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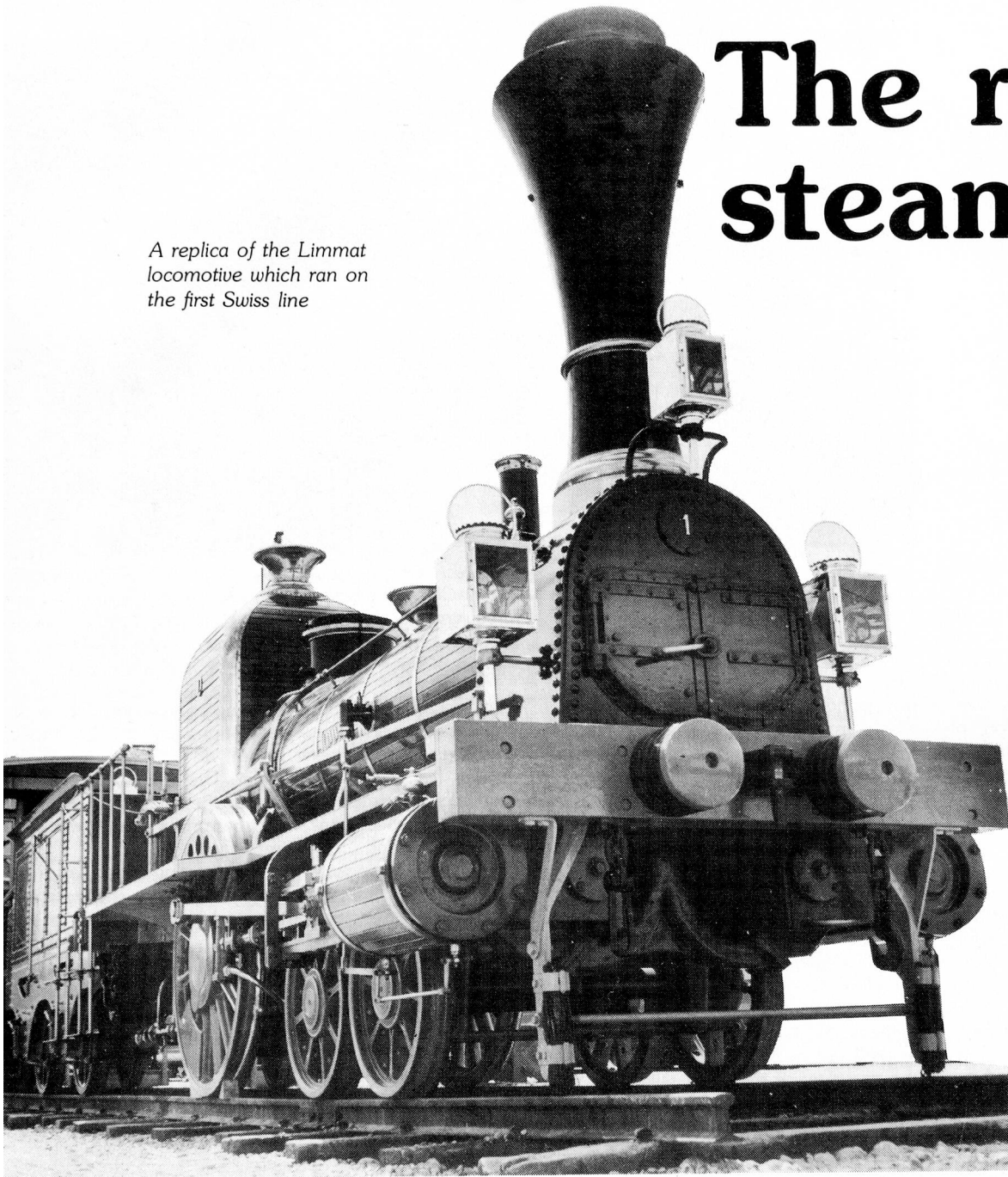
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The romantic steam lineage

A replica of the Limmat locomotive which ran on the first Swiss line



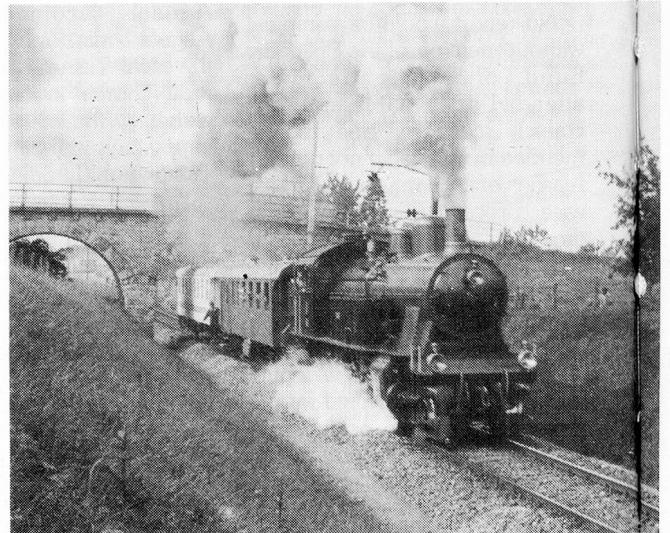
IT MAY be surprising to hear that in a country famous for its electrified railway system there should be room for steam engines. But as in other countries, there is increasing nostalgia for things old and beautiful.

