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Not everything in the Verkehrshaus is railway related - this is how it solves its parking problems. Photo: Tony Bagwell

ZB Historic

This is a new historical society, which has been formed with the support of SBB Historic, to take over the relics of the SBB Brünig line, now the Zentralbahn, and the Luzern-Stans-Engleberg organisation. Items of historic metre-gauge rolling stock it will look after include He 4/4 No. 1992 'Muni' and first-class salon car As101 that have been stored at Luzern station for many years. These, and others, including Deh 4/6 No.909, are now all in Engelberg, whilst Deh 4/6 No. 914 is in working order and often works from Meiringen depot. ZB Historic intends to run public specials with this rolling stock. More information is on www.zbhistoric.ch.

Albula Railway Museum

As planned, the Museum, located in a massive stone-built former armoury and military store alongside Bergün station yard, was opened on June 1st, welcoming over 2,000 visitors on the opening weekend. Also the weekend saw 160 members of the Museum Foundation attend its AGM, electing Andreas Durst as its Board Chairman. The meeting also thanked the sponsors and volunteers essential to the opening and operation of the facility. The 500 guests present included Vinay Mittal, Chairman of the Railways Board of the Indian Transport Ministry. Railways are a leading industry in the Indian economy and Indians are an increasingly enthusiastic group of travellers to Graubünden. Also the Kalka-Shimla Railway is, like the Rhätische Bahn, a UNESCO world-heritage railway and the subject of a special exhibition in the Bergün Museum. The Museum is also a cultural centre; it organises special walks in the Albula valley; has a good café and shares the premises with the Bergün regional tourist services. RhB trains are literally on the doorstep.

See www.bahnmuseum-albula.ch for more information.

SBB Historic

In spring 2012, after being fitted with ETM-S signaling equipment to conform to SBB regulations, SBB Historic's handsome 4-6-0 4-cylinder De Glehn compound A3/5 No.705, was again at work. This greatly loved machine, dating from 1904 (and actually reconstructed out of two locomotives), has a British patent valve gear. The outside high pressure cylinders have Walschaerts gear, but the inside

low-pressure cylinders have Joy valve gear, designed and patented by David Joy in the 1870s and used extensively in Britain on the LNWR and LYR. The SLM had obtained the rights to Joy's patent, and it is used on the short return-crank tram and rack locomotives of SLM and on the oldest engines of the Brienz-Rothorn Bahn. SBB Historic has just 'won' another locomotive Ta969 'Tintenfisch' ('Octopus'). The engine concerned is a diminutive 4-wheeled, steeple cab, workshop battery shunter built in 1909 and used until recently in the workshops at Zürich to move dead locomotives. Ta969 is now in Olten, where there always used to be one outside the carriage works. The 4-current TEE RAe No.1053 has completed a lengthy overhaul at Stadler Rail and the SOB in Samstagern, and is now again available for special workings. In June 'Red Arrow' RBe4/8 was seen in Platform 2 at Basel SBB being prepared for an evening special hire. This railcar set was built in 1939, shown at the National Exhibition in Zürich, but due to the onset of WWII was seldom used as intended; however, in 1946 it achieved fame. Winston Churchill came to Zürich and gave a most effective lecture at the University on the future of a united Europe - it is still remembered in Switzerland; 1021 was put at his disposal by SBB to tour the country gaining the nickname 'The Churchill Arrow'. In 1979 a transformer defect led to its withdrawal following which it was sold privately into Germany. In 1994 it returned home for restoration and is now operated by SBB Historic.

Verkehrshaus Update.

The transport museum at Luzern (Verkehrshaus) is always worth visiting, and like any good museum is always updating its exhibits. In April work was underway between the main entrance and the main road to drive steel piles into the ground. The Verkehrshaus was originally constructed on reclaimed land used as a rubbish dump many years ago and reinforcements are needed to be able to take the front section (the cutting head) of the tunnel boring machine that is working in the Gotthard base tunnel. It is big part of a huge machine some 300 metres long and weighing 220 tonnes that is being donated to the museum by the construction companies, and will be a striking sight to welcome visitors. 