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100 YEARS OF THE SBB LOW KEY BUT HIGH QUALITY



460 005-2 was presented to the press on the 17th of January; it carries the pertinent years on its sides: 1902, the start of operations as Swiss Federal Railways on one side, and...

The year 2002 is a special year for the Swiss Federal Railways: 100 years of operation. On the 20th of February 1898, the Swiss (at the time, that meant only the men) voted with a 68 % majority to nationalise the biggest of the then private railway companies. Operation under federal control started on the 1st of January 1902. Now, normally, this would have been cause for a big celebration... But first of all, only four years ago, all the stops were pulled out for the "150 years of Swiss Railways" celebrations. Secondly, 2002 is the year of the national "EXPO 02" exhibition, which will severely stretch all resources. It was thus decided to have only a few, but very special events:

1. Railway film nights: all night shows of films with a railway theme; several classics are promised. By the time you will read this, most will have passed, but you will be able to catch the night at Zürich Hauptbahnhof on the 30th of May.

2. On the 20th of April, national TV channels will produce a huge show at Olten Railway Works (now known as "Industriewerk Olten"). This is also the "official day", with all the bigwigs descending on Olten.

3. Something very special: on Saturday, the 27th of April, there will be a national "Collectors Day" flea market at Biel Works ("Industriewerk" again), together with an open day.

4. On Mother's Day, the 12th of May and during the whole month of November, there will be special reduced price day tickets, valid on SBB lines, also for non-holders of half fare cards.

5. On the Internet: www.sbb.ch/100-jahre, there will not only be lots of information, but also a live web cam from an SBB cab, games and also auctions (lasting until 27th of April) of items from the SBB archives.

6. A Jubilee Book: "Der Kluge reist im Zuge". It is a big book: 9? x 11? inches, 256



2002; the start of (hopefully) the next hundred years on the other. What a contrast to the rather grotty looking 460 069-8 on the next platform! Both photos taken by myself at Zurich Hauptbahnhof on the 17th of January 2002 (after all my colleagues had finally left).

pages with 344 illustrations, all printed in full colour or sepia and many full page size. The book is not another picture book of trains, but it is about the role and influence the SBB played in past and present design and architecture of railways in Switzerland. Posters, timetables, people at work, models of rolling stock, old prints and new photographs are beautifully reproduced. Several experts wrote the short, but competent text. Delightful both

to browse and to read! The book is also available in French, costs CHF 98 or £59.80 and is published by AS Verlag in Zürich, publisher of many interesting railway books. ISBN 3-905111-632 (in German) and 3-905111-69 1 (in French).

7. A set of four stamps (see below).

8. A 460 Locomotive with special livery (see photos).

STAMP CORNER

The Swiss Postal Service will issue four new stamps to commemorate the 100 years SBB Jubilee. They will be available from the 12th of March. Several official and freelance First Day Cover efforts will no doubt also appear.

The 70 cts value depicts the new RABDe 500 tilting train, star of the EXPO 02. The 90 cts illustrates the Inter City 2000 double decker, either loved or despised by all. A futuristic view of regional transport sets is depicted by the 120 cts stamp; this will be the Luzern-Lenzburg Seetal set. Finally, freight transport is celebrated by the 130 cts value; the omnipresent Re 460 is pulling a freight train. 130 cts is the postage needed for letters to Europe; is there a message here? The stamps will be illustrated in the next *Swiss Express*

STARLIGHT EXPRESS - A TRIP TO LES PLÉIADES

Last summer I decided to take a trip up to Les Pléiades, above Vevey. It is not exactly on the beaten track, even though the line has wonderful views and passes through the village of Blonay, famous for the Blonay-Chamby museum railway. The museum itself though, is more accessible through Chamby, on the MOB. My reason for travel was the presentation of the new "astro parc" at Les Pléiades. The park will illustrate astronomical distances and sizes of planets in our solar system by means of open-air scale models, and is aimed at the family market. Swiss Astronaut Claude Nicollier, who is very famous here, agreed to help with the concept. For me, it was also a good occasion to take some pictures. By the way, Vevey-Blonay is on the Swiss Pass; for the rack-section Blonay - Les Pléiades a reduced fare supplement must be bought. All photos were taken during the summer of 2001.

