

Zeitschrift: Swiss express : the Swiss Railways Society journal
Herausgeber: Swiss Railways Society
Band: 6 (2000-2002)
Heft: 4

Rubrik: Notepad

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General

On 17th August, a joint SBB and BLS press release gave details of future close cooperation. The two managements have agreed the following in principle:

“The SBB will take over long-distance passenger traffic from the BLS. Already, the main planning tasks are with the SBB as the BLS has no exclusive long-distance traffic. The BLS rolling stock for long distance traffic is virtually identical to that of the SBB; livery and seats being the only differences. But it notable that the BLS Mark IV coaches only spend 14% of their operating time on BLS and 86% on the SBB (timetable 2000/01). On the other hand, many BLS trains are composed of SBB coaches.

The BLS will take over all SBB S-Bahn trains in the Bern area, which are the S1 (Thun - Bern - Fribourg/Laupen) and the S3 (Thun - Belp - Bern - Biel/Bienne).

Freight will be operated separately. The SBB is joining with the FS to form CSI (Cargo Svizzera-Italiana) whilst the BLS is planning a joint operation with DB. They will remain in competition, but trainload traffic within Switzerland is already only offered by the SBB (later by CSI).

The “piggy back” service on the Lötschberg route will be operated by BLS alone. The BLS will keep the car transporter traffic through the Lötschberg tunnel (and the Simplon, on occasions).

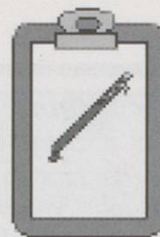
Infrastructure management will be carried out by the SBB but maintenance and operations will remain with the SBB and BLS separately. The SBB wishes to purchase a 34% stake in the BLS. This however is subject to cantonal referendum.”

This means there will be important changes in passenger service, small changes in freight and a better co-ordination in infrastructure. However, at least six months of hard work by the BLS administration is needed before the corporate structure can be changed.

International

SBB announced that the start of their joint venture with FS would be postponed (yet again). They indicated there was more work to do than could be foreseen. Critics say, that the planning was unrealistic. It

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also appears that the Italians are not as enthusiastic in practice as they are in their press releases, and may not be happy about the way the SBB are prepared to cooperate with anyone. Also, the EU has not yet indicated whether it would back this joint venture. In the meantime, the proposed stake by the SBB in the BLS would make them a partner in the BLS Cargo - DB Cargo partnership.

The SBB has also taken a share in M40 trains, the British company which runs the newly-renewed Chiltern Trains franchise. (see article by George Hoekstra)

In a further joint partnership, SBB, DB and ÖBB are looking to build a joint fleet of tilting InterCity EMU's. The SBB RABDe500 type is the preferred prototype, selected because of its higher seating / coach ratio compared with the DB ICE-T.



SBB CFF FFS

The first IC double deck ‘bistro’ coach was due for introduction into trial service between Basel and Chur from 23rd November.

The SBB has ordered a further batch of IC double deck coaches. Of the 134 vehicles, 90 are equally divided between first and second class vehicles; the remaining 34 will be double deck motor coaches allowing the formation of double deck Pendelzug formations, capable of running in multiple during peak periods, replacing the existing Re460's.

The garden wagons referred to in Swiss Express Vol 6/3 were scattered about the system at the start of October, including two craned onto platform ends at Lausanne and Renens. Others could be seen in Basel loco refuge siding and at Luzern buffer stops. Two further wagons were seen in a sadder state in Lausanne carriage sidings, badly in need of weeding and dead-heading!

On 22nd August, a MThB RABDe525 + Bt formation carried out a demonstration and test run over the full length of the Seetalbahn from Lenzburg to Luzern.

Some new level crossing signals for road traffic have been installed on the northern end of the Seetalbahn (Emmenbrücke - Lenzburg). They consist of red rotating lights (the sort usually seen on top of emergency vehicles) inserted in a cutout in the standard black and red triangle. It has to be said they are



Philip Elwin took this picture of an SBB Brünig line mess car at Giswil. Summer 2000

brighter and flash faster than the traditional signals, so are more noticeable.

SBB have stopped using coach-side destination plates on internal services. Local trains using older push-pull stock have destination cards changed by the driver inside the front and back cab windows, and some double-deck IC stock now has electronic indicators (as do the new tilting trains), but for other inter city and inter-regional trains, you now have to rely on the station indicators.

SBB have discontinued the International volume of the timetable. Instead there is a series of booklets covering groups of countries, available free from leaflet racks in booking offices. They are less comprehensive - e.g. the France booklet does not include Eurostar or train and ferry links to England.

Meiringen Works successfully converted an EWII AB to restaurant car WR 422 in seven months during the winter, as part of the package for a revamped Brünig Line service. Two 'Brünig Panoramic' formations have been operating since the May 2000 timetable change, formed with two firsts (one panoramic, one modernised with 'long' windows), a restaurant car and three seconds (one with wheelchair lift). All coaches carry the 'Panoramic' livery of red and white with black bands as introduced on the panoramic coaches

BLS Lötschbergbahn

The BLS operated freight service between Basel and Chiasso was withdrawn from the May 28th timetable change.

