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Swiss News

Gotthard Base Tunnel

Scheduled operations through the Gotthard Base Tunnel commenced with the introduction of the Winter Timetable on the 11th December 2016. The Federal Office of Transport (BAV) has issued a formal operating licence that sets an upper speed limit of 200kph and limits the operation to a daily total of 260 freight and 50 passenger trains.

New Timetable 11th December 2016

This was a monumental occasion, as the implementation of the new Gotthard Base Tunnel (GBT) had wide-reaching implications. However all went well with the two stages: Saturday night, passenger service implementation; Monday, freight services. This required more detailed attention, as the SBB's new wagonload freight system was implemented at the same time. Two significant moments: a freight locomotive failure in the GBT on 13th Dec. caused a 45-minute blockage although the timetable restored itself almost immediately; the second was when the problems referred to in SE 12/2016, a danger of section time overruns and delays due to inadequate traction power for trains in the GBT, were now admitted to be real. They will however not be apparent to users at present traffic levels; load limits for freight trains are now more clearly defined, and as yet 250kph running is not required - this will come when the 2-year delayed 'Giruna' units are introduced. The passenger service is heavily orientated to Zürich-Ticino-Milano, shifting from the traditional (Germany) – Basel – Ticino, which was the orientation for the last 130 years and reflects changes in travel patterns. In any case there is another major change to come when the Monte Ceneri base tunnel opens in two years. At that point, the full benefits of the overall project will come to bear. The new timetable has been heavily criticised, especially in Basel, and because of the Milano connections, but much is still tentative. Away from the influence of the GBT the TGV/Lyria Paris-Interlaken service via Basel and Bern is maintained (it was announced as cancelled). As announced, DB withdrew its sleeper services but OeBB took over Zürich-Vienna, and also installed a new replacement Zürich – Hamburg service. It will run (at least at first) via Berlin, and so takes longer to Hamburg.

SBB Staff Changes

SBB has announced that it is aiming to implement a CHF1.2 billion 'Rationalisation Plan' based upon a 2015 review of activities. One outcome will see some 1,400 posts (from a total of 33,200) being eliminated by 2020. Around 500 jobs will be lost from areas involved with administration and management, some 250 from various roles at four operating centres, 220 from ticket sales posts and over 150 from yard operations, these following freight sector reorganisations. There will be a net gain of 25 train conductor posts, with an increase of 60 on long distance services, balanced against a reduction of 35 on regional services. The changes in freight operations will see 90 less driving roles, but increased passenger services will absorb some 80 of these. Up to 200 posts will be created in new 'Key Activities' as well as 60 new posts for train cleaners.

'Léman 2030'

In Renens (VD) a new interlocking system and control centre was opened by CFF/SBB in November. It was the first step in the 'Léman 2030' project, which aims to double the passenger rail capacity between Genève and Lausanne. The centre controls 127 points and some 300 signals and its introduction allows the headway between services to be reduced to 2 minutes from 3 to 4 minutes.

'p/s Italie' returns to La Léman

Built by Sulzer in Winterthur in 1908, and re-engined in 1955, this classic ship from the Belle Epoque era has been out of service over recent years. Following a rebuild in the shipyard of the CGN, that also involved replacement engines, she re-entered service over the weekend of the 10th/11th November.



p/s Italie at Lausanne-Ouchy on the 11th November.

Photo: Mario Gavazzi

Lausanne – Bern

SBB have given advance warning of serious disturbance in summer 2018 as the main line Bern – Fribourg – Palézieux – Lausanne will be closed completely for two months for renovation. Between Bern (and beyond to the north) and Lausanne and Genève the best available route will be via Biel/Bienne. There will be substitute buses but readers who know the thinly populated upland region between Palézieux and Fribourg will realise their limitations. The work is required to prepare for the Bombardier 'Twindexx' high-speed tilting trains now on order, and will involve clearances, realignment and catenary changes.

