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THINGS THEY ARE A'CHANGING



Steve Buck supplies some random observations on the Swiss Scene

The new Class 511 unit on the 'Rheintaler Express'.

Photo: Steve Buck

A visit to Switzerland in the early summer of 2013 highlighted a number of changes to rolling stock, etc. On our journey to Davos, we had to leave the train at Klosters and change onto a double deck PostAuto. On arrival at Davos Platz the reason for this was clear - there was almost no track in the station! It was being relaid and changes made to the station building it, reopened on 29th June, after we had left. Any trip we made from Davos entailed the first leg being on a bus, either to Davos Glaris where the Filisur shuttle composed of an RhB 51x EMU hauling a B and ABt rake, or to Klosters by bus for onward connection to Landquart, St Moritz or Scuol. At Landquart we were quite lucky as the kiosk in the subway, where you pick up your coffee when travelling on the "Rheintal Express" towards St. Gallen, was open. Two weeks later the kiosk was closed and being rebuilt - so no coffee. The "Rheintal Express" has changed too. Instead of a Re4/4 and coaches, this service is now operated by Class 511, six-car double deck units. Like the Zurich 450 hauled sets, they have stairs up and down to an intermediate level inter-coach gangway. They ride remarkably quietly and smoothly and are a great improvement on the previous offering. However there is no provision for a trolley or buffet service on this 90-minute

journey (hence the visit to the kiosk) in contrast to the IC double deck trains between Zurich and Luzern where a trolley is available on a 50 minute journey. At Luzern the Zentralbahn was operating four very smart seven-car, rack-fitted Class 150 'Adler' units on the Interlaken service in-lieu of local hauled stock. They have panoramic windows and a buffet car, although the coffee is not cheap. In the set we travelled on, the 1st-class accommodation was not clearly marked inside the train, although it was on the outside, so the guard was continually checking tickets and ejecting some passengers from the comfortable leather seats. Also they have the curse of all modern air-conditioned stock in having few opening windows. Fortunately some workings are still Class 101 loco-hauled push-pull sets with opening windows, but sadly no refreshments. These new Class 150s are supplemented by three-car Class 160 'Fink' rack-fitted sets, and on some services, both types run in multiple to form 10-coach trains. With the introduction of these new units the 72-year-old Class 110 locos used between Interlaken and Meiringen can at long last retire. The revised December timetable will see the through Brunig service being worked by just four sets so the Class 101-hauled trains will also disappear. ☒

☒ *Swiss Tips: Good ideas and information about Switzerland from travellers.*

Quality and reasonably priced meals are to be found in both Kandersteg and Spiez station buffets and also both establishments are willing to cater for the needs of those with dietary constraints such as providing Gluten Free options. ☒

Don't forget to carry waterproof capabilities for your back pack and essential travel documents - as those to the 'BLS 100' celebrations in June 2013 were to discover the hard way when the weather turned decidedly wet! ☒