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are two further photos without any dates, one between June and July, the other - a shot of the long-departed Vevey trams crossing the SBB main line - at the very end, with a questionnaire concerning future policy. The

calendar measures 480 x 290mm and has a spiral back so that the leaves do not have to be torn off each month.

CJF

Venice Simplon Orient Express Over the Gotthard

by Sue Knight



Ae6/6 No.11414, *Bern* in red livery with chrome trim, one of the two locomotives that headed the VSOE over the Gotthard route last September

A unique event in Switzerland was the double heading of seventeen VSOE cars over the Gotthard route from Basel Hauptbahnhof to Chiasso last September. The locomotives for the task were specially rostered Ae6/6s sporting red livery and the chrome trim "moustaches" of the second series built between 1955 and 1958. The choice of these particular locomotives was dictated not only by their haulage power, needed to lift the seventeen heavy cars over one of the most taxing of Europe's main lines, but by the fact that in their striking red livery, they photograph well. This was an important consideration, since the SBB, in conjunction with all the firms who provide videos of Swiss Railways, were determined to see that the event was fully recorded for posterity.

The *Orient Express* had to be routed

through Switzerland on this occasion due to engineering works on its normal route through Austria. It was two hours late arriving at Basel, causing a headache for the SBB control staff and, much more to the point, consternation among the camera crews who had only a scant few hours of reliably daylight in which to video the event.

The two Ae6/6s, lead by 11414 *Bern*, left Basel just after 14:00, after two attempts to get the heavy train of 961 tons rolling. The age of the VSOE cars and the length of the train resulted in the brake compressors having to run almost continuously through the five and a half hours it took to reach Chiasso. As dusk fell, the two Ae6/6 uncoupled and an FS locomotive backed on for the rest of the journey through Italy.