

On the first day of Christmas

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Tucked away in Lausanne depot on Christmas Day but active again two days later, Crocodile 14275 is seen shunting tank wagons at the oil depot at St Triphon, 27/12/79.

All pictures by Gordon Wiseman. Please bear in mind that these were taken with schoolboy equipment many years ago!

Looking back through old notes, I happened to come across my log of a journey in the last few days of 1979. Not just an ordinary journey, but a Christmas morning jaunt! I realise that relating the tale in this journal is preaching to the converted, but thought it would remind us all of the beauty of Switzerland during dark dull British winter days. Comments on the motive power seen on the day will serve as a reminder of the CFF of 20 years ago. It seemed so ordinary then, but you will note quite a few 'surprises'.

Staying, as with most Christmas holidays as a child, at the family residence near Geneva (though actually in France as SRS members who are also in the SNCF Society may know), I had to find a 'financial' reason to use what would otherwise have been a wasted day on a Swiss Holiday Ticket (as they were called then). So, it being Switzerland, why not have a morning out and benefit from the full public transport service available on Christmas Day – in stark comparison to certain countries I could mention! The prospect of combining a refresh-

ing bracing morning out and soporific family Christmas Day afternoon was mouth-watering. So, off I set to Geneva Cornavin.

Departing half a minute late at 1002 1, my train was formed of Re4/4^{II} 11175, one Hendaye – Zürich SNCF couchette and a Geneva – Biel – Zürich rake of Mark IIs. In an adjacent platform stood 'Swiss Express' orange 11106. On the way out, as befits a keen member of the

SNCF Society, I noted the presence on the SNCF loco spur of BB9321 and 9322 and CC6563 'Laval' as well as CFF Bm 4/4 18407. Calling first at Nyon, I was passed by 11239 'Porrentruy' the only named Re4/4^{II} hauling the St Gallen – Geneva InterCity. For that two minutes, Nyon was at its capacity, with both loops also occupied by west and eastbound locals; both formed of Rbe 4/4 (1421 and 1426) pendelzug sets.

This was before the days of 'taktfahrplan' expresses using the avoiding curve, so arrival for a reversal at Lausanne was as usual past the depot, so conveniently situated right next to the running lines. There were no doubt many more on shed, but my notes list six Re4/4^{II}, four RBe 4/4, Ae 6/6 11479 and 504, Re 6/6 11636 and 647 and Ae 3/5 10212. Also glimpsed through the windows tucked up nice and warm in the shed were Lausanne's two pet 'croc's, 14274 and 14275 which were still used at the time for shunting duties at Denges and St Triphon. In the station was 11249 in TEE livery, but hauling a regional to Vallorbe!

Yverdon was its usual quiet self, with YStEC no 5, CFF 10984, and the usual terse, "voie une attention départ" which I remember as the only thing ever spoken over the PA here!

Arrival at Neuchâtel was on time at 1142. As usual you have a brief double take at meet-



SBB RBe 4/4 1405 at Neuchâtel. 25/12/79

Presumably worried about the amount of time I had to spare, what with having to climb back up to the station, I went only as far as Serrières, where I boarded tram 1104 for the return journey. I must have felt lazy, because I note that I took trolleybus 35 on route 7 to get back to the station, and that it derailed on the

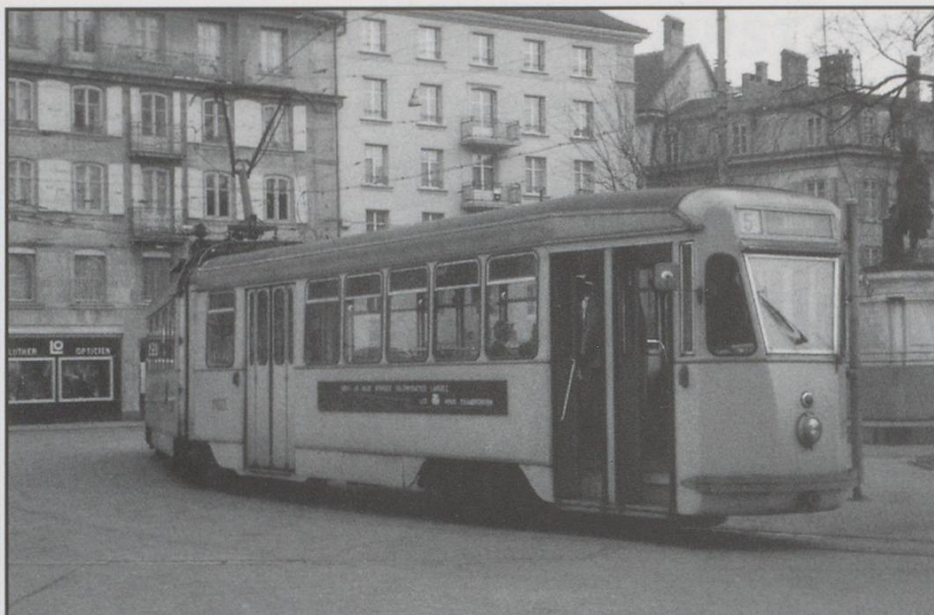
ing the 'BLS' and its blue railcars, in this case Be4/4 BN 762. I slithered off down the steep unexpectedly icy street which connects the elevated station at Neuchâtel to the town centre. I say unexpected because being based in Geneva, at quite a 'low' altitude by Swiss standards, it is easy to forget that in winter, Neuchâtel and La Chaux de Fonds can be much colder. I remember being struck by the fact that the only concession to Christmas Day was that prettily-decked shops (including a model railway outlet) were closed – disappointing when your brain has been coaxed into believing it's a normal working day for the past 1hr 40 mins.!