SBB Cargo Wagonload Freight

Like most national railways, SBB Cargo was faced with two alternatives, either run down its wagonload business, or reshape it - again. Most railways have chosen the first; apart from major industrial users, many generating block trains, or intermodal services, little remains of the former familiar freight trains. Switzerland is an exception. SBB claims around 25% modal share of the national freight transport market. Distances are not long, but geography helps, as does highway congestion. It was realised that the traditional pattern of local trips in the afternoon, overnight haul, and trip working again in the morning, was wasteful of capacity and resources, and also generated freight trains which shared scarce capacity also at peak times. This is being radically changed, with close partnership with the main service users. Replacing it is a

pattern of 8-hourly working periods, where the sorting and train formation takes place during the day at the morning/evening times when peak passenger traffic is moving; the inter-yard freight trains run in scheduled paths in the interval timetable, giving greater reliability, and most users will be served at least once daily, sometimes three times. Space on the through trains is booked with the cargo, so that transits become assured and predictable. In future yard staff will work two day shifts, and not at night. Benefits are anticipated for users (who are supportive of the plan) and also in better utilisation of motive power, staff and system capacity. Expect therefore also that increasingly, the SBB Cargo locomotive fleet, especially the Re4/4 II, will be reduced by withdrawals. Sorting wagonload freight is concentrated on the yards at Lausanne, Basel, Chiasso, Limmattal, and Buchs. An additional feature, little commented, is that some 5,000 wagons are to be given transponders for radio registration in transit. This reminds your correspondent of the Amtech transponders widely installed in the USA as policy around 1990; at that time it amazed European observers, that the US railroads had the means of knowing where their customers' cargo was, something never attempted in Europe. Through the partnership 'X-Rail', SBB Cargo has links to DB Cargo, Green Cargo (Sweden), Rail Cargo Austria, and SNCB Logistics, all of whom still provide wagonload services. A basic international system is still therefore in place to those countries.

All-change at Andermatt

Andermatt on the Matterhorn Gotthard Bahn (MGB) is one of their centres of operation and over the next few years it is planned that the station will experience a total CHF200m renovation. The whole building is to be relocated to the other side of the tracks, becoming a disabled-friendly development complete with shops, offices and apartments. To maintain full railway operation at all times the work will take place in several stages. The planning for the first "Main North Stage" is already complete and includes a new station concourse and a service centre, along with some commercial premises and apartments. Work on this will continue until 2018. Further stages include, the expansion of the new main building with additional parking spaces on the ground floor, more apartments and the possible construction of municipal facilities such as a fire brigade base or a service yard. After 2018 the platform lines will be placed under an overall roof that will double as a covered overnight storage facility. This phase could last until 2024. In addition to this work in 2017 the new station Nätschen will be completed. This will be 400m nearer Andermatt and will be close to the centre station of the gondola lift Andermatt - Nätschen - Gütsch. The preparatory work for this started in 2016 and is progressing very well.

Naming of CEVA stations and Eaux Vives demolition

The naming of the stations of the CEVA (future '*Léman Express*') has caused controversy, as the Federal Office of Transport approved the Canton of Genève's proposal to change the names of the three of the stations. Lancy-Pont-Rouge, opened 2002, will be renamed as Genève-Pont-Rouge. The original names for the new stops at Carouge-Bachet and

Champel-Hôpital will be dropped and they will be called instead Genève-Bachet and Genève-Champel when they open in December 2019. In Switzerland station naming has to follow certain principles. Instead of automatically using the name of the commune where the station is located, the post code area and the wider area the station serves need to be considered. In this case, it was decided to use the name of the metropolitan area of Genève in the names. However, Chêne-Bourg will retain its old name to the annoyance of the commune of Lancy, which aims to fight the name change in the courts. The old PLM station of Genève-Eaux-Vives, which opened in 1888 as the gare des Vollandes, was demolished at the end of 2016 to make way for a new housing and office complex that will surround the new '*Léman Express*' underground station.

