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INTERNATIONAL

The residual service between Annemasse and Chêne-Bourg is not shown in any French timetables, only in those provided by TPG.

Following the derailment of ETR 610 013 at Preglia (see P28), now firmly attributed to the state of the trackwork, Italian infrastructure operator RFI imposed a 60kph restriction on the other track between Varzo and Preglia whilst a limit of 30kph was imposed northbound between Domodossola and Varzo. With the ongoing work in the Simplon tunnel net delays over the Brig - Domodossola stretch are in excess of 30 minutes. In consequence drastic revisions have been made to the timetable, with many services replaced by buses between Iselle and Domodossola, and complete suspension between Varzo and Domodossola on Sunday daytimes and mid-morning on Saturdays. Passenger services have naturally been affected across much of western Switzerland; Milano - Bern - Basel services were particularly badly affected as they lost their path over the single track section of the Lötschberg base tunnel and have had to be curtailed at Bern, with SBB-organised substitute services running at the normal scheduled times between Brig and Basel. For freight traffic the gauge-enhanced track, which forms part of the Simplon Intermodal Corridor, has been out of commission; consequently, a much reduced service has been operating over the Simplon axis with transit traffic diverted to other routes.

The new RABe 522.2 FLIRT units are being tested for operation in France at various locations in the north of that country, with a view to gaining homologation before the end of 2012.

SWITZERLAND

SBB

The prototype 3-car ETR 470 unit in Slovenian Railways livery and known as 'Treno Zero' has been acquired from Alstom to provide spare parts for the SBB's fleet.

When Ice Hockey League matches are being played at Ambri arriving supporters are being catered-for by extending appropriate TiLo S10 services from Biasca to Ambri-Piotta, calling at Faido. Returning supporters are catered-for by an extra train to Bellinzona (calling at Faido, Lavorgo and Bodio) for forward connections.

A derailment between Chénens and Cottens early on 8th March caused considerable disruption across western Switzerland until the line was reopened mid-morning. Buses were laid on between Romont and Fribourg for IR and RE services, but the IC services were turned back from the west at Lausanne. Passengers bound for the Genève Motor Show were diverted via Neuchâtel, using scratch single deck formations, as the line between Bussigny and Yverdon is not yet cleared for double deck stock.

Sadly this accident resulted in a fatality.

RABe 511 sets entered service from 13th February on the S12 (Brugg - Winterthur Seen) service, releasing DPZ sets for the S21 services. By March, all diagrams on this part route were in the hands of the new units, which could also be seen on the Brugg - Seuzach part of Line S12 at weekends.

Eem 923 001 was named *Heitern* on 9th March at RB Limmatal; the plan is to name the fleet after hills near their home station. Fleet delivery is planned at 3-week intervals from May until late 2013.

At Lenzburg the Seetalbahn services were cut back from 11th November to a new platform (Track 7) in front of the main station building, from where the line is diverted into the main line station over a signal-controlled level crossing. The old station tracks are retained as stabling sidings, but now accessed from the 'other' end of the station.

BLS

The line between Sumiswald-Grünen and Huttwil Sportzentrum was officially closed from 11th December, the remaining section from Huttwil being retained as a siding.

From the December 2011 timetable change, the double track section between Falkenhaus and Belp has been worked as parallel single tracks, with through services (S4 and S44) to Thun using the western track and track 3 at Belp; the eastern track is dedicated to the services which reverse at Belp, S3 services in Track 2 (allowing cross-platform interchange to S4 / S44) and S31 in Track 1.

The spare sets for Bern S Bahn line S4 are now Pendelzug formations, normally using Re420 503 and 506 based at Thun and Langnau. Re4/4 164 replaced 420 503 as Thun Heizlok until the December timetable change, when the duty was withdrawn. However, 420 503 and a Pendelzug set were employed on route learning duties for DBS crews between Basel and Chiasso in February.



The first of 28 'DOSTO' double-deck EMUs for the BLS was unveiled on Tuesday, March 20, 2012 in Erlen. The first train is due to enter service on the Bern S-Bahn in September. Each four-car train has

335 seats, of which 61 are in first class, and can accommodate a further 110 standing passengers.