Ae8/8 275 has been returned to service, for use on the base tunnel support workings between

Goppenstein and Raron. Sister engine 273 has been inspected with a view to reinstatement.

During the blockage of the Simplon Pass road by a mudslide on 22nd August, the BLS provided a substitute car transporter service between Brig and Iselle. A five return journey per day service was also provided from 26th October, as the Simplon rail tunnel was reopened before the road pass.

Other Standard Gauge Mittel Thurgau Bahn (MThB)

The Re4/4' fleet is being given intermediate overhauls at the Frauenfeld-Wil workshops at Wil, with Re 416 625 (SBB 10007) the first to receive attention. Re 416 628 (ex 10039) entered service during the spring, retaining its green livery with 'mittelthurgaubahn' branding.

The flyover connection at Kreuzlingen with the Schaffhausen - Romanshorn line has been replaced by a temporary flat junction nearby to permit the construction of a major new road and Swiss/German transit facilities. However, a permanent new flat junction is being built about 800m further west, with a new double track line from Kreuzlingen to Bernrain on the route to Weinfelden. As the existing Tägerwil station is to be bypassed, presumably it will be re-provided on the new line.

Oensingen Balsthal Bahn (OeBB)

It is reported that some of the OeBB rail services are to be replaced by buses



Regionalverkehr Mitteland (RM)

The company has ordered eight GTW2/6 units from Stadler. It has placed five of its 10 Be4/4 locomotives into store pending withdrawal of the class, but does intend to retain two as historic locomotives.

Südostbahn (SOB)

Pfäffikon (SZ) station has been rebuilt. Raised platforms have been installed throughout, and the erst-while shuttle platform on track 7 has been lengthened. The line towards Hurden has been doubled as far as the 'causeway' road bridge.

The former Märklin-lok Re 446 447-5 is in a new red, white and blue advertising livery for the firm Tesa. (see *Snapshots from George Hoekstra*)

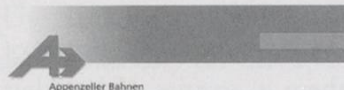
Transports Publics Fribourgeois (TPF)

Canton Fribourg's two main transport companies, the Chemins de fer Fribourgeois (GFM) railway and rural bus organisation, and Transports Fribourgeois (TF), the Fribourg city transport undertaking, were amalgamated under the above title on July 12th. Buses have been appearing in a new livery and one standard gauge loco-hauled coach was seen in it outside Fribourg depot. The sides are mainly white with one end (the front end of buses) dark red and a horizontal row of large red dots under the windows, ending in the initials "tpf".

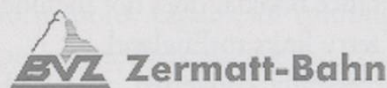
AppenzellerBahn Te 2/2 no. 40 delivers rails for the remodelling at Urnäsch. 5/10/2000.

Photo: Robert Fox

Metre gauge.



Urnäsch station is being modernised and remodelled. See the accompanying picture.



The HGe4/4III's have received large advertising slogans on the side. No. 4 carries an advert for Visp football club; another has the BVZ web address (www.bvz.ch) filling the whole side.

Forchbahn (FB)

The FB has declared that their 1959-1966 built fleet, BDe4/4 11-16 and Bt102-108, is not up to current comfort and riding standards and intend to order between 11 and 13 low floor articulated cars as replacements.

Frauenfeld-Wil Bahn (FW)

Freight traffic on the line finished at the end of August with the end of Cargo Rail traffic at four intermediate stations.

Well yes, I like trains but perhaps not quite that much. Brünig line Hge ??? masquerades as a frog at Interlaken Ost. Summer 2000. Photo Philip Elwin



Further to the note in the last Swiss Express, there are actually five 'Sportwagen' B4241 - 4245, all with different styling! The avalanche gallery by the Oberalpsee and the adjacent station at Oberalpasshöhe-Calmot were rebuilt during the summer.

Rock falls in the Rhône valley at the end of November closed the line between Bitsch and Mörel from 1st October, to allow other dangerous rock formations in the area. With the parallel road also closed, the alternative route was by bus directly from up the mountain road to Ried bei Mörel, where passengers transferred to the cablecar back down into the valley to reach Mörel station. The line reopened on Thursday 12th October, just in time to be flooded over the following weekend!

Meiringen Innertkirchen Bahn (MIB)

Brünig Line TmII 980 has been acquired and renumbered TmII 10. Bem4/4 6 has been broken up.



