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SWISS GOODS TRAINS WITH PASSENGER ACCOMMODATION

by Victor Isaacs

For those who might like a change from the well-known Swiss joys of travelling a modern and co-ordinated transport system, the lesser known enjoyment of sampling goods trains with passenger accommodation can be recommended. These trains can be found by searching through the Timetables for the symbols G or M. This is one of many interesting non-standard features to be found in the "Indicateur Officiel" notwithstanding the general regular interval nature of services. Most of the 'trains de marchandises avec voitures' run in the early morning. They run on some main lines as well as some branches, and on some private lines as well as the Federal Railways. The Timetable warns that they run without guarantee of adherence to their schedules or of maintaining connections. Observers of the Swiss scene will know that the official description is somewhat arbitrary because in fact some of the "goods trains" in practice sometimes run without freight vehicles, and many secondary "passenger trains" will, when convenient, convey freight vehicles. This article records journeys on five goods trains which did live up to the description.

Friday 4th October 1985: The 0631 from Lausanne to Vallorbe being the first stopping train of the day mainly conveyed workers. Upon alighting at Le Day there was no sign of any connection to Le Brassus. However, within a few minutes it appeared around the curve from Vallorbe. It comprised of Re 4/4 II 314 one passenger carriage, and a long line of freight vehicles. The passenger carriage was second class with wooden seats and end platforms. It belonged to the Compagnie Pont-Brassus (PBr) with "Valle de Joux" painted on the sides. It is possibly the only PBr passenger vehicle in regular use (albeit for only one round trip on a day) because other services on the branch are provided by CFF train sets. The train departed on time at 07.16. At Le Pont the rear three wagons were detached by the station's small shunting locomotive. At Sentier-Orient (headquarters of the PBr) the train arrived five minutes early at 07.53, and departed fourteen minutes late at 08.17. In the intervening time wagons were detached from various parts of the train and shunted around the yard, the CFF EMU going in the opposite direction was "crossed", and the driver spent a few minutes in the carriage talking to the passengers. Upon arrival at the terminus of Le Brassus a few minutes later only three passengers were left.

Due to the time taken to shunt and prepare the train, the return journey commenced twenty minutes late at 09.05 and because of this, the crossing with the opposing CFF EMU was at Le Liev instead of Le Pont as scheduled. The only shunting en route was at Sentier-Orient. Arrival at the terminus of Vallorbe was at 10.00 (ten minutes late) providing plenty of time for a connection to Lausanne at 10.37. This by way of contrast, was by the TGV "Lutetia" ex Paris.

Monday 7th October 1985: CFF has international "trains de marchandises avec voitures" running to and from Pontarlier. On this day the 15.03 from Neuchatel comprised RE 4/4 1259, van, first/second carriage, second carriage, three FS open wagons, and six bogie open wagons. All except the first two wagons were detached to be loaded with timber at Les Verrieres, the last station before the border. The return journey on this day with a similar load is only available for passengers from Pontarlier to Les Verriers. The trains ran on time throughout.