Greater Genève tram extension plans

The Greater Genève agglomeration has published the 3rd version of its regional transport master plans covering the period 2016-2030. The 1m-population area covers Canton Genève, the Nyon area of Canton Vaud and French communities next to the border. Consisting of over 200 Communes covered by different regional administrations, with changing political agendas, cooperation regarding transportation planning has not been always easy, or fast. The current proposals include the extension of three of Genève's tramlines – provided the proposals gain Swiss Federal Government approval. The proposed extensions are:

- **Line 12** - From Moillesulaz to the centre of Annemasse;
- **Line 15** - From Nations to Grand-Saconnex (by 2023);
- **Line 18** - From CERN across the border, first to St-Genis-Pouilly – Porte-de-France (by 2022,) and later to St-Genis-Pouilly Centre (by 2026).

One of the key themes of the plans is to maximise the benefits of the coming '*Léman Express*', and they also contain several projects to integrate bus connections better with the railway network. One proposal is to build an interchange hub in Châtelaine, to the west of Genève Cornavin, where the local commune has been fighting for a station for a long time - however the CFF/SBB has not yet committed to it.

Vaud S-Bahn extension plans

From December 2021 it is proposed that the Lausanne S-Bahn/RER network will be extended to include services on the TRAVYS line along the Vallée de Joux between Le Day and Le Brassus. Currently passengers to this remote part of Canton Vaud hard by the French frontier have to change from a Vallorbe-bound S2 service at Le Day to a local train. The station at Le Day will be relocated nearer Vallorbe so that trains to Le Brassus can reverse at it. The physical junction between the lines at Le Day is currently north of the station that serves this village suburb of Vallorbe. The plan is to have one train per hour continuing to Vallorbe, as today, and the other one to Le Brassus. In peak hours one of the two hourly trains will run from Aigle via Lausanne to Le Day, where it will divide to serve both Le Brassus and Vallorbe. An intermediate step at the December 2016 timetable change sees two peak services begin operating from Lausanne to Le Brassus, but going to Vallorbe to change the direction and hence passing Le Day twice. Also TRAVYS has applied for Federal funding to

upgrade the 4km Orbe – Chavornay branch line for it to become another integral part of the S-Bahn network. The project will include its conversion from 750 V DC to a 15 kV AC power supply; the installation of modern signalling systems; plus upgrading all the platforms to meet accessibility requirements and to cater for longer units. Currently at Chavornay, the Orbe-bound Be 2/2 or BDe 4/4 units wait at their own short platform on the west side of the CFF station. However, the plan is to build a new connection just north of Chavornay from the branch to the main line, so the through platforms can be used.

Driverless Operations Planned

We have reported in the past on the long-running saga of the Waldenburgerbahn that has resulted in it becoming a part of Baselland's BLT organisation, and on work commencing on its modernisation and conversion from its unique 750mm gauge to conventional metre-gauge operation. During the implementation of this project, which is scheduled for completion by 2022, it is intended that the potential for future full-automatic driverless operation of this line will be considered as an integral part of the programme. In Eastern Switzerland the management of the SOB are also studying the possibility of introducing a pilot project involving driverless trains in the next few years. The Editor recalls that back in 2012 when he was a guest in the cab of one of the RhB's then-new Allegra units on a run from Chur to Arosa, the driver commented that once clear of the section shared with road traffic in Chur, the EMU's on-board computer could drive the train to its destination with no involvement from him. It is understood that in Germany DB are also looking into trials of driverless operations.



Most of the station at Alpnachstad is still in the original state.

