

Where's Heidi?

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PostAuto timetables separately published from 1989; that was too much. I have also some much older timetables, including former private pocket editions, and am always searching for more, but from 1969 it is my own series. The older timetables were a joy to hold and consult on a winter evening, or in a Swiss hotel, like the old Bradshaw's. My winter 1969 edition before me is an example. It contains: the first 80 pages of introduction and notes, all in four languages; then a station index (Swiss, with altitude plus foreign); national tariffs and fares; special tariffs for services such as mountain railways and cable cars; details of sleepers and couchette routes and conditions; registered baggage; automobile-carrying services and more. Then there are 88 pages of international train timetables, all over Europe, Istanbul and Warsaw to Lisbon and London, starting with TEE services, and ending with Italy via Chiasso. In 1969 the legendary Stockholm – Rome Wagon-Lits sleeping car called in Basel from 02.24 to 02.47. Then follow 374 pages of Swiss trains. Who recalls the old familiar tables? A reminder: Table 10 Bern – Geneva; 20 Vallorbe – Domodossola; 30 Lausanne – Biel; 40 (BLS) Brig – Delle; 50 Bern – Zürich; 60-70 Basel – Gotthard – Chiasso; 80 Basel – Zürich; 90 Zürich – Chur and 100 Rorschach – Zürich. Know this, and the rest was easy. The pattern was really historical; it reflected still the private railways of pre-nationalisation in 1903. Connecting services and through coaches were extensively detailed, and the tables showed distances (tariff-km for calculating fares). Fascinating was always the detail of operating company, electric or not, and whether narrow gauge or with rack. It was all there. Now followed 32-pages of lake ships, more in summer of course, and 256 pages of PostAuto and other buses. Perhaps the greatest surprise comes last: 8 pages of the Swissair European air timetables at all Swiss airports. The whole runs up 838 pages, printed clearly on specially made light paper, and so 2.7 cm thick. It passed to every briefcase, or even in an overcoat pocket. All this information for just CHF3.50.

It could not last – change was inevitable. The salient dates were:

1982 - (summer edition) Introduction of the Taktfahrplan.


1988 - Annual timetable, then summer to summer.

1989 - Separation of rail and bus timetables.

2003 - Change to Winter start of Annual Timetable (UIC

international agreement), also International services fell away to separate booklets, partly because they were difficult to confirm in time for the timetable publishing schedule, and they often changed during the validity period.


What next? A public timetable is a legal obligation, as is its respect by operators. There will be local printed timetables, including those published by PostAuto. The official timetables will remain available on line (www.fahrplanfelder.ch) and can be downloaded as pdf files. This will also form the archive.

A tailpiece must follow. My special timetable is one published contrary to all rules and practices on April 6th 1980 and valid to May 31st. It was headed '*Interim-Kursbuch/Indicateur Transitoire*'. It contained 544 pages of train and ship services, including international rail connections and its introduction page starts – "In most European countries Summer Time applies from April 6th to 27th September 1980. This is an hour in advance of Swiss time." What had happened? The SVP, Switzerland's right-wing political party, had demanded a popular vote to prevent Switzerland adopting summer time with all its neighbours. They pleaded special hardship for farmers and animals. The vote was carried and the dilemma was perfect. On April 6th 1980, all connections across borders were broken; the ramifications on national lines were everywhere. A year later the dust had settled, but my Interim Timetable remains a treasure, if only as a reminder of contrariness. This interim edition, valid for just 8 weeks, cost CHF2.00. 

An RAe TEE at Basel brings back memories of time past.




Where's Heidi?

Where would you find this magnificent set of 5 bells? Answer on Page 46 




And finally...


Mario Gavazzi notes how times change

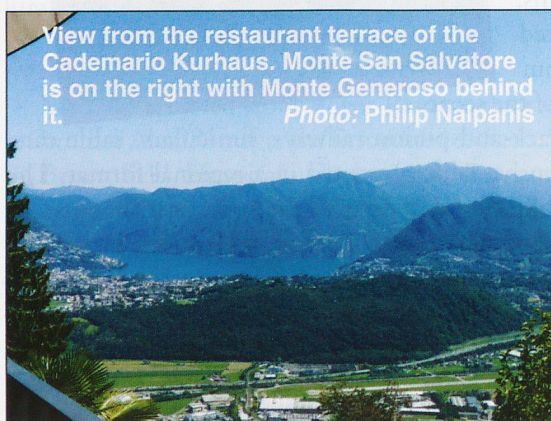
Today Swiss trains are no-go areas for those people who continue to smoke despite all the medical evidence that indicates its danger to health. Back in 1900, when this poster was produced, it was seen as a commonplace thing to do and Swiss tobacco companies even targeted specific groups of workers such as the railway employees in this advertisement. This is one of many on display at the "Tabak & Zigarren-Museum" at Menziken, Canton Aargau. Following the opening by Samuel Weber in 1838 of a cigar factory in the village, the tobacco manufacturing industry came to dominate communities in the Wynetal, the southernmost area of Aargau. As the SBB was not formed until 1902 the uniformed employee would have been in the uniform of one of the old private companies, although not the metre-gauge WSB (now the AAR) which did not reach Menziken until 1903. 



Swiss Express contributor Ron Smith is always on the lookout for all things Swiss, hence when in Ghana he spotted this Swiss-built Saurer truck that was inoperable at the back of the Tema (Ghana Health Board) garage. Judging by the model it was probably donated from Switzerland to the Health Board in the early 1980s. Ron was in West Africa at the culmination of a church-led project based in Scotland to raise money to equip a workshop to train vehicle mechanics to help keep useful vehicles like the Saurer on the road. After receiving tremendous help from the automotive industry a miracle occurred when the German Government donated €500,000 to construct the building and fund some essential kit. Hopefully the trainees managed to get the Saurer back in service. 

Where's Heidi?

They are on Schynige Platte to celebrate the railways centenary in 1993. Ding Dong if you knew that. 



Swiss Tip:

One of the most luxurious and spectacular public transport interchanges in the world has to be the Kurhaus at Cademario, the interchange of three PostAuto routes to the west of Lugano. The bus stand itself is unremarkable, but cross the turning circle and make your way to the Kurhaus restaurant terrace in summer, or the bar, for spectacular views south and east over Lake Lugano and into northern Italy. The Kurhaus is higher than either Monte Bre or Monte San Salvatore. Of the three PostAuto services, the 422 takes a splendid switchback journey down to Bioggio on the Ferrovia Lugano-Ponte Tresa, or into Lugano itself via the main FFS/SBB station. In the uphill direction it passes through Miglieglia for Monte Lema. Finally, don't be concerned if a bus appears to pull into the turning circle and appears to leave early! The driver is either returning the bus to, or taking a break at, the depot 400m lower down the hill. 