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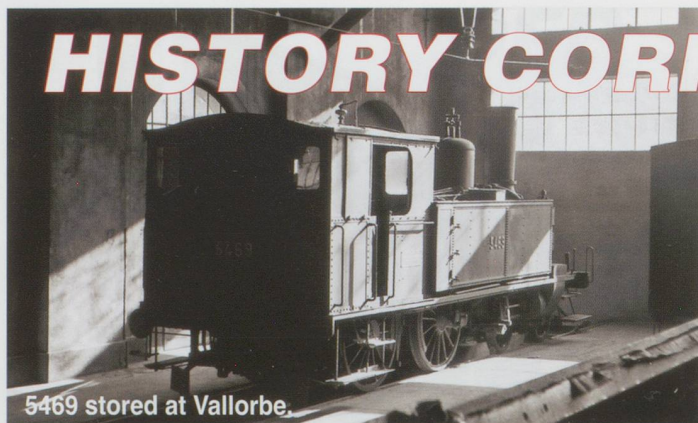
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HISTORY CORNER



5469 stored at Vallorbe.

SBB Historic celebrates its first 10 years

SBB Historic is a foundation created in 2001 to take over from SBB their large collection of relics and archives that under a change in legislation they were no longer able to take responsibility for. The collection includes all sorts - from locomotives and vehicles to station furniture and oil lamps. It dovetails into the Swiss Transport Museum (VHS) collection in Luzern, and the two organizations cooperate in many ways as historic artefacts from the private non-SBB railways are also important. A statutory obligation on SBB to keep records means that a huge archive has accumulated covering legal, commercial, financial, engineering, and many other aspects of the SBB operations. It is much in demand by researchers and students. The September 2011 SRS tour visited the offices, library and archives in Bern where members learnt from Archivist Martin Cordes just what they do, how they do it, and what is planned to increase and sustain public interest. A visit when in Bern is always well worth while as the library is open to the public, and although there are always treasures exhibited the really big items are elsewhere. Visiting Switzerland in the 1960s a 'Swiss Tip' was to drop off the Calais - Paris sleeper train at Vallorbe, have a buffet breakfast among the railwaymen, and then see the locomotive collection dozing quietly in the old engine shed up by the tunnel mouth, before taking a local down to Lausanne and continuing one's journey. Those engines were mostly to be restored, with some today at the VHS, and some with SBB Historic, whose active steam engines are usually to be found in the Delémont roundhouse. Since the 60s the collection has grown as electric locomotives, passenger coaches, freight cars, and more had to be accommodated. The solution has been found in Olten.

On 15th October 2011 the SRS was invited to be represented at the opening of the SBB Historic collection and workshops in the former SBB work's facility in Olten. The opening was great fun, with speeches, a band, an Apéro, and some lunch, but it showed the dramatic achievement of rebuilding two large halls, and a former transporter bridge area, as a workshop and display area for the main collection. Participants also had a free ride with Ae6/6 No.11425 to Oensingen and back, where JS Eb2/4 No.35 and SCB Ed2x2/2 No.196, kept at Balsthal, were in steam on the OeBB. Olten is a railway town, and the city authorities are also supporting the depot. The intention is that it should be



RhB 407 on its plinth at Bergun.

Photos: Bryan Stone

both an accessible display and cultural centre, as well as a place where maintenance can be done, for most of the exhibits are mobile and in running order. SRS members wishing to visit in 2012 (it is ten minutes walk from the west, or river side of the station) would be well advised to first consult www.sbbhistoric.ch for opening details. At present Olten is home to (though they may of course be elsewhere): Red Arrow 1001; Re4/4 10001 and 10047; Ae3/5 10217; Ae 3/6 10264; Ae3/6 10439; Ae3/6 10700; Ae6/6 11425; Be4/7 12504; Crocodile 14305; Ee3/3 16445; Bm4/4 18451; and BTB 2. There are also various passenger coaches and special vehicles whilst TEE-set RAe 12/12 1053 is also somewhere around.

Bahnmuseum Albula @ Bergün

The new Railway Museum Bergün will open on 1st June 2012. Its object is to bring together the culture, natural environment, aesthetic and technical features of the region, interpreted as widely as possible to show where and how the railway is part of this. The building is the prominent former military armoury in the station yard of Bergün that had been standing empty for years but whose potential has now been realized. On 17th December 2011 it opened as a customer service and tourist office for the Albula valley and the Rhätian Railway, complete with a 'rustic style' café. Now a railway and regional museum with over 400 exhibits will join them. One of these is RhB No. 407, the almost 100 year-old Ge6/6 'Krokodile' which spent some 30-years standing outside near Bergün station. It was moved last December to become a major feature inside the Museum. A new approach, intended to foster interest and involvement, is to sell a block of 52,000 shares at CHF1 and CHF5 (a total face value of CHF100,000) with the idea that the Museum will be supported by a broad basis of population and friends. Bergün is the last significant place on the climb to the Albula Pass, and the start of the winding and spectacular section in the Albula Gorge, with its four valley crossings, reverse and helicoidal tunnels, and steep climb. The fast trains have always stopped here. Bergun is also, with Filisur, architecturally an outpost north of the Albula of the architectural and cultural traditions of the Engadin. In winter, when the pass is closed to cars, it is a place to sit and watch trains, lots of them, and at night enjoy a mountain night sky of stars you will not see in more populous and over-lit places. You can ski on the Darlux, not too adventurous, and you can ride the sledge run from Preda, the last station before the tunnel. 