Photo: Mario Gavazzi

Modernisation of Pilatus Bahn Zahnradbahn Alpnachstad-Pilatus

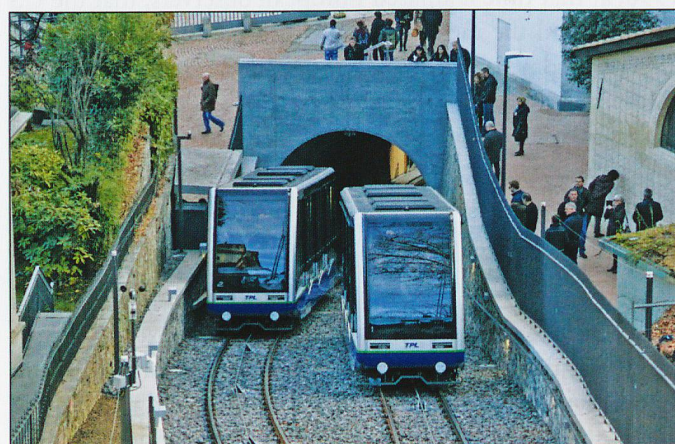
In early November 2016 the Pilatus Bahnen announced that following the construction of the new cable ways from Kriens to Fräckmüntegg and Fräckmüntegg-Pilatus Kulm, it is also planned to modernise the original Pilatusbahn that dates from the years 1888/9. The current rolling stock dates from 1937 so it will be 80 years old in May 2017. Thanks to the good maintenance these units have received these veterans are still capable of regular service, but it is apparent that newer units would be more efficient and potentially less liable to

unforeseen problems. It is understood that some sections of track work are due for reconstruction and there is also the potential for parts of the route to be realigned. At the time of writing the railway's management was being very tight-lipped about their plans.

Busiest Funicular Reopens

Until it closed for a complete rebuild in August 2014 Switzerland's busiest funicular was the line that connected Lugano SBB/FFS station with the centre of the old town over 50m below. This link carried some 2.5m passengers annually and it is probable that the gleaming new infrastructure, and state-of-the-art 100 person cars, will soon reclaim that title following its reopening on the 11th December 2016.

The new facility has some 35% more capacity than the old system and at peak times can carry 2,240 passengers/hour. At the same time as the funicular was being rebuilt the SBB/FFS undertook a major reconstruction of the main station, and this too reopened on the 11th December. See the article on P. 2 of this magazine for more details.



The renewed Lugano city funicular on its first day back in service. The cars are stopped whilst No. 2 on the left serves the halt at the cathedral. 11th December 2016.

Photo: Sholto Thomas

Basel SBB/SNCF

The distinguished, and now protected, station at Basel is at last to have a serious renovation, especially the French end. This had progressively degraded over many years and will be restored at a cost of CHF82m. The Customs facilities, where we once filed through late at night or in the early hours to reach the monumentally long French express trains will disappear, being today largely irrelevant; the old SNCF booking office, once fully staffed but now long boarded up, will be restored as a commercial centre, and architectural features such as galleries will re-emerge. For the duration of the work passengers transiting between Swiss and French services will be directed to use the public road outside the building. Today however, the most important through trains bypass the French station and are served by the through (SBB) platforms. On the other hand the long periods in the past when little happened at the SNCF end, have given way to a new vigour with intensive commuter services and hourly regional expresses linking Strasbourg and Basel.

BLS News

● **Huttwil** - The station and layout have now been completely modernised at a cost of CHF50m. A significant task was to

simplify the layout and eliminate hand points, which were still in use within station limits. The 1950s station building, not a treasure, has been replaced; the new building includes a BLS/regional travel centre. The Swiss News Editor notes that on the former Emmental lines there had long been several stations with only rudimentary signalling installations such as at Ramsei where, not too long ago, an agent had to cycle down the yard to change points for an approaching train. Following some deplorable incidents, and stern words from the Federal Transport Office (BAV), a lot of money has been invested to create sustainably safe operating conditions.

● **BLS Ships** - These carried 1m passengers in 2016 - a recovery which, in the face of the strong Swiss Franc and troubled tourism, is most encouraging. The steamships are popular, with 'Blümlisalp' again having a 2016/7 Christmas/New Year programme. The 'Lötschberg' on the Brienzersee developed a serious crack in a large casting that supported the motion and valve gear, just the bit the passengers love to watch. This was patched temporarily to complete the season, and was to be repaired permanently during the winter break. The historic 'Spiez' is being fully restored and, after a setback with the steam engine first planned for installation, is now to receive a completely new steam engine, built in Winterthur by DLM to the original plans. The cost of CHF4.5m is being met by contributions from the 'Friends of the Steam Ships', and although some CHF1m is still outstanding, a maiden voyage is planned for Dec. 2018.