The Golden Pass Panoramic service was launched with the start of the new timetable on 28th May and replaced the Crystal Panoramic and Superpanoramic Express services. Until 31st October 2000 and from 1st May - 9th June 2001 there are three workings in each direction, during the winter this is reduced to two trains from Montreux to Zweisimmen and one in the reverse direction. The trains are made up of a combination of Crystal Panoramic and

Superpanoramic stock; one driving trailer from each set having been turned, with the Crystal Panoramic driving trailer on each train set leading from Montreux. The two locomotives dedicated to these services, Ge4/4 8003 and 8004, have been painted black and on each side have four panels of illustrations overlaid with cartoon cows. From Montreux the normal formation is for both trains to have a Crystal Panoramic driving trailer and coach in front of the locomotive and two Superpanoramic coaches and a driving trailer following, although on 30th August the 14:28 departure from Montreux consisted of Arst 152, As 118, Ge4/4 8004, Bs 227, Brs 228 and Ast 116.



Two of the Bernina Panoramic coaches have been allocated to the Heidiland Bernina express.

The loops at Bernina Lagalb and Brusio stations, and at Cantoniera (between Poschiavo and Le Prese) on the Bernina line have been extended during the summer. At the same time, a loop has been installed on the site of the old siding at Stablini between Alp Grüm and Cavaglia. Individual signals are provided for each loop, an improvement on the normal 'group' departure signal.

A bogie 'aussichtswagen' open coach B2111 has been created by rebuilding 'heavyweight' coach B2227 of 1930. It is intended for summer use on Chur - Arosa trains and specials into the Vorderrhein Gorge.

B2229 and B2230 of 1931 are expected to be converted in the same way.

Ge4/4 Crocodile 411 and Salonwagen As1154 are to go to the Munich Transport Museum on a 15 year loan from 2001. 411 has been out of service since its failure at Reichenau on 9th February, while As1154 of 1930, which has run since 1986 in its original 'Engadin Express' red and cream livery, is the last unmodernised 'heavyweight' coach and retains its side corridor and compartments.

Trams

Zürcher Verkehrsverbund (ZVV)

All SBB trains on the Zürich S-bahn network now seem to be carrying also ZVV lettering and symbols. Many ZVV area vehicles (trains, trams, lake steamers) are also advertising integrated transport tickets in the area - one SZU Re4/4 loco has the wording "Ich bin auch ein Schiff" (I am also a ship!) and a lake steamer was seen in October claiming "I am also a tram!"

Preservation

Ballenberg Dampf Bahn (BDB)

Brünig Line rack tank HG3/3 1068 was removed from its plinth at Meiringen on 9th June after a stay of 34 years and transferred to the BDB depot at Interlaken for restoration. See letter from Michael Cross



While BT-owned Eb3/5 9 is undergoing overhaul, MThB Ec3/5 5 was used for a programme of public and charter steam trips between 11th July and 23rd August.

Dampfbahn Furka Berkstrecke (DFB)

Once again trains are running between Realp and Gletsch. The 5.85 km section between Furka and Gletsch, including the 1874 m Furka Tunnel, was formally opened to passenger traffic on 14th July (see Swiss Express September for pictures). The timetabled service, consisting of a return working between Realp and Gletsch with a short intermediate return working between Gletsch and Muttbach-Belvédère commenced on 24th July and operated daily until 17th August, after which it was reduced to Friday - Sunday operation until 8th October.

Dampfbahn Verein Zürcher Oberland (DVZO)

The Bauma - Hinwil line is closed from 15 October until May 2001 to allow the Weissenbach Bridge at Neuthal to be renovated. While this is being carried

out, the normal Sunday service will operate on the SBB Tösstal line between Bauma and Wald. SBB Goods traffic has also ceased, with the closure of the Cargo Rail depot at Bäretswil at the end of August.

SA des Transports Emosson Barberine (SATEB)

To celebrate the 25th season of operation of the 60cm gauge tourist railway above Châtelard to the foot of the Barberine dam, the group borrowed G2/2 "Liseli" from the Schinz nacher Baumschulbahn for the summer period from July to September. Steam traction is an unexpected bonus on this mountainside line which is normally the province of battery locomotives.

Industrial

Progress report on the Gotthard Base tunnel, in early October (supplied by Alptransit Gotthard)

Erstfeld: Work stopped at present due to political decisions that have to be made. Work will not begin before 2001 or even 2002, since the construction plans are now subject to approval by the local people. Within the overall timescale, this will have no effect on the opening date of the base tunnel.

The state of progress for the other sites are as follows:
Amsteg access tunnel : 1660 metres drilled so far. Its final length will be 1784 meters

Sedrun: The 734 metre deep shaft is complete, the base cavern is being enlarged to accommodate the tunnel drilling equipment which will be assembled on site
Faido access tunnel : 1050 metres drilled.

Bodio access tunnel : 370 metres drilled.

Rock disposal.

From Amsteg/Erstfeld: to be used for reconstruction of the Reuss river delta, with the remainder being offered for sale to third parties.

From Sedrun: Offered locally for sale with remainder being disposed of in Val Bugnei and Val de Claus.

From Faido/Bodio: Used for new track bed and embankments. Balance sent by conveyor belt to quarries at Cavienna and Buzza di Basca.

NOTEPAD is compiled by Nick Freezer. Contributions were received from Peter Arnold, Brian Hemming, David Adams, Duncan McKay, Steve Horobin and Robert Fox. If there are others then I am unaware of them and apologise for their absence.