As with many jaunts on a Swiss Pass, the human brain tends to need a valid 'destination', however brief the stay. So it was that I made my way to Place Pury to seek out TN tram route 5 as it still was then. I can't remember whether I had planned this jaunt because modernisation was already on the cards at that time, but the Place Pury turning circle, tram station and ex-Genova (Italy) trams were beginning to feel like an anachronism. Boarding tram 1103 I was obviously struck by its dated appearance – no doubt enhanced by the dullness of a winter day – and noted that I photographed the interior.

sharp corner half way up the hill! Back on the platform, no doubt by now looking forward to 'toasting' myself in a well-heated Mark II, I noted a second blue Be 4/4 EMU, this time GBS 763! Boarding a Basel – Brig train with 11162 in charge, scheduled departure time came and went. As it turned out we needed to wait for a conflicting movement. This turned out to be the 12 minute late arrival of the Paris – Bern (remember we're still talking about Christmas Day here!) service behind Re4/4 10046. A minute later we were off, at 1315 four minutes down.

Returning past Yverdon, my notes list (rather pointlessly) 10984 again. I wouldn't waste energy so much these days! Also, I have noted the connecting Ste Croix train as a 'power twinning' of motor cars 11+12, with no trailer, no doubt a sop to winter conditions. On the return journey, there was something worth noting at Chavornay station – namely 11486 'Burgdorf' with sugar beet wagons.

As if there hadn't been enough variety on such a brief excursion, Lausanne would this time need a change of train. Arriving at one minute past two, I saw another TEE Re4/4^{II} on a regional, this time 11251! My notes on the stock stabled on shed curiously different on the



*No 1103 in Neuchâtel,
Place Pury, 25/12/79*

return journey. In particular I appear to have taken the trouble to note shunter 16371 as well as 1615 and 1617, two Be4/6 railcars which were nearly always there – often used only as staff trains - so I very seldom bothered to note them! Also noted are 10042, 10044 and Ae3/6 10783. My connecting train turned out to be the Milano – Geneva (remember we're still talking about Christmas Day here!), hauled, as

afternoon as I have only noted Ae6/6 11478 'Sierre'. I had been away from Geneva for just 4 3/4 hours, but had seen trains of three different Swiss railways, coaches incoming from France and Italy, freight, another city's trams, and at least 10 different classes of CFF motive power, including Re4/4/IIIs in three different liveriesand all on a Christmas Day.....

Brian Hemming SWISS FEDERAL RAILWAYS - STOCK CHANGES

March 2000 - Corrections to p59, Vol.6/3

Withdrawn - For Tm' 40/30 read Tm' 409, 430
For Re4/4' 1003/7 read Re4/4' 10035, 10037
For Eglisa read Eglisau

(Note from Editor, these are his mistakes not Brian's)

July 2000

New: RABDe 500 007 (comprising - Bt 500 107+B 500 207+AD 500 307+A 500 407 +WRA 500 507+B 500 607+Bt 500 707), Tm - 234 057/8

Withdrawn: Tm^{II} - 980 (Brünig)

Formation changes: WRA 500.502 has replaced AD 500.310 in RABDe 500.002

August 2000

New: RABDe 500 008 (comprising - Bt 500 108+B 500 208+AD 500 308+A 500.408 +WRA 500 508+B 500 608+Bt 500 708), Tm 234 003/59/60/61

Withdrawn: Tm^{II} - 809, Tm - 893, Tm^{III} - 901, Deh 120 010 (Brünig), Xrote 50 (Brünig)

Formation changes: WRA 500.500 has replaced AD 500.306 in RABDe 500.000

WRA 500.503 has replaced AD 500.309 in RABDe 500.003

Rebuilt & renumbered: RABDe12/12 1101/3 to RABDe 510.000/2

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