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| <u>Timetable No.</u> | <u>Departure Time</u> | <u>From</u> | <u>To</u> | <u>(Dist. km)</u> | <u>Railway</u> | <u>Comments</u> |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------|---|
| 100 | 05.54 | Sion | Brig | 54 | CFF/SBB | Mon-Sat |
| " | 08.30 | Brig | Domodssda | 32 | SBB/FFS | Daily |
| " | 04.08 | Brig | Sion | 54 | SBB/CFF | Mon-Sat Conveys Carriage to Lausanne |
| 131 | 07.03 | St. Maurice | Bouveret | 22 | CFF | Mon-Sat to Monthey-CFF |
| " | 13.37 | St. Maurice | St.Gingolph | 26 | CFF | Sun-Fri to Monthey-CFF |
| 140 | 05.10 | Brig | Zermatt | 44 | BVZ | Daily |
| " | 12.40 | Brig | Zermatt | 44 | BVZ | Mon-Sat |
| " | 12.23 | Zermatt | Brig | 44 | BVZ | Mon-Sat |
| " | 17.32 | Zermatt | Brig | 44 | BVZ | Mon-Sat |
| 201 | 07.17 | Vallorbe | Le Brassus | 26 | CFF/P Br | Mon-Sat |
| " | 08.45 | Le Brassus | Vallorbe | 26 | PBr/CFF | Mon-Sat |
| 220 | 16.45 | Pontarlier | Les Verrieres | 14 | CFF | Mon-Fri |
| " | 07.00 | Neuchatel | Pontarlier | 53 | CFF | Mon-Sat |
| " | 15.03 | Neuchatel | Pontarlier | 53 | CFF | Mon-Fri |
| 223 | 06.55 | La Chaux-de-Fonds | Le Locle/Col-des-Roches | 9 | CFF | Mon-Sat |
| " | 18.15 | Neuchatel | Corcelles-Peseux | 3 | CFF | Mon-Fri Conveys carriage ex Bern |
| 225 | 05.13 | Biel/Bienne | La Chaux-de-Fonds | 44 | CFF | Mon-Sat |
| 226 & 230 | 04.43 | Delemont | Sonceboz-Sombeval | 36 | CFF | Mon-Fri |
| 230 | 12.05 | Delemont | Laufen | 16 | CFF/SBB | Mon-Fri |
| 237 | 05.21 | Tramelan | Tavannes | 13 | CJ | Mon-Sat |
| 251 | 04.24 | Lyss | Payerne | 42 | SBB/CFF | Mon-Sat |
| 255 | 05.22 | Bulle | Romont | 26 | GFM | Mon-Sat |
| " | 06.00 | Romont | Bulle | 26 | GFM | Mon-Sat |
| 257 | 07.24 | Flamatt | Laupen | 12 | STB | Mon-Fri |
| 298 | 04.50 | Bern | Thun | 31 | GBS | Mon-Sat |
| 300 | 05.33 | Kandersteg | Brig | 59 | BLS | Daily |
| " | 22.03 | Spiez | Brig | 101 | BLS | Daily |
| " | 00.07 | Spiez | Brig | 101 | BLS | Daily |
| " | 04.34 | Brig | Frutigen | 85 | BLS | Daily Conveys carriage to Spiez |
| " | 06.33 | Brig | Goppenstein | 36 | BLS | Daily |
| 411 | 07.48 | Moutier | Gansbrunnen | 12 | SMB | Mon-Fri |
| " | 14.48 | Moutier | Solothurn | 29 | SMB | Mon-Fri |
| " | 06.33 | Langendorf | Moutier | 25 | SMB | Mon-Fri |
| " | 13.00 | Gansbrunnen | Moutier | 12 | SMB | Mon-Fri |
| " | 13.25 | Solothurn | Gansbrunnen | 17 | SMB | Mon-Fri |
| 412 | 07.30 | Balsthal | Oensingen | 4 | OeBB | Mon-Sat |
| " | 10.13 | Oensingen | Balsthal | 4 | OeBB | Mon-Fri |
| " | 16.13 | Oensingen | Balsthal | 4 | OeBB | Mon-Fri |
| " | 17.11 | Oensingen | Balsthal | 4 | OeBB | Mon-Sat |
| 440 | 05.20 | Ramsei | Langnau | 12 | EBT | Mon-Fri |
| " | 05.30 | Konolfingen | Thun | 19 | EBT | Mon-Sat |
| 441 | 08.46 | Zell | Wolhusen | 22 | VHB | Mon-Fri |
| 442 | 09.30 | Ramsei | Huttwil | 27 | VHB | Mon-Fri |
| " | 14.58 | Ramsei | Huttwil | 27 | VHB | Mon-Fri |
| " | 09.58 | Huttwil | Sumiswald-Grünen | 21 | VHB | Mon-Fri |
| " | 14.57 | Huttwil | Ramsei | 27 | VHB | Mon-Fri |
| 460 | 05.03 | Wolhusen | Langnau | 37 | SBB | Wolhusen - Escholzmatt Tues-Sat |
| " | 05.13 | Luzern | Langnau | 58 | SBB | Mon-Sat |
| " | 10.11 | Wolhusen | Langnau | 37 | SBB | Mon-Sat |
| 470 | 06.16 | Giswil | Meiringen | 16 | SBB(Brunig) | Mon-Sat |
| " | 07.14 | Giswil | Luzern | 29 | SBB(Brunig) | Mon-Fri |
| " | 18.36 | Interlaken Ost | Meiringen | 29 | SBB(Brunig) | Mon-Fri |
| 474 | 11.33 | Meiringen | Innertkirchen | 5 | KO | Mon-Sat |
| " | 15.40 | Meiringen | Innertkirchen | 5 | KO | Mon-Sat |
| " | 09.55 | Innerkirchen | Meiringen | 5 | KO | Mon-Sat |
| " | 16.25 | Innerkirchen | Meiringen | 5 | KO | Mon-Sat |
| 480 | 06.09 | Stans | Engeiberg | 19 | LSE | Mon-Sat |
| " | 12.44 | Luzern | Stans | 14 | SBB/LSE | Mon-Fri |
| 700 | 23.32 | Basel/SBB | Zurich HB | 88 | SBB | Daily |
| 754 | 17.41 | Wald | Ruti | 7 | SBB | Mon-Fri |
| 760 | ?? | Eglisau | Schaffhausen | 20 | SBB | Sat only |
| 850 | 00.05 | Winterthur | St. Gallen | 58 | SBB | Mon-Fri |
| 880 | 11.37 | Rorschach | St. Gallen | 15 | SBB | Mon-Fri |
| 902 | 05.00 | Glarus | Linthal | 16 | SBB | Mon-Fri |
| " | 05.33 | Glarus | Schwanden | 5 | SBB | Sat only |

