

Rail-in 88. Part 1

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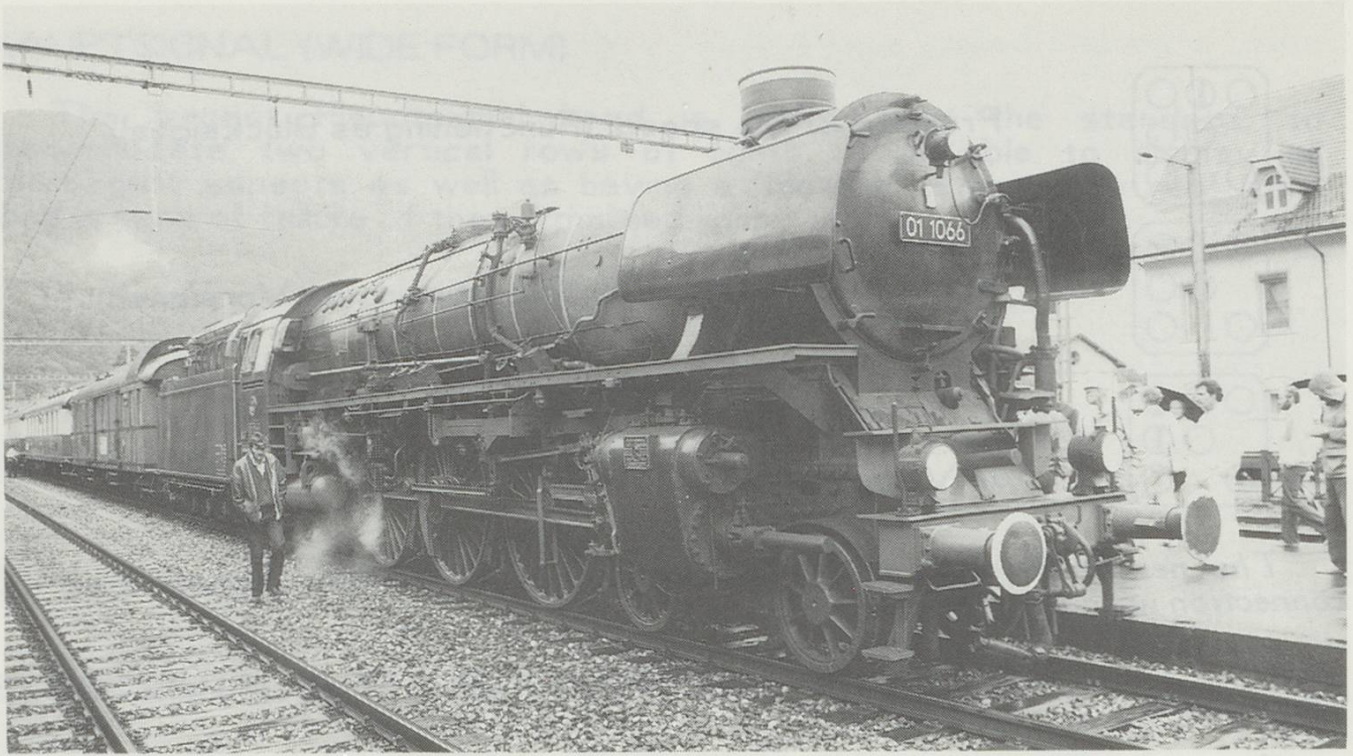
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01 1066 on arrival at Interlaken West, at the end of Rail-In '88 steam parade
20:8:88

