Zeitschrift: Swiss express: the Swiss Railways Society journal

Herausgeber: Swiss Railways Society

Band: - (2017)

Heft: 130

Artikel: Ae 6/6 Swansong

Autor: Tinsley, Steve

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-853887

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. Mehr erfahren

Conditions d'utilisation

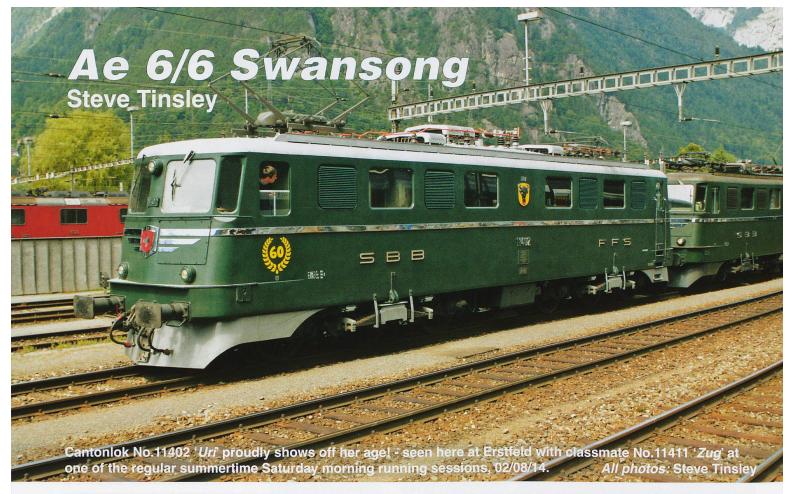
L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. En savoir plus

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. Find out more

Download PDF: 21.08.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, https://www.e-periodica.ch



his article is not intended as a technical report, nor a detailed history of the 120 Ae 6/6 class locomotives of the SBB – this information is expertly covered by Bryan Stone and Paul Russenberger in the June 2014 Swiss Express. This article is merely a recollection of my memories of the class in its later years.

My first trip to Switzerland, post childhood, was on honeymoon in 1993, but it was to be some 10 years later when my interest in Swiss railways began, by which time the class Ae 6/6 locomotives were already 50 years old! Although the class had been built for the Gotthard and Simplon routes, by the time I had started to pursue them, they had been relegated to secondary duties and rarely appeared on the

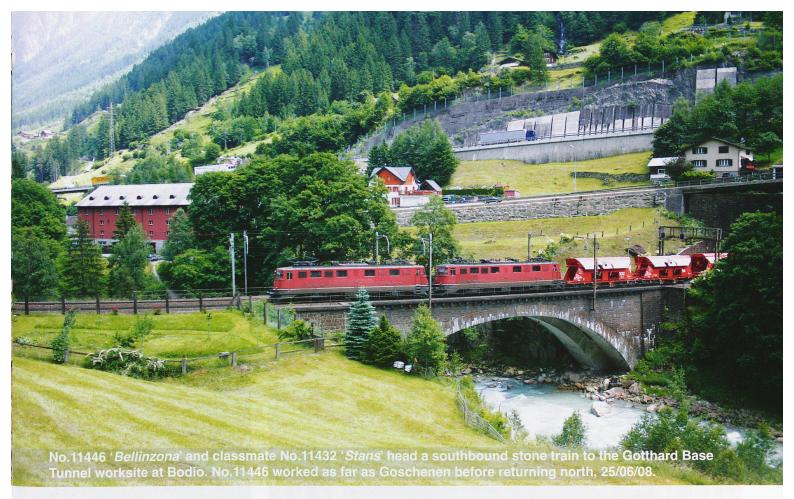
"mountain routes". Among my first photographs of the class was of No.11450 at Arth-Goldau, not realising at the time that this would be the last photograph of the class in service that I would take. It was complete with crests and original nameplates – Cargo liveried examples appeared in later years with what I assumed to be replica nameplates, all the original plates being removed for safekeeping.