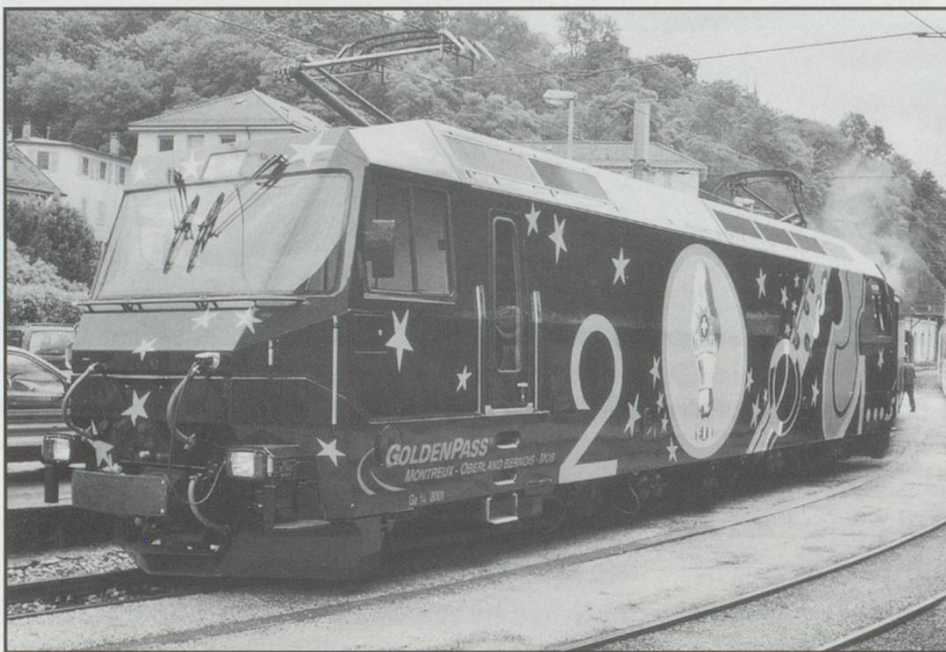


Photo 1 - Left
MOB Loco Ge 4/4 8001 is seen here in its new livery at Vevey. If you look carefully, a whiff of steam seems to be coming from the rear...

Photo 2 - Below
And it was! Mallet No.105 of the Blonay-Chamby museum railway, was waiting with a private charter not for me, I am sorry to say!