Photo, Author

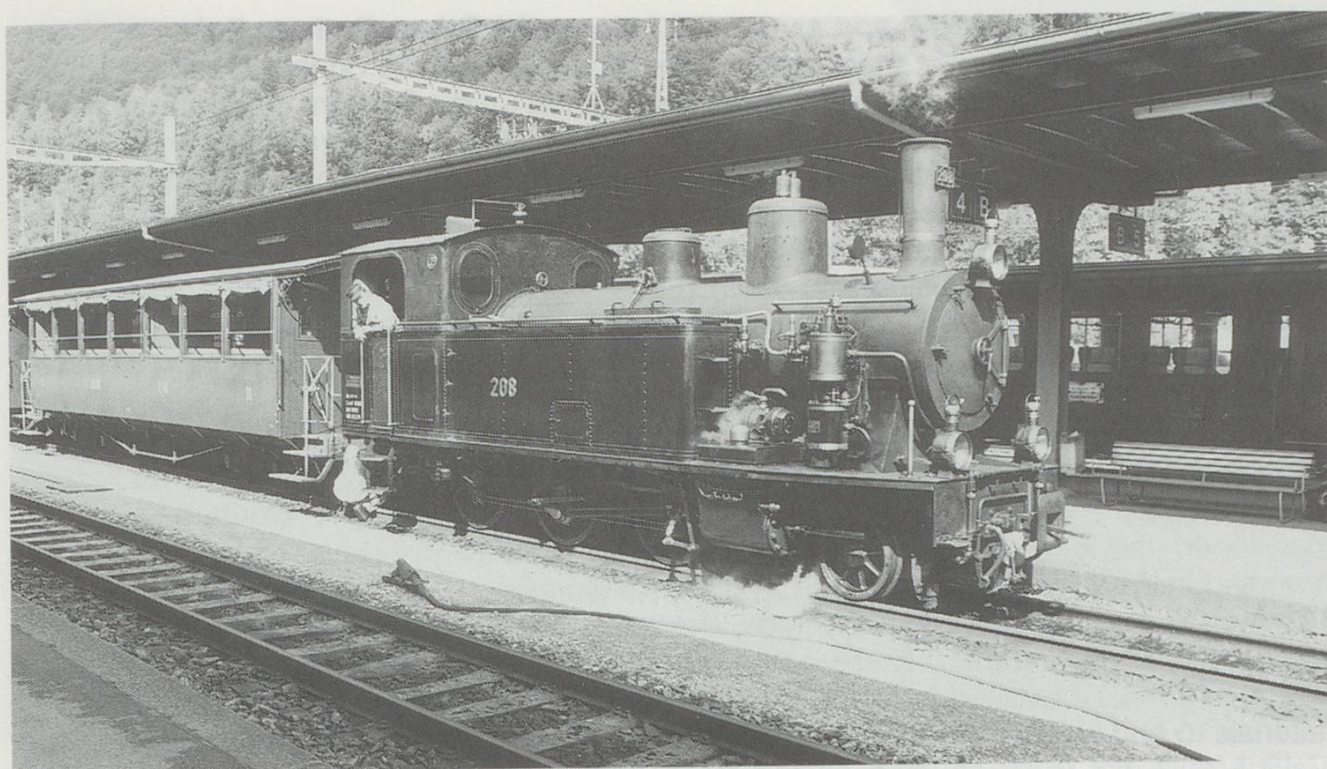
RAIL-IN 88

By P. Kloss

Our 1988 family holiday, based in Goldswil near Interlaken, was especially memorable for its coincidence with the Rail-In 88 exhibition. This was helped by an excellent home base, a holiday apartment situated on the hillside above the Aare ship canal, with a magnificent view over, and only 15 minutes walk from, Interlaken Ost.

At 07:50 on the 12th of August we arrived, bleary eyed, at Spiez on train 499 having left Ostend at 21:00 the night before, (an adventure in itself!). As our apartment was not free until late afternoon we chose to go the last stage by Lake Steamer. Since the first boat was at 09:39, we had time to book our Regional Season Tickets, discover the joys of hot running water in the station conveniences, stroll down to the landing stage and find a cup of coffee at a lake-side cafe.

After the week's big shop, I found the Rail-In 88 information caravan at Interlaken West. Here I bought the exhibition guide, and quizzed the caravan staff about the week's events. At the station we saw the arrival of a Basel-Brig excursion including three 1962 Rheingold dome-cars hauled by a pair of Re 4/4 Is, one in TEE livery. While the Re 4/4 I s ran round, the preserved SBB Ae 3/6I No. 10439 shunted itself into the West goods yard. Soon afterwards, the Ost-West-West goods exhibition shuttle arrived, worked by a colourful hybrid pendelzug: SIG built BLS (blue/cream) RBDe4/4 + ABt on the ends, with trailers from the GFM (orange/grey) and RVT (red/white), sandwiching an SBB blue and silver-grey NPZ trailer. After glimpsing the exhibition in West goods from afar, we BLS bussed up to Goldswil. At the apartment we threw open the shutters and charged onto the balcony. The view was all that we remembered- Interlaken nestled below between the lakes framed by the mountains. Below for the rail-fan was the constant activity at Interlaken Ost. Freight, empty stock and train movements on all the lines into the station were in full view-



SLM 2-6-0T No.208 at Interlaken Ost. 22:8:88

Photo, Author

Brünig, BLS main line and branch to the Bönigen carriage works and the BOB heading South to the Jungfrau. We were on the lookout for audible and visible clues of Rail-In 88. From the Brünig engine sheds we could see a column of smoke rising. Later, a green and cream foreign power car emerged from Interlaken Ost and climbed the Brünig ramp. As evening fell I sat down with the timetables and planned the next day's trip to Frutigen to watch the Electric loco parade, an event not to be missed!

The next morning we caught the 09.25 local from Interlaken Ost and changed at Spiez onto the next express for Brig. This was absolutely packed, and we had to stand all the way. At Frutigen, we saw that the multi-coloured Pendelzug shuttle to the parade viewing area was also packed, so we walked the mile or so to a good viewpoint overlooking the Kander viaduct. The parade was opened by a special, extra long goods train hauled by an Ae8/8 and Re4/4. The length of this train meant that when the front reached the viaduct, the rear was still snaking out of Frutigen yard! There followed a historical tableau of the development of 15kV 16.6Hz motive power, with SEZ Ce4/6 of the 1920s through historic and standard Swiss classes up to 3-phase BT Re 4/4 No. 91. Foreign guests were SNCF 4-system BB202013, an OBB 1044 and a DB 120. Each item, Swiss or foreign, was chosen to illustrate a significant step in traction development. Afterwards the locos coupled together and ran back down to Frutigen, all whistles and claxons sounding in an amazing cacophony of sound which echoed around the mountains! We concluded this excellent start to our holiday by continuing on up to Kandersteg, and taking the Stock cabin/chair lift (very dramatic ride over a sheer drop) to the wilderness at the North end of the Gemmi pass. Returning to Spiez, we continued to Interlaken by boat and STI bus from Beatenbucht.

