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INTERNATIONAL

On the Gotthard route, EC trains 15 (09 09 Zürich – Milano) and 22 (17:10 Milano – Zürich) have reverted to a 9 car loco-hauled formation using Re484 power until 12th June. While southbound EC 15 only loses around 15 minutes over the Gotthard, the northbound service is not so fortunate; losing 5 to 10 minutes before Chiasso means that the train loses its path through Ticino, following an S-Bahn service to Castione-Arbedo before having to follow a Zug S-Bahn service between Goldau and Baar, giving an overall delay of around half an hour.

The downturn in goods traffic has allowed SBB Cargo to hire out its locomotives with multi-country operational capability. Of the 50 Re482s, 15 are hired out, including operation of Rotterdam – Prague intermodal trains. There are only 29 diagrams for the remainder, facilitating an overhaul programme.

SWITZERLAND

SBB

19 Ae6/6 were retired in December, leaving 40 engines in stock to cover 29 diagrams.

The first six-car TILO FLIRT, RABe 524 101, was launched at the inauguration of the re-built Castione-Arbedo station on 10th December; perversely, the unit has been christened 'Arbedo-Castione'. The introduction of these units will allow RABe523 015 to 017, sent south to allow three RABe 524 sets to move to Genève for La Plaine services, to return north of the Alps.

Ee934 560 has been re-built by ABB Sécheron at Genève, re-entering service in February as Ee933 001 with its 25kV capability removed.

Following a landslide on the Simplon Pass road between 4th and 9th January, the Brig – Iselle car carrier frequency was doubled to a 45 minute interval, using a spare set from the BLS Lötschberg fleet.

The suppression of the passing loop at Küssnacht am Rigi between March and September as part of the station reconstruction program, has seen the withdrawal of stops at Meggen Zentrum by Voralpen Express services to allow these trains to cross at Immensee rather than Küssnacht.

Issues with the overhead at the Tossmühle crossovers on the three-track section between Winterthur and Kempthal, mean that RABe514 units on Line S7 now have to coast across the junction with pantographs lowered to avoid further damage.

BLS

The last of the repairable Re4/4s damaged in the collision at Biel in August 2007, re-entered service in October 2010, now numbered Re425 175. First-built Re4/4 161 is the second of the class to be withdrawn and will be used for spares, leaving 33 engines in traffic on diverse diagrams such as Spiez – Interlaken locals, Zweisimmen – Interlaken (Golden Pass) and Bern – Neuchâtel fasts, oil

trains between Basel and Cornaux and Lötschberg line freights.

Four more Class 535 units have been ordered from Bombardier for delivery in Autumn 2012; these will replace the fire write-offs 565 730 and 525 031, and a 525 due to transfer to RegioAlps in December 2012.

Zentralbahn

Power unit diagramming on the Zentralbahn has completely changed with the opening of the new line to Engelberg. As reported in the last Swiss Express, the hourly service is now diagrammed for two HGe101 Pendelzug formations, formed HGe101-ABt*-DB-B-B-ABt8; in February, one of the ABt was replaced by newly refurbished A215, which has been retro-fitted with air conditioning.

There are eight HGe101 diagrams; two to Engelberg, five on IR services between Luzern and Meiringen and one which acts as a 'hot spare' at Luzern coupled to a Pendelzug set which can cover either an Engelberg or Interlaken diagram. The remaining De110 MLVs have all migrated to Meiringen to cover IR services on to Interlaken.

The weekend Titlis Express services still operate and are diagrammed for 4 vehicle Pendelzug sets powered by BDeh 140 006 & 007, which also work the Luzern – Wolfenschiessen peak services; these are the only two ex-LSE treibwagen which have been modified with the required fire suppressant equipment for operation through the new tunnel. The only other diagrams for ex-LSE treibwagen are on the peak hour Hergiswil – Wolfenschiessen shuttle and as coverage for Luzern S-Bahn duties. LSE 5 has lost its advertising livery and is now running in standard ZB livery as BDeh 140 005.

BLM

The second hand unit from the ASm arrived at Grütschalp on 20th January. It has been overhauled and repainted into BLM livery as Be4/4 31.

RhB

The Allegra fleet has been deployed on the Arosa line this winter, releasing Ge4/4II locos for the main network. In consequence of this cascade, there are no diagrams for the Ge4/4I fleet of 1947-1953 in the low season timetable which operated from March 7th.

WSB

To standardise unit lengths, 10 mixed units have been formed from 'short' (two windows between doors) units 21-25 acquired from BDWM and existing 'long' (three windows between doors) units 28-32. The re-formed units are numbered ABe4/8 28-32 and 35-39, (33 and 34 are unmodified WM units), with a first class section created in the Schöffland portion of the ex BDWM sets.

TRAMS

RBS / Bernmobil

The use of stretched Be4/10 81-89 on joint Route 6 to Fischermätteli has not been a success. Issues with the modified units on the Bern town system curves mean that rectification works are required to reduce tyre squeal. Bus substitution between Zytglogge and Fischermätteli after 2100 and until 09.00 on Sunday mornings having failed to satisfy local residents, the suspension was extended to apply all week from 4th April. Buses operate between Bern Hbf and Fischermätteli as Bernmobil do not have enough trams to cover the RBS diagrams, particularly as it is no longer possible to reverse trams from east to west at the Hauptbahnhof.

HERITAGE

BDB

Rack services for this group will be restricted in 2011;

the removal of the Meiringen turntable requires a crane turn at Interlaken to work services over the Brünig pass, while the removal of run round capabilities at Grindelwald will prevent operation beyond Schwendi in future.


BLS

Be4/4 761, stored since late 2007, has been given a major overhaul at Spiez; ETMS equipment has been fitted and asbestos removed prior to a relaunch in April.

RhB

Funds are being sought to assist the overhaul of G4/5 108.

SOB

The Amor Express set has been leased to the Dampf-Loki Club at Herisau, for use with their loco, BT Eb3/5 9. Be3/4 43 and the bar coach are up for sale, the DLC group have expressed an interest. 



I found that the picture for this note was stored with my 'SBB – Reiseverkehr' (passenger traffic) files. That's logical. Members who remember that prize-winning British Transport documentary 'Waterloo' will recall a scene with a reserved compartment for 'The Home Office', and a small group with a police escort, booked to Plymouth on the Atlantic Coast Express, as the long journey to Princeton for the prison on Dartmoor began. The Swiss equivalent is

restored 540 036 with a neutral-looking driving trailer marked 'Securitas', but with surprisingly few openings. It slips through the busy timetable, mostly between Genève, Bern and Zürich, without station announcements and stopping only briefly. This is transport of persons "in custody" and it is a discreet, but essential, part of the everyday scene. If members thought it was 'just another railcar', look more thoughtfully. And, yes, passenger traffic is increasing. 