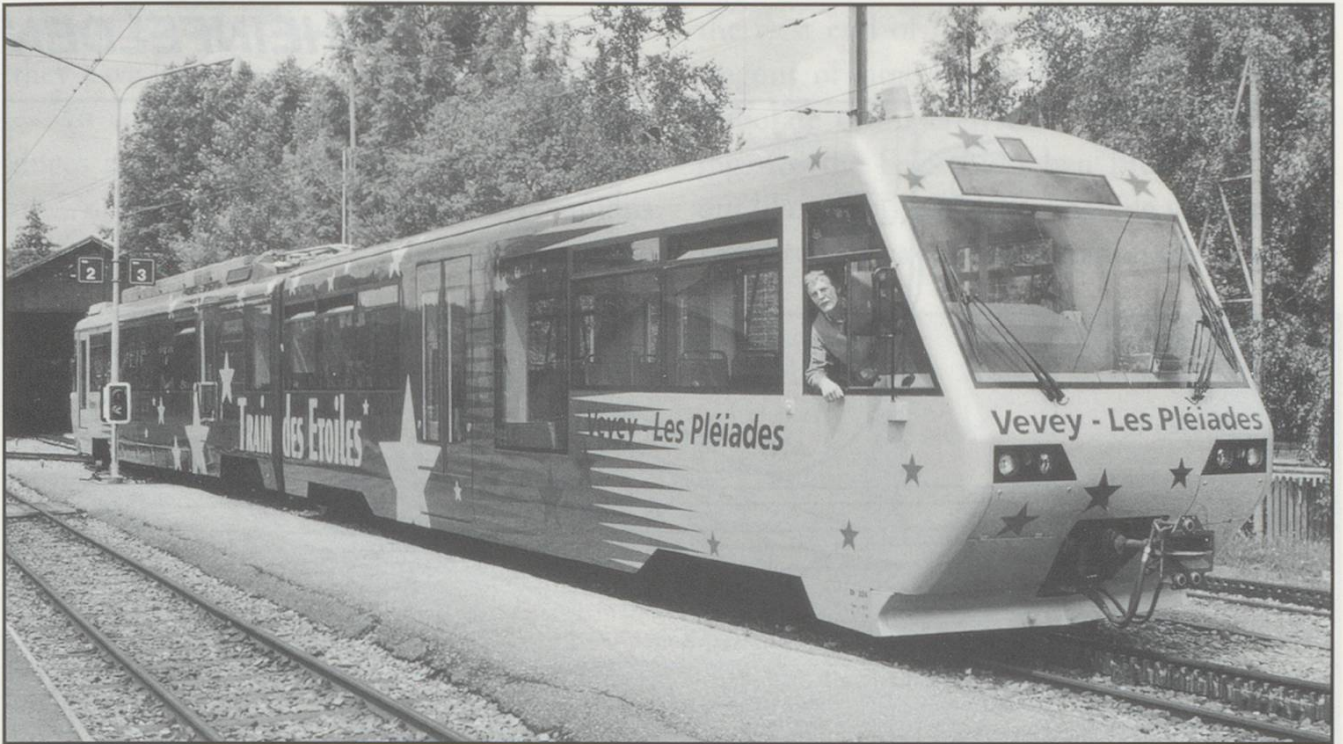


Photo 3 - Above

At Blonay, one of the "Train des Etoiles" Railcars in its very striking livery was waiting to take us up the rack-section, which starts here. Les Pléiades is at an altitude of 1348 m (app. 4500 ft).



Photo 4 - Left

The park was still being built: here a helicopter is delivering a model of the earth. The moon (to the same scale) can be seen in the background.

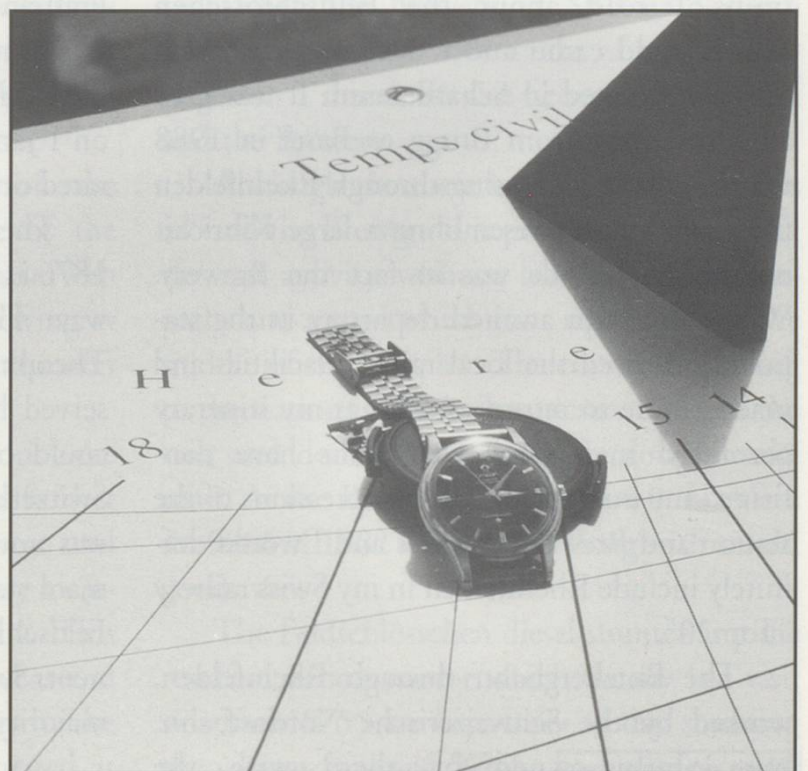


Photo 5 - Right

The sundial was already installed. As can be seen, the *temps civil* (worldly time, as opposed to astronomical time) is calibrated for summer time - the park is obviously closed in winter. The comparison with my 45 year old "Omega Constellation" Chronometer shows both agree: 3.08 pm!