Nobody can deny the powerful fascination of a modern engine, and in an age where speed seems to be essential the superb performance of a Swiss electric locomotive must be acknowledged with admiration.

But nothing can compete with the romantic appeal of steam. No wonder steam enthusiasts are growing in numbers, and that their absorbing keenness should extend even to the old paddle steamers on Swiss lakes.

In all regions of Switzerland old steam trains have been preserved – in fact, too many to mention them all. There is one for instance in Appenzell, built in 1886, adorned with rustic painting. The “Amor Express” with a Maffei steam engine Eb3/5 is run by the Bodensee-Toggenburg Railway.

The Bernese Oberland Railways run trains between Thun and Interlaken and the Luetschental (the engine was built in 1902 for the Rhaetian Railways), with an “oldtimer” restaurant carriage for 16 people, the so-called Emperor’s Carriage.



Elegant interior (left) of one of the coaches of the Amor Express (above) of the Bodensee-Toggenburg Railway.

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The most famous rack-and-pinion railway in the Bernese Oberland is the Briener Rothorn-Bahn, the only steam-powered public line which, in summer, runs daily to a set timetable. The Emmental-Burgdorf-Thun-Bahn runs steam engines and period carriages, and 12km of a narrow gauge line is operated by the United Berner-Worb Railways.

From Bauma to Hinwil and back in the Zurich Oberland enthusiasts run a museum railway, and the "Schnaaggi-Schaaggi" steam train runs in the Sihltal.

In the Fribourg region excursions are run by the Blonay-Chamby Museum Railway Line from Palezieux to Broc. In the Jura and Basle region the "Chluser Schnaegg" steam train runs from Balsthal to Oensingen and back, while the narrow gauge line of the Waldenburgerbahn runs from Liestal to Waldenburg with the "Gedeon Thommen" steam engine No. 5 and the "Eurovapor" engine formerly of the Steyertalbahn.

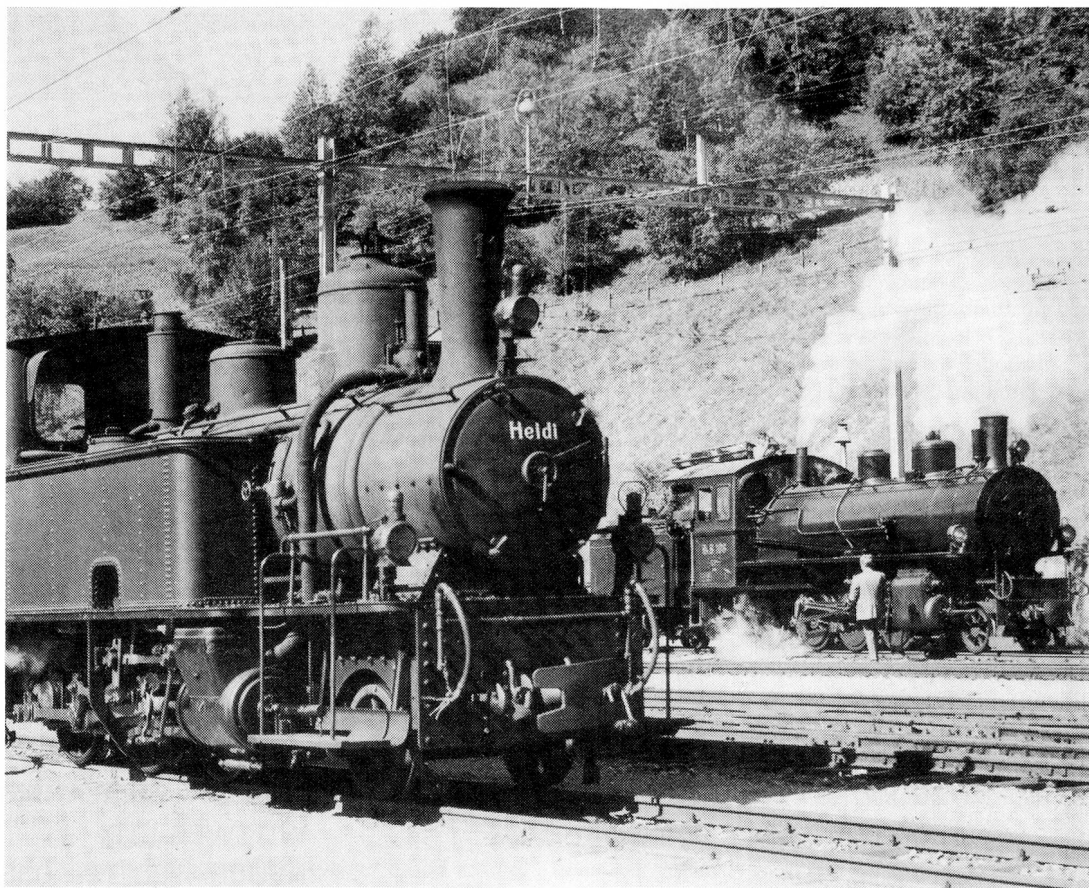
The Schinznacher Baum-schulbahn has three steam engines and the 600mm gauge works railway runs along the track in a tree and plant nursery for 3km.

