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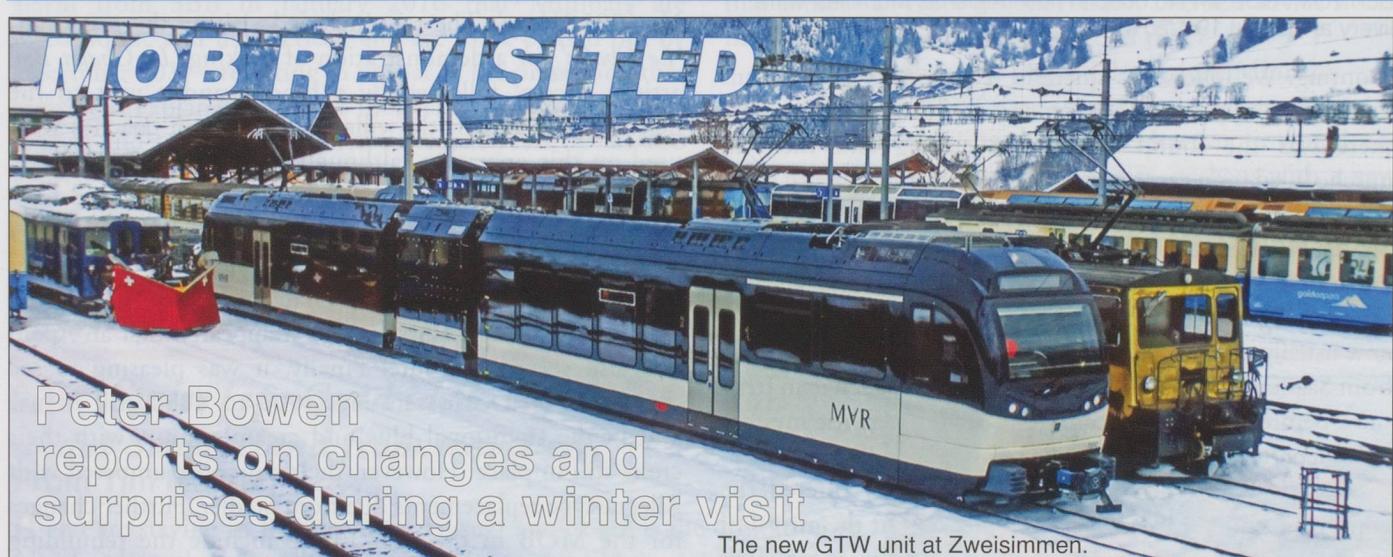
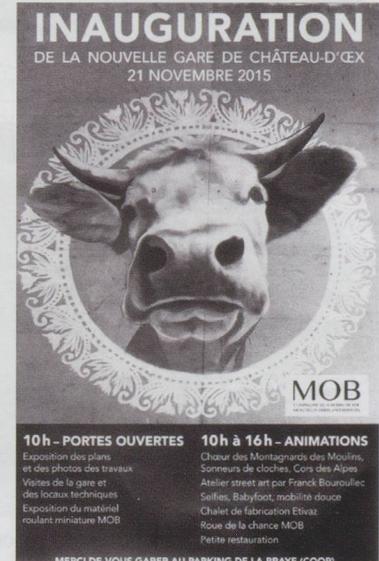
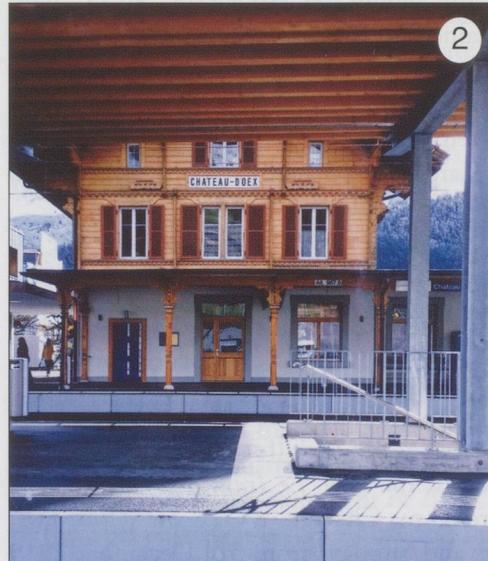
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of line remains hourly, however from last December the Canton has arranged with the MOB for later departures to run from Montreux on Friday and Saturday nights with the last train for Zweisimmen now leaving at 23.50 – with a 00.43 arrival in Cd'O for Night Owls! Between last December and April the MOB also ran ‘Le Train du Fromage’ which consisted of an additional coach(s) being attached to a regular service train and detached at the new station enabling passengers to visit a nearby hotel for a demonstration of cheese making and enjoy a lunchtime fondue followed by time to discover the village. This operation uses the rebuilt elegant saloon coaches that form ‘Le Train du Chocolat’. This popular trip runs May to October from Montreux to Gruyères, and on to Broc for tours of the Cailler chocolate factory. Let us hope that the winter version will prove as popular as the summer one, and to the benefit of Château d’Oex. 

