

Easter tour of Switzerland for railways enthusiasts

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EASTER TOUR OF SWITZERLAND FOR RAILWAY ENTHUSIASTS.

There is a thrill in store for British railway enthusiasts this Easter — a fascinating conducted tour over some of the most famous rail-routes in Switzerland.

I am told this is something that has never been tried out before. No ordinary excursion, it includes visits to a variety of places from signal boxes to power stations. One day's tour is devoted to that unique feat of engineering, the Gotthard line, with a behind-the-scenes look denied the average traveller.

As it is being organised by a Sheffield coach firm — in conjunction with the Swiss Railways — the tour starts from Sheffield, but people from other parts of the country can join the main party at Dover.

Montreux, pleasant resort on the northern shore of the lake of Geneva, is the starting-point for the rail part of the holiday.

First the route is over part of the international Simplon line, past the lake-washed Chillon castle and into the broad valley of the Rhone.

At Brigue, where the Simplon line turns right to cut through the Alps by means of the longest tunnel in the world, the party is to change trains for the journey over the Lötschberg, one of the most impressive of the privately-owned lines in Switzerland with its many viaducts, tunnels and avalanche protection galleries.

The next day there will be a choice of two excursions.

The first of these goes from Interlaken to Grindelwald, from where there is a further ride by chairlift to First — and a breathtaking view over the Bernese Alps.

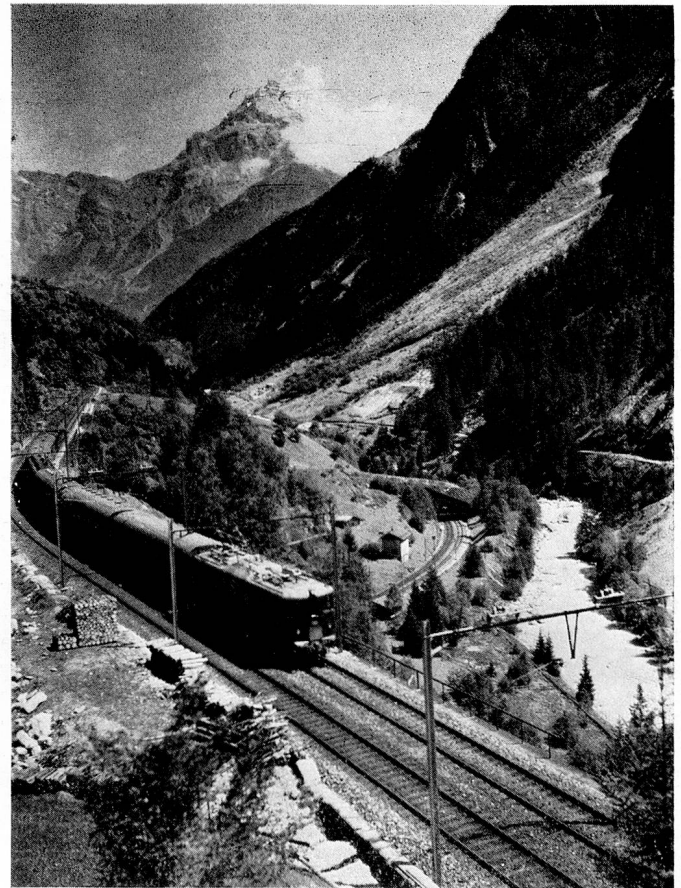
Even more spectacular (and well worth the extra £2.10s) is the alternative excursion by the famed Jungfrau line to the highest railway station in Europe, carved out of solid rock in the 11,333-ft-high Jungfraujoch itself. The journey is full of many surprises, but none to beat the sight of the jagged peaks, vast snowfields and the giant, 16-mile-long Aletsch glacier.

However, as this holiday is designed principally for railway enthusiasts plans have been made for them to see something of the technical side of Swiss railways. Some of their curiosity in this respect will be satisfied at Meiringen, where they will be taken round the railway workshops and yards.

Next will be the crossing of the Brünig pass — by the only narrow-gauge track owned by the Swiss Federal Railways — and the swift run to the holiday resort of Lucerne.

Here two local visits are lined up. One is to see a steam-driven model railway, with five locomotives, four of which are reproductions of noted British engines. The second is to the Dietschiberg, above Lucerne, where one of the main attractions is an electric model railway, part of which is a one-in-ten model of the St. Gotthard line at Wassen.

And talking of the St. Gotthard, a trip over this line and through the famous tunnel will be one of the high spots of the holiday. Available for inspection will be the 73,000 h.p. generating station, the



cleverly-designed spiral tunnels and the station which is actually inside the tunnel itself.

The last full day in Switzerland will include a trip up the Rigi by the world's first cog-wheel railway.

The cost of the whole tour, counting the travel from Dover back to Dover, will be £34. (From Sheffield and back to Sheffield £35). Further details are given in the leaflet enclosed with this issue.

Derek Meakin.

