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AND FINALLY... ..Erstfeld in the spring

Robin Sherwood



SBB Re6/6 No 11624 at Erstfeld shed.

PHOTO: Robin Sherwood

Recent articles in Swiss Express about operations over Gotthard prompted a visit this spring. Although there are still a lot of trains using the route Erstfeld itself is slowing down, and at a holiday weekend this is even more obvious. The Regional Expresses stop every hour with just a few people, often railway personnel, getting on or off. A FLIRT local terminates hourly but the fasts don't stop at all, and the freights only stop to attach or detach assisting engines as required. The BLS and DB have a small depot here, with crew change and usually half a dozen 185s in view. On this day at the SBB shed, once home to 60 or more of its newest engines and several hundred train crew, just two Ae6/6s stood

outside. Round the back was a Class 482, an Re 6/6 seemed a static fixture, while a fitter dozed in the sun against the shed wall. Two Re 4/4s slipped out with a short works train for the NEAT site 2 km down the line. An Ae6/6 came to life, rolled-out and stood at the south end, with just three freight cars, waiting for a DB-BLS freight to leave first before it set-off with the once-a-week pick-up goods to Airolo and back. But life there was, if you looked carefully. There was water in the fountain. Sparrows had nested in the tree beside the memorial Crocodile, No 14270, and there were young, up among the blossom. But in railway terms how many more springs will once-busy Erstfeld Depot see? ■

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