In 2006, I embarked on my first "lads trip" to Switzerland with my good friend Alan Wardman, staying in Brig for 3 nights, the primary objective of the trip being to photograph the BLS

"Brownies", which we believed to be in decline – how wrong we were! On this trip we saw the occasional Ae 6/6 but they seemed to appear more by chance than by expectation. Brig often produced a class member, which worked a westbound pick-up goods in the afternoon. Odd examples were also noted at Spiez and Thun and on one occasion crossing the Kander Viaduct. Unfortunately, by the time I had mastered the controls on my new camera this engine must have been nearing Kandersteg! In 2007, the focus of the "lads trips" turned to the Gotthard route, as a result of reading an article in Swiss Express on the subject, written by David Adams, meeting David for the first time that very summer in the bar of the Hotel Frohsinn at Erstfeld – where else? This hotel was



11487 'Langenthal', leaves Brig station prior to taking out the afternoon westbound pick-up goods, 08/08/06.



to be the destination of choice for many years to come. Scheduled workings for the Ae 6/6 class over the mountain route were very rare indeed, however in the summer of 2008, the construction works associated with the Gotthard Base Tunnel did produce a regular Ae 6/6 working, this being a double-headed combination working a stone train from Huntwangen-Wil to Bodio. Such workings still exist today, being in the hands of an 'Re 10/10' combination and serving the Ceneri Tunnel worksite.

Although our trips to the Gotthard focused mainly on the North and South ramps, we did have the odd day trip to places such as Pratteln. This station at the eastern approach to Basel Muttenz yard proved to be a "hot spot"

for the class, noting nine different examples in only a few hours as they worked freights in and out of Muttenz. Killwangen-Spreitenbach, situated at the western approach to Zürich's Limmattal yard was another "hot spot" for the class and this was often a calling off point for us as we headed up to Zürich Airport on our way home. In 2012, our "pilgrimage" to the Gotthard did not go as planned, arriving to find the line totally blocked just north of Gurtnellen due to a rock fall, resulting in us having to re-plan our whole trip "on the spot" or rather "in the bar"! For full details see December 2012 Swiss Express and John Jesson's article "Plan B". However, we were lucky enough to have the use of a mini-bus for one of the days and with John Jesson as

navigator, we headed north towards Brugg and the Botzberg Tunnel. By now Ae 6/6 appearances were becoming a rarity, though on that particular day the three members of the class that we did see were in all the different liveries – green, red and Cargo – quite a bonus!.

From 2010 onwards, as new motive power arrived in Switzerland, along with a general downturn in freight, more and more members of the class were being "switched off" and could be found stabled in sidings and yards – very few of these would escape the cutter's torch. Anyone

and yards – very few of these would escape the cutter's torch. Anyone Cantonlok No.11419 'Appenzell I. RH', heads through Pratteln with a train of vans in the direction of Brugg, 27/06/08.

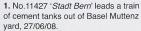


MARCH 2017

travelling through Biasca around this time would be able to see no less than twenty-one of the class awaiting such a fate, and my records show that none of these made it into preservation, perhaps becoming a source of spares at the very best. This certainly showed me that you don't realise what you have until its (almost) gone!

My latest copy of the Platform 5 'Swiss Railways European Handbook No. 5' tells me that fourteen class members have been preserved and of those, seven are still active and presumably certified for mainline use. No.11402 "Uri" based

at Erstfeld has on occasions been hired out for banking duties over the Gotthard North ramp, with enthusiasts being invited to "ride the footplate" at considerable cost! It is still possible to see the remaining seven active members in service throughout Switzerland, as they are often called upon to work charter trains. Hopefully this article has been an enjoyable read, and hopefully it will inspire others to share their memories of these iconic locomotives - you have 50 years worth of material untouched!



2. No.11465 'Oerlikon' approaches Killwangen-Spreitenbach with a mixed goods bound for Zurich Limmattal yard, 25/06/10.

3. 610482 'Delemont' returns to Erstfeld, light engine, prior to taking up her next duties, 18/09/09. 4. No.11407 'Aargau' heads a Schaffhausen - Chiasso charter through Erstfeld. Classmate No.11402 "Uri" can just be seen in the far distance, 03/09/11. 5. No.11431 'Sarnen' stands at the end of a row of no less than 21 class Ae 6/6s at Biasca - all of which were bound for the cutter's torch, 22/06/10 6. Cantonlok No.11404 'Luzern' passes through Pratteln on the Brugg lines with a mixed freight, 27/06/08. 7. Immaculate 610439 in Cargo livery complete with 'Schaffhausen' nameplates, hauls a northbound container service through Pratteln, 27/06/08.