● **Spiez** - This centre of BLS operations is always worth a visit. A lunchtime hour in October produced the usual succession of trains, including a dozen or more BLS Re 4/4s (Brüneli/Brownies), several blue Class 465s, and a succession of intermodal block trains. In addition Vectron No.475 403 was on test, and a complete surprise was the new SBB Intercity unit RABe 502 203 running trials on the BLS Base Tunnel line.



BLS Re 4/4s 177 and 175 pass through Spiez on a freight.

Photo: Bryan Stone

● **Brig and the Ae8/8 No.275** - This, the last BLS double engine, has for some time been stored in the small engine shed at the west end of Brig station, but as the shed is now required for other purposes No.275 had to go. The five engines of this class were in reality each built out of two Re4/4s, close coupled with the cabs removed where they were joined. On 3rd Nov. 2016 No.275 was separated into its two Re4/4 parts, and each half was propelled during the night to Frutigen. As it had not

moved for some years special attention, and a licence, were required. To move each half was challenging; both were open at one end to the elements. The 'eastern' unit of the pair was fitted with headlights, and a driver on a temporary seat with a warning device for the propelling locomotive behind him, was charged with signal and track observation. All went well, and at the time of writing No.275 (last regularly used for spoil trains from the BLS Base tunnel during 2002-4) was safely stored in Frutigen.

● **Kambly Biscuit Train** - On 31st October 2016 a simple ceremony, in very characteristic Swiss tradition, took place in the BLS workshops in Spiez when a 'Lötschberger' EMU No.535 114, was named after the station Trubschachen. This is in the Entlebuch, a beautiful and peaceful rural valley through which runs the Luzern - Langnau - Bern line with its BLS operated service. The immediate reason for the event was that the Class 465-locoms and EW III cars used in recent years have now been transferred to the Bern - Neuchâtel - La Chaux de Fonds line and 'Lötschberger' units have replaced them. However, that raised a problem. In Trubschachen is the biscuit factory of the Kambly family concern, which has deep local roots in its community. Kambly is very publicity conscious, and has not only a model factory, where an exhibition hall is open to visitors, but it also had a Class 465 and train set painted in Kambly colours for the Entlebuch services. Working closely with the BLS, Kambly has fitted out a pair of 'Lötschberger' units, Nos.114/115, as the 'Kambly Train' to operate two return trips a day on the Entlebuch line. Your Swiss News Editor and his wife were among the guests at Spiez when company owner Oskar Kambly publicly thanked the BLS and unveiled 'his' train. This is beautifully fitted out in Kambly colours and with lounges, children's playroom and refreshment facilities. We were taken to Thun and back and made very welcome. In case readers have never heard of Kambly biscuits, which are a household word in Switzerland, an explanation may be that in Britain their only point of sale is Harrods, in Knightsbridge, London.

Oskar Kambly being presented with the loco name plates.

Photo: Bryan Stone



Our Swiss Editor at the Kambly presentation in Spiez.

Photo: Bryan Stone

TMR – SNCF

Major renewals on this cross-border operation between Le Châtelard and St Gervais have been delayed, causing a two month closure in late 2016 and probably after the winter season another complete closure in April and May 2017. The problems appear to be the testing and approval of the new signalling system. It is suggested that visitors to this delightful alpine area should check before travelling.

DFB News

The dedicated volunteers restoring steam powered snow blower R12 have made slow progress in 2016, due to other commitments on the Dampfbahn Furka Bergstrecke (DFB), but it is now nearly complete, with the brake rigging being the big outstanding item to sort. In spring 2017 it is confidently expected that a test run will be made at the Goldau base. There is no hurry to move it to Realp, as there is a lack of covered accommodation there, but there is a plan to remedy this with a new shed.

