow, on the lake shore below the village, where the original Confederation was founded in 1291. 



The funicular just outside the bottom station at Treib. Note the luggage rack on the bottom end.

All photos: Mario Gavazzi



ABOVE: Lots of people visit Seelisberg and 'Weg der Schweiz' ("Way of Switzerland" for the 700-year-jubilee, opened in 1991).
BELOW: Boat and funicular meet at Treib.



ABOVE LEFT: Full security for daily service: the engine is still in operation 100 years after construction!

ABOVE RIGHT: The manoeuvring and moving parts of the two passenger cars are checked every day!

BELOW: The 'happy end' of every visit to Seelisberg, the way back by postbus (PostAuto), or by paddle steamer.