But there are also steam trains in the Valais, the Grisons, Central Switzerland and other parts. The Swiss Federal Railways are keeping five steam locomotives in operating condition for historical trains, and two steam engines are operational from the Zurich Depot of the SBB.

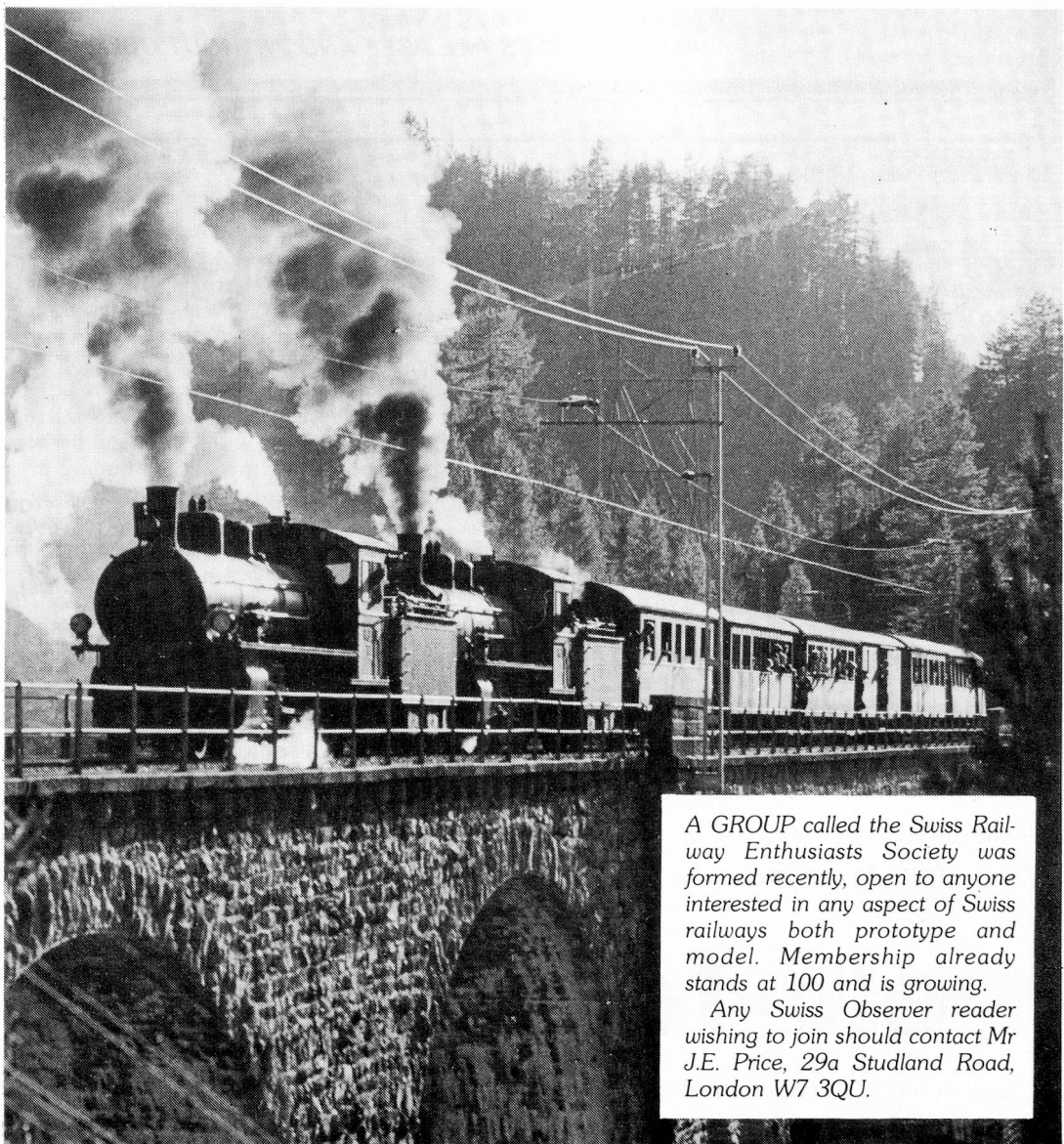
Nor must one forget the paddle steamers on the Lakes of Thun, Brienz, Geneva, Zurich and Lucerne.

The Swiss National Tourist Office has published a booklet on steam events in Switzerland with details of "hobby holidays" and of special "steam highlights" like the nostalgic Orient Express which will run between Zurich and Istanbul between October 6 and 11. Yes, a great time for steam engine enthusiasts!

Mariann Meier



Locos on the Raetian Railway



A GROUP called the Swiss Railway Enthusiasts Society was formed recently, open to anyone interested in any aspect of Swiss railways both prototype and model. Membership already stands at 100 and is growing.

Any Swiss Observer reader wishing to join should contact Mr J.E. Price, 29a Studland Road, London W7 3QU.