Monday was spent quietly. I took the children on a photographic expedition to the end of the Aare canal viaduct. The cause of the smoke seen the night before- SLM 2-6-0T No. 208 came cheerily along with four balcony ended coaches on the first of its two daily trips. The rest of the day was spent sunbathing with a stack of exhibition leaflets and the local train timetable trying to work out what to do when, whilst the rest of the family swam and paddled in the Burgseeli lido .

Tuesday dawned fine, and as our 1987 trip on the Brienz Rothorn Bahn had been spoilt by low cloud, we went there again. After an uneventful trip on the Brünig to Brienz we scrambled for space on one of the three trains going up the Rothorn departing at 10.15. Only one was steam powered, by 1936 built No.7. It lead the way, permitting several good photographs of it from the following diesel propelled train. I was also able to take several superb views over the Lake. We scrambled the last few hundred metres to the summit point, well worth the extra effort. A magnificent panoramic view of the three main mountain blocks (Jungfrau/Eiger, Susten and Titlis) unfolded, and in the far distance a corner of Lake Lucerne could be seen. The earlier promising conditions rapidly deteriorated, and a thunderstorm loomed up from the West. Fortunately, it passed to one side! We went back down on the 13.40 departure under a darkening sky. Then we headed West and South to Grindelwald by train aiming for the First chairlift. As we hurried past the Grindelwald Tourist Information Office the children remembered there was a playground, so we had an enforced stop. This was fortunate because within 10 minutes the storm broke. We abandoned thoughts of the First chair lift and rushed back to the station for home. Steaming in the warmth of the next BOB train, we wondered what to do next. However, by the time we approached Zweilutschinen, the rain was dying out, so we bailed out and changed for Lauterbrunnen. There we took the funicular up to Grutschalp, and thence by BLM to Murren, not visited in '87. The BLM was operating a mixed train service. Building materials to and waste from a building site at the mid way passing loop were being carried in skips on a flat truck coupled on the North end of the single-car emu. The sun now emerged and gave misty views of Wengen across the valley, as well as the green and yellow trains of the WAB crawling toy-like up to Kleine Scheidegg. Returning by the same route, we saw the skips craned onto a platform at the down-hill end of the funicular cars to take them down to Lauterbrunnen. At Lauterbrunnen, I had a quick look at the new metre-80cm exchange sidings with overhead gantry and several idle WAB Box-car locos. At the other end of the station sat new WAB Beh4/8 unit No.133 resplendent in its brighter yellow and green livery. Unfortunately there was no chance to ride on one today, as it was getting late, so it was home on the BOB to Interlaken Ost, hauled by one of the 1987 built ABeh4/4II units. At Ost we walked around the Rail-In '88 narrow gauge exhibits to spy out the land for the next day. Walking up to our apartment, we saw the Rheingold dome cars in the ecs, resting after their excursion to Stresa.

On Wednesday we rather rashly (as it was rather hot) decided to visit the Rail-In '88 static exhibitions. We started with the narrow gauge exhibits at Interlaken Ost. These were drawn from a variety of metre gauge railways, with modern Ge4/4II No.632 Zizers of the RhB contrasting with BVZ HGe4/4 No.12, BOB HGe 3/3 No.24 and MOB DZe6/6 No.2002. All the cab doors were open, so an interesting time was had inspecting the works of these engines, during which I discovered that the MOB had vacuum brakes, and that the ancient electro-mechanicals cared little about protecting the works from idle 'gerfingerpoken'. The favourite item was the Brünig's diesel powered snow blower, Xrotm No.51. To educate the technically minded there was a display of rack drive technology in the shape of four power bogies, from 1943 built Brünig Deh4/6 to 1986 built FO/SBB HGe4/4II. Having truly done the narrow gauge we went onto Ost station platforms to witness the arrival of preserved GTB E3/3 No.3. It was part of one of those complex itineraries the organisers seemed to love. This was a nostalgic trip from Berne to Brienz as it used to be in the 1880's: Train to Thun, launch to Darligen, steam train to Interlaken Ost and finally by paddle steamer (the famous DS Lötschberg) to Brienz. After photographing No.3 it was on to the other exhibition at Interlaken West goods. We were taken there by the RAe2/4 Red Arrow unit. A few ordinary passengers got on by accident and were surprised to find they were expected to pay the entrance fee to the exhibition as their fare- SF7 as opposed to the standard SF1 for the short journey!