continued from page 12.

Tuesday 8th October 1985. The 13.37 St. Maurice to St. Gingolph consisted of old electric Ae 4/7 10954, one second class carriage and three open wagons. The wagons were all detached at Monthey - CFF, leaving the train rather short and over-powered.. The train arrived at Gingolph at 14.18 (one minute late). This is a very strange village, being half in Switzerland and half in France, with only a little creek between. The station is also strange, comprising only a platform, there being no run-round loop or siding. The train therefore had to push back empty the four kilometres to the preceding (and more important) station of Bouveret.

A full list of all goods trains with passenger accommodation attached as at the Summer 1985 timetable. It will be seen that some mainline journeys are quite lengthy. The longest being 101 kilometres over the entire length of the BLS mainline-- but the journeys are often at strange hours of the night. The "trains de Marchandises avec voitures", can, however, be recommended as providing insights simultaneously into passenger and freight working, and often including usual workings. For example, of the three runs instanced above, that to Le Brassus gave travel on goods trains in both directions on a partially Federal partially private branch, with plenty of shunting along the way to and from Pontarlier offered international working and that to St. Gingolph produced a run behind an elderly locomotive.

BOOK REVIEW by Nigel Heath

"Tramways & Light Railways of Switzerland and Austria". Author R.J. Buckley. Published by Light Railway Transit Association. Size A5, paperback 120 pages. Price £3.50 from Swiss Railway Society Book Sales.

This volume fills for me a gap in available information. It covers Tramways & Light Railways including some funiculars. Of necessity it excludes metre gauge systems such as the Rhaetian Bahn as virtually Main line railways, but it includes some standard gauge DC powered lines. The author has applied an arbitrary rule of thumb in doing so, but then the distinctions between tramways, light railways and full railways were always blurred at the edges. What for instance is the Newcastle Metro ? the answer depends upon your definition and viewpoint.

There are no pictures, except for an illustration of a city tram and bus ticket, but there are a mass of routemaps.

The book includes sections on ticket arrangements, rolling stock classification and each line grouped by Tramways, Electric Light Railways and Tramcar Preservation. There are separate parts for Switzerland and for Austria, of which the part on Switzerland is by far the largest. Comprehensive Indexes detail both the lines included and lines excluded, and also Funiculars & Museums. This even includes a warning of the museums, all municipal, which are not open to the public. Though why have a museum if you dont let anyone come and see what you have got ?beats me !

The section on the lines includes rolling stock lists, descriptions and timetable information where appropriate.

This is a useful little book with a vast amount of information for its size. For anyone wanting to explore the Tramways & Light Railways of Switzerland, it could easily be taken with them and would be invaluable for planning trips. It contains plenty of warnings on the perils of the ticket systems and inspectors which could easily save the price of the book in fines avoided. Mr. Buckley has clearly put an immense amount of work into this compilation and is to be congratulated on a fine job. be congratulated on a fine job.