SOB

Samstagern Works are being modernised to maintain the enhanced Voralpen Express fleet which will come into service from December 2012.

TPF

The four new FLIRT units 527 191-4 entered service at the end of October 2011; their primary deployment is on the Bulle – Fribourg RE service (which cross at Vuisternans-devant-Romont) and on relief services from Fribourg to Estevayer le Lac. The loops at all three former stations on the branch have been extended to 150m to accommodate twin unit operation; one round trip (RE 14108/14125 MF) is booked for double traction. On 8th December, all four units were trialled in multiple over the Bulle- Romont section. See P29.

Zentralbahn

The first of the new units from Stadler's Bussnang works arrived at Meiringen for testing on 17th February. ABeh 160 101 is the first of the six three car FINK units on order, which have two rack bogies under the centre car and short low-floor sections in the driving cars; the four ABeh 150 ADLER units are effective two single-ended FINK units sandwiching a Bistro trailer car. They will provide the basic IR service between Luzern and Interlaken.

AB

On 3rd January, Ge4/4 1 was unveiled in a livery that celebrates the 500th anniversary of the accession of the Appenzell cantons to the Confederation in 1513.

MGB

Snow and avalanche risk caused regular service suspensions over the Furka and Oberalp sections over the Christmas period, with a train being caught by a snow slide below Nättschen on Christmas Day.

Plans for the newly ordered stock include operating at 30-minute intervals between Zermatt and Brig and Brig and Fiesch. The individual low floor coaches will be inserted into the Deh Pendelzug sets. These will continue to supply the base service on the Furka Oberalp section for the next 10 to 15 years. ABDeh8/8 No. 2041 'Brig' was broken up in November.

RhB

The RhB continues to suffer from availability issues with its locomotive fleet. Ge6/6II No. 703 'St Moritz' is out of service with heavy damage following a collision in November and two Ge4/4III engines are also laid up, Ge6/6II have been regularly employed on Albula line passenger diagrams, with the corresponding goods diagram handed over to a pair of Ge4/4Is.

Extra block sections have been created in the Bergün – Preda section to improve the operation of the Schlittelzug services; two sets were scheduled for operation, with one diagram for a Ge4/4I / BDt 1723 Pendelzug formation.

On the Bernina line, ABe4/4 46, 47 and 49 have been deployed in passenger service on a regular basis.

For several days last winter the Albula line was blocked by snow and avalanche risk between Filisur and Preda. A RE service was provided between Chur and Filisur, one of the sets being worked by Ge4/4I No. 602 'Bernina' with the Schlittelzug Pendelzug, while sister engines Nos.603 'Badus' and 605 'Silvretta' replaced a Ge4/4II on a Scuol – Disentis diagram. Through services were routed via the Vereina tunnel, with ABe4/4 501 from the RhBs Historic Stock put into service to provide connections between Samedan and Pontresina where necessary.

TRAMS

BVB/BLT

On 8th February, the 'Tramnetz 2020' plan was launched by the Cantonal governments. This envisages a 20km expansion to the tram network as a mixture of city centre improvements and suburban extensions.

VBZ

The concession for the extension of Route 8 from Hardplatz to Pflingstweidstrasse has been granted.

HERITAGE

SBB Historic

Ae6/6 11456 'Olten' has been transferred to the historic fleet and will, appropriately, be based at Olten.

BLS / TVB

BLS have leased BDe4/6 736 (ex GBS/Sensetalbahn 103) from Tramverein Bern for 12 years, to ensure that the unit is available for the BLS centenary celebrations in 2013. Restoration will now take place at the former EBT depot at Burgdorf, the new base for the BLS historic fleet, rather than its old home at Bern Holligen.

DVZO

From 11th December, SBB formally decommissioned the overhead between Hinwil and Bäretswil, which dated back to electrification in 1947. DVZO steam services are not affected, but their Be4/4 and Ee3/3 locomotives will be restricted to assisting trains out of Bauma in future.

VVT

The group have taken over the Fleurier – St Sulpice branch on a 25-year concession from 17th January from the TRN group. 