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INTERNATIONAL

CIS

Following the opening of the Lötschberg base tunnel, the four Milano – Basel services have been turned over to ETR 470 units, with loco hauled sets taking over the Milano – Genève workings. This diagramming avoids the need to equip the conventional EC train sets for Lötschberg base tunnel working.

The 25kV equipped multi-voltage FLIRT unit, RABe 521 011, was loaned to the GySEV line from 19th September for demonstration and training in advance of the delivery of four similar units to the Austro-Hungarian line.

SWITZERLAND

SBB

The former SBB Cargo depot at Bellinzona has been transferred to the Personenverkehr division and from August 2008 will take over maintenance of the RABe524 TiLo units and the four Ticino-based NPZ's.

SBB Passenger has placed an order with Stadler Winterthur (ex Winpro) for 21 Ee 922, which seems to be a two-axle electric shunter for major railway stations to replace the existing Ee3/3 fleet.

Swiss Express liveried Re4/4ⁱⁱ 11141 has been withdrawn.

SBB Cargo have hired three Re484s, 484 903 – 905, from MRCE for three years from October 2007. These are partial replacements for Re484 013 – 018, still on hire to the passenger sector for Cisalpino workings

The weak viaducts at Sitterdorf and Sorental on the Sulgen – Gossau line have been strengthened and from 22nd August the line has been passed for all SBB locomotives except Ae6/6. The old bridges formerly restricted the line to lightweight engines only, basically Re4/4ⁱ series only.

The first 522 series FLIRT unit for operation on the Basel S1 service into France, RABe 522 001, started test running from Stadler Bussnang on 7th September.

A programme to reconstruct the three 'inland' tunnels on the Gotthard line between Brunnen and Flüelen over the period 2008 / 2009 has been announced, with all trains using the original line between these stations.

ZB

The temporary bridge installed following the August 2005 floods across the Melchaa river between Sachseln and Sarnen has been replaced with a permanent structure with a 48m span.

BLS

The Lötschberg base tunnel was passed for full passenger working on October 26th, from which date IC 1077 and CIS 45 / 46 were booked to run via the new tunnel. This was in addition to the 'ETCS test train' (last Swiss Express) which continued to run until 8th December. Despite being first class only, loadings on the Saturday evening trip from Brig approached 100%!

While working Freiburg– Novara ROLA service 43647, a bogie of Re465 007, derailed on pointwork on the approach to the Englisten tunnel on the Lötschberg Base line in the early morning of 16th October. For technical reasons, trains were unable to be diverted via the link south of Frutigen between the original and new lines, so all services had to be diverted via the summit tunnel.

Ae4/4 257, which has been stored at Spiez for spares for the last two years, has been broken up.

NINA unit RABe 525 025, running in multiple with 525 019, caught fire at Wichtrach on 7th October on an S1 Thun - Fribourg service, closing the line for around two hours. The undamaged unit re-entered service the following day; 525 025 was towed by Re4/4 185 on 10th October to Bombardier Villeneuve for repairs.

Latest information about the four Re 425 involved in a head-on collision in Biel-Mett yard on 4th August indicates that three of them (170, 174 and 175) should be repaired but that 187 will be broken up.

SBB / OeBB / MBS

Of the four prototype Kolibri sets, RBDe 560 000 + Bt 900 and an EWI AB centre coach has been sold to the OeBB. Unit 560 003 / 903 has been sold to the Austrian Montafonerbahn Bludenz – Schrans, who already operate their own Kolibris. 560 001 / 901 will be transferred to the MBS in June 2008.

R4C

This company have hired Re 416 628 from Taurino Traction (formerly Classic Rail) as a replacement for defective (and stored at Oberwinterthur) 416 626.

SZU

A couple of SBB DPZ sets are scheduled to be sold to SZU. Re 450.067 + B 061 + AB 067 + Bt 964 is due to transfer 1st April 2008. Re 450.070 + B 064 + AB 069 + Bt 966 is due to follow, perhaps in October 2008.

1978-built Uetliberg line units Be8/8 531 and 532 have been running as a semi-permanently coupled pair since July 2007.

SOB

1960-built units BDe 576 051 – 053 (ex BT 51-53) have been broken up. Sister unit BDe4/4 50 of 1960 remains in service.

The revised timetable from December 9th has seen the end of the dedicated shuttle service between Biberbrugg and Einsiedeln. To the end, these workings were a haunt of the surviving 1978-built ex SOB Pendelzug sets.

THURBO

Halts at Arbon Seemosriet and Steinach on the Rorschach – Romanshorn section opened on 9th December.