1. Rebuilding of the new platforms almost complete – 25/9/2015. 2. The window on the right is of the refurbished booking hall of the original 1905 building. 3. Entrance to new subway visible on the right of platform 1.



Last January my wife and I returned to Gstaad for the anniversary of our wedding in the village. As always the MOB/‘goldenpass’ had surprises for us, and having plenty of fresh snow and sunshine there were ideal walking conditions for using the excellent winter paths, many with



views of the railway.

On our first trip, from Gstaad to Saanenmöser, the first coach was Panoramic As111 showing-off the new dark blue and white livery complete with new branding. This livery has also appeared on one of the second-hand railcars used for



TOP: Panoramic As111 in the new colours at Gstaad 19/1/2016.

MIDDLE: ABDe 8/8 No.4004 'Fribourg' at Zweisimmen 20/1/2016.

BOTTOM: GDe 4/4 No.6006 in new 'Aigle les Murailles' wine livery at Gstaad 19/1/2016.

shunting. We followed a splendid 'Panoramaweg' that runs near the railway from Saanenmöser to Schönried. En-route there was the sound of barriers closing and then an unscheduled train came past. It was clearly not standard stock but was in the new livery and with bold MVR branding, so a bit of a puzzle. From Schönried we took a train to Saanen for lunch in the hotel by the station, where we had a brief glimpse of a driving trailer from the former 'Golden Panoramic' set now usually used on the 'Chocolate Train' workings. Walking from Saanen to Rougemont proved quite a challenge in fresh snow before returning by train to Gstaad, where the mystery train departed before it could be photographed!

A trip to Zweisimmen the following day offered the opportunity to resolve some of the puzzles but the arrival of ex.TPF GDe4/4 No.6006 'Neirivue' in a new livery for 'Aigle Wine', replacing the yellow colours advertising the 'Log-In' scheme, was a further surprise. Zweisimmen offered a push-pull set comprising Ast 117 at the Montreux end plus two standard carriages (all in the now obsolete gold and white livery) hauled by GDe4/4 No.6004 'Interlaken', still retaining

its crest and the former 'Crystal Panoramic' livery. Another unusual sighting was BDe4/4 No.3006, one of six Class 3000 Autorails dating from 1944/6, as a single unit. They have had a complex history. Nos.3005/6 were permanently coupled to provide power for the 'Super Panoramic Express' and the control equipment from the inner cabs was used to equip the two driving trailers of the train. Latterly they became part of the service fleet, but still as a pair, as well as No.3004 as a single unit. These were joined in 2012 by No.3002, once one of the pair Nos.3001/2 that were converted to push-pull units. No.3003 was scrapped many years ago, and No.3001 was withdrawn more recently, so presumably spare control equipment existed enabling No.3006, at least, to have it re-instated allowing it to be operated independently. The reappearance of the mystery train showed it to be No.7502, one of the order of eight ABeh 2/6 GTW sets from Stadler (Nos.7501-7508). These units will replace the existing stock (Nos.71-75) on the former CEV line between Vevey and Les Pleiades, although it is understood the rebuilt set (BDeh2/8 No.71, with Bt 224) will be retained for special workings, and BDeh 2/4 No.72 for service work. The four early GTW units dating from 1997/8 (Be 2/6 Nos.7001-7004) used on the Vevey-Blonay and Montreux-Les Avant workings have been sold, three will go to Aare Seeland mobil (ASm) and one to the Meiringen-Innernkirchen-Bahn (MIB).

Returning to Gstaad it was pleasing to see one of the original saloon coaches in use. These (Nos. As101-2) were rebuilt to work with the CIWL coaches A103-106 of the 'Golden Mountain Pullman Express' now on the RhB. The pair are used on the 'Chocolate Express' from Montreux to Gruyère (visiting a cheese factory and the historic village and castle) and Broc (for the Cailler chocolate factory). There is now the new 'Le Train du Fromage' that ran from Montreux to Château d'Oex on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 3rd December 2015 to the 3rd April 2016. It was advertised on GDe 4/4 No.6001 'Vevey'. The trip included visiting the restaurant 'Le Chalet' for a demonstration of making 'Le Chalet Bio' artisan cheese, followed by a fondue and a visit to the heritage museum in the village. The saloon coaches were used on this operation, although with the trip apparently limited to just 36 participants just one coach would have been needed, this being attached to the scheduled 10.44 service from Montreux, returning with the 15.15 'Golden Pass Panoramic' departure from Château-d'Oex. At CHF89 it was not a cheap excursion, but it appeared that an Apéro was also served en-route! Finally, it was pleasing to see the classic ABDe8/8 sets Nos.4001 to 4004 still in use and in the traditional blue and cream colours with their crests still in place. However, their days are numbered with Allegra-type replacements due from Stadler. Further changes for the MOB in the near future include the rebuilding of Zweisimmen station to accommodate the innovative gauge changing equipment after the financial go-ahead for this project was given last year, together with the prospect of running to Interlaken in 2018. Doubtless there will also be more surprises to come. 