The DFB operates in a harsh environment and most of its historic rolling stock is exposed to the elements all year round, with severe effects especially on woodwork and paintwork, the latter ascribed to “aggressive UV light” due to altitude. An appeal is underway to raise CHF2.5m to build a new shed at Realp containing four 60m tracks, plus space for plant and machinery. This will not only protect coaches, but will also allow better conditions to work on them. Funding from various sources is forthcoming to allow work to begin in 2017, with the hope of having the first carriages under cover in the winter 2018/2019. The building will be low lying and fit in to the landscape. Apart from being unobtrusive this will help to protect it from the weather. The new building will be at the MGB (Matterhorn Gotthard Bahn) end of the DFB's Realp station. The shed tracks will connect directly into the present station tracks, via a two track flat crossing of the Schweigstrasse that connects the DFB and MGB stations. More details can be found on the web site www.dfb.ch plus info. on how contributions can be made.

JB - Passengers down in 2016

After a record year in 2016 when the Jungfraubahn carried some 1m passengers to the Jungfrauoch, their results for 2016 were less than pleasing with passenger numbers dropping to around 900,000. This fall was put down to the unstable political situation in some countries and well-documented terrorist activities in areas of Europe. It appears that potential travellers in the Asian markets, that the company had been targeting are more liable to alter, or cancel, their travel plans due to such disturbances than customers from Europe and other more mature markets. Early high-level snow at the end of the year did help the JB Group's overall carryings as it boosted home and European winter sport trips.

Aargau Changes

Canton Aargau took a decision last autumn that the two metre-gauge railways that operate in the Canton should formally merge from 2019 under a yet-to-be-announced common name. BDWM Transport and the Wynental und Suhrentalbahn (WSB), part of WSB/AAR Bus & Bahn, have been working closely together since 2011 and have already

achieved annual savings of CHF300,000. It is expected that the total merger will see this figure increase as common ‘back office’ functions are brought together. Also it was announced that the WSB had placed a CHF50m order with Stadler for the supply of five three-car EMUs for delivery in 2019.

Brien Rothorn Bahn

2017 is the 125th anniversary of this little railway. It will be celebrated throughout the season, from mid-May to mid-October. An unexpected start was the transfer of 125 year old locomotive No.1 to Bern, where it was displayed throughout the winter in front of the Berner Kursaal (municipal concert hall) and theatre at the Victoriaplatz. No.1 is one of the three operational ‘originals’, Nos.1, 2 and 5, but is not currently planned for work in 2017. Usually one of the three is at work, one is reserve, and one is in overhaul. We will wait to see if the newly overhauled No.7 (a youngster of 80-years) is back in service, but equally, we learn that No.12 of the 1992 batch built new at SLM is now due for a heavy overhaul. The BRB has two more originals, Nos.3 and 4, but both are long stored out of use with various expensive defects - No.3 has a cracked frame. See also the announcement in Society News on the ceremony on 26th May for the dedication of the SRS-funded ‘Dunglison Memorial Bench’ at Planalp.

BRB loco No. 1 on display at Bern.

Photo: Bryan Stone



Sugar beet

2016 was a disappointing year as poor weather conditions led to a poor harvest, meaning that only around 600,000t were delivered by rail to the factories at Aarberg and Frauenfeld. A number of traditional loading points were closed, and if current tests using Swap bodies (similar to containers used to transfer domestic waste) are successful, the concentration of loading points may continue. This could spell the end of a very rural Swiss autumn scene of the heavy tractor with its wagon of beet, going from the fields to the station.

New Stamps

SwissPost has begun to issue a new long-term series of fifteen ‘definitive’ stamps featuring images of notable Swiss stations. At present we have seen Brig on the CHF0.85; Luzern on the CHF1.00; Bellinzona on the CHF1.50, and Genève on the CHF2.00.

Bussnang to Birkenhead

Swiss rolling stock builder Stadler announced in December that it was the preferred bidder to supply England's Merseyrail with 52 new four-car EMUs to replace the existing 40-year-old trains. The contract, worth £460m, will see the first units delivered in mid-2019 and the whole fleet in operation by end-2020.

Stadler Expands in Poland

December 2016 was a busy month for Stadler. Not only winning their second major rolling stock supply contract in the UK they announced that they were taking a 40% stake in reformed Polish LRV manufacturing company, Solaris Tram, that has a production plant in Sroda, south east of Poznan. The plan is that in future Solaris Tram will bid with Stadler's Polish subsidiary Stadler Polska as a consortium led by Stadler for tenders in Poland and Central/Eastern Europe.

SBB Close 1st Class Lounges

At the end of 2016 SBB/CFF closed its 1st Class lounges in Genève (opened 2014) and Zürich (2008) due to low patronage. Costing CHF3m a year to run they were used by only 5% of the international 1st Class passengers, and just 1% of the annual 1st Class GA holders who were eligible to use them. Connections in Switzerland are so good that few passengers spend much time at these main stations where there are also numerous catering outlets.

Gotthard – A new dramatic documentary video

It often surprises not only casual visitors to Switzerland, but experienced SRS readers, how deeply even today, the awareness and pride of many Swiss in their railways sits. Of course there are critics and bad days, but regular referenda, readers' letters and commentaries, confirm the basic sympathy. There is an automobile/road building lobby, but it has an uphill battle. Building and opening the new Gotthard Base Tunnel has shown it again. A major success of the Locarno Film Festival in August 2016 was a 3 hour dramatic documentary, 'Gotthard', describing in a mixture of fictional characters and real events the building of the Gotthard Tunnel in 1882. It brings the triumph and also the disasters and shame, as when militia shot four striking miners in Göschenen. The film was shown twice at Christmas on Swiss TV (SRF 1) and attracted a record audience of some 6 million viewers. There is a DVD available.

Vectron No.475 403 on test at Spiez.

Photo: Bryan Stone



ZSG Surcharge

From the 11th December all passengers using the ships of the Zürichsee Schifffahrtsgesellschaft (ZSG) will be required to pay a CHF5 daily surcharge. This includes all holders of Half Fare Cards, GAs, Swiss Passes (in their various forms), etc. The surcharge is valid for all trips on one day and covers all services operated by ZSG, with very few exceptions. The ZSG website notes that, as their financial masters Canton Zürich are apparently having problems balancing their budget, all enterprises operated by the Canton are being required to generate additional income, especially from loss-making services such as the lake ships. There is more information on their very clear English-language website accessed via www.zsg.ch.


New Rolling Stock

- **RhB** - During last summer the RhB contracted with Stadler for the supply of 27 four-car "Retica 30" EMUs with an option for a further 20. Just a few months on the RhB has gone back to Stadler and ordered nine more within the terms of the option to give a fleet of 36 units with delivery starting in 2019.

- **Chemins de fer du Jura** - The first of five railcars Be4/4 Nos.651 – 655, delivered at a cost of CHF25m, enters service in March 2017.

- **BOB** - Six ABDeh 8/8 units Nos.321 – 326 are being introduced on the Lauterbrunnen and Grindelwald lines in time for the 2017 summer season.

- **SBB-Cargo International** - New Vectron locos Nos.193 256 – 260 have been hired from owner ELL, and are suitable for the corridor Netherlands – Italy, including the Gotthard Base Tunnel.

- **BLS** - Three new Class 515 'Mutz' EMUs now on order will increase the fleet to 31. These are required to meet increased demand on the Bern S-Bahn services to Thun, Fribourg and Biel/Bienne. 

Swiss News is compiled by Bryan Stone and includes input from Mario Gavazzi, Michael Donovan, Jakob Jäger, Ron Smith, s'Murmeli, Glyn Jones, Ilkka Huotelin, and others.

SBB Intercity unit RABe 502 203 and a Diagnosewagen at Spiez. See item on P.35

Photo: Bryan Stone