AB

The recent Stadler-built units 31 and 32 on the Trogen line have been causing complaints due to excessive wheel squeal on curves. As a temporary measure, they are not being used on morning and late evening services. Experiments have been carried out with water spray near Vogelinsegg and Speicher, but as three further units are on order a more permanent solution is required.

The St Gallen – Trogen parcel service, latterly provided by running a two-axle Gk van behind a 21-25 series unit, was withdrawn from 8th December.

MGB

The major deviation at Brig opened on Sunday 4th December. Brig station is now a through station rather than a terminus; trains to the Goms now leave in the opposite direction via the old SBB goods yard and rejoin the existing line near Bitsch halt. Naters halt has closed. The distance from Brig to Bitsch is 613 meters less as a result.

The launch train for the new line on 1st December was also the first public run for the first KOMET (Komfortabler Metrespur Treibwagen) on the MGB. There are three four unit and two three unit articulated sets, ABDeh4/10 2011-13 and ABDeh4/8 2021 / 2022, and are a further development of the ZB SPATZ units. They will take over Brig – Zermatt services from the old BVZ fleet.

The route via Naters was formally closed on the same day by a historic train headed by HG3/4 4 borrowed back from the DFB. While what amounted to a reversing loop existed at Brig, the MGB ensured that all the ex-FO Pendelzug sets stabled at Glisergrund depot were turned so that the motorcoach remained at the Göschenen end for when they venture onto the Schöllenenbahn! Attempts are being made to sell off the now redundant Rhône bridge.

A 1.2 km long diversion has been completed between Kalpetran and St Niklaus, incorporating a permanent replacement for the Chipferbrücke, where a temporary structure has been in use since avalanche damage in 1999 to the previous bridge. The revised route incorporates avalanche protection.

The new MGB timetable has been completely recast. There is now an hourly service between Disentis and Andermatt, between Andermatt and Visp, and between Brig and Zermatt. A two trains per hour shuttle service runs between Göschenen and Andermatt. Five additional local services per day overlay the standard hourly service between Visp and Zermatt, with a shuttle service in most hours between Brig and Visp using the Zermatt set during its layover. Timings at Visp are naturally optimised for connections with Lötschberg Base tunnel services.

RBS

The second track between Worblaufen and BKW Ittingen was commissioned on 23rd August and officially commissioned on 14th September. This section, passing under the SBB Bern – Biel main line, completes doubling of the Worb line as far as Bollingen.

RhB

611 has become the first Ge4/4ⁱ to appear in all over advertising livery.

Chur Wiesental halt, between Chur and Haldenstein, opened with the timetable change on 9th December.

Blizzards on 10th November saw the single heaviest single day snowfall since 1952 and the closure of the Klosters – Davos section due to avalanche risk.

TPC

The modernised Bahnhofplatz at Aigle was formally opened on 6th October. Centrepiece of the opening was AL CF 21 (on loan from the Blonay-Chamby), which was propelled through the tape by Arseh 2/4 201. The AL tracks were used because the Leysin line was closed from 3rd September until November for track renewal!

TRAMS

Bern

SVB Bernmobil has ordered 21 new 7-element Be 6/8 Combinos!! In addition, 8 out of the 15 existing Combinos will be upgraded from 5 to 7 elements. This order will provide stock to operate the Bern West extensions, and replace the Be8/8 + B4 formations currently working Line 9.

SWITZERLAND - CHATEAU D'OEX

Beautiful apartment (sleeps 2) in newly-converted period hotel with superb facilities (indoor pool, fitness room, sauna, laundry room, computer room etc) in Chateau D'Oex, a small winter/summer resort in the Bernese Oberland.

The apartment is a few minutes' walk from the station, a stop on the famous Golden Pass Line between Montreux and Zweisimmen. This makes it an ideal base for exploring a wide variety of main line, narrow gauge and mountain lines in the Lake Geneva, western Rhone Valley and Bernese Oberland areas.

**More details from Eddie Stedman
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NOTEPAD

The former Weissenbühl depot was opened as the Tram Museum Bern group's museum on 19th September, with five tram sets and three works cars on regular display.

SHEDMASTER

SWISS FEDERAL RAILWAYS - STOCK CHANGES

July 2007

New:

Tm 234 214, 215 RABe 514 024, 025
RABe 524 006 - 008
XTmass 92-19 005, 006

Withdrawn:

Tmⁱⁱ 9587 Ee3/3ⁱⁱ 16519
XTms 95-85 589

August 2007

New:

Tm 234 216 RABe 514 026, 027
RABe 524 009

Withdrawn:

Tmⁱⁱ 660, 827 Bm6/6 18508
Tm 235 013 Tm 236 642 (ex MThB)
Xtms 95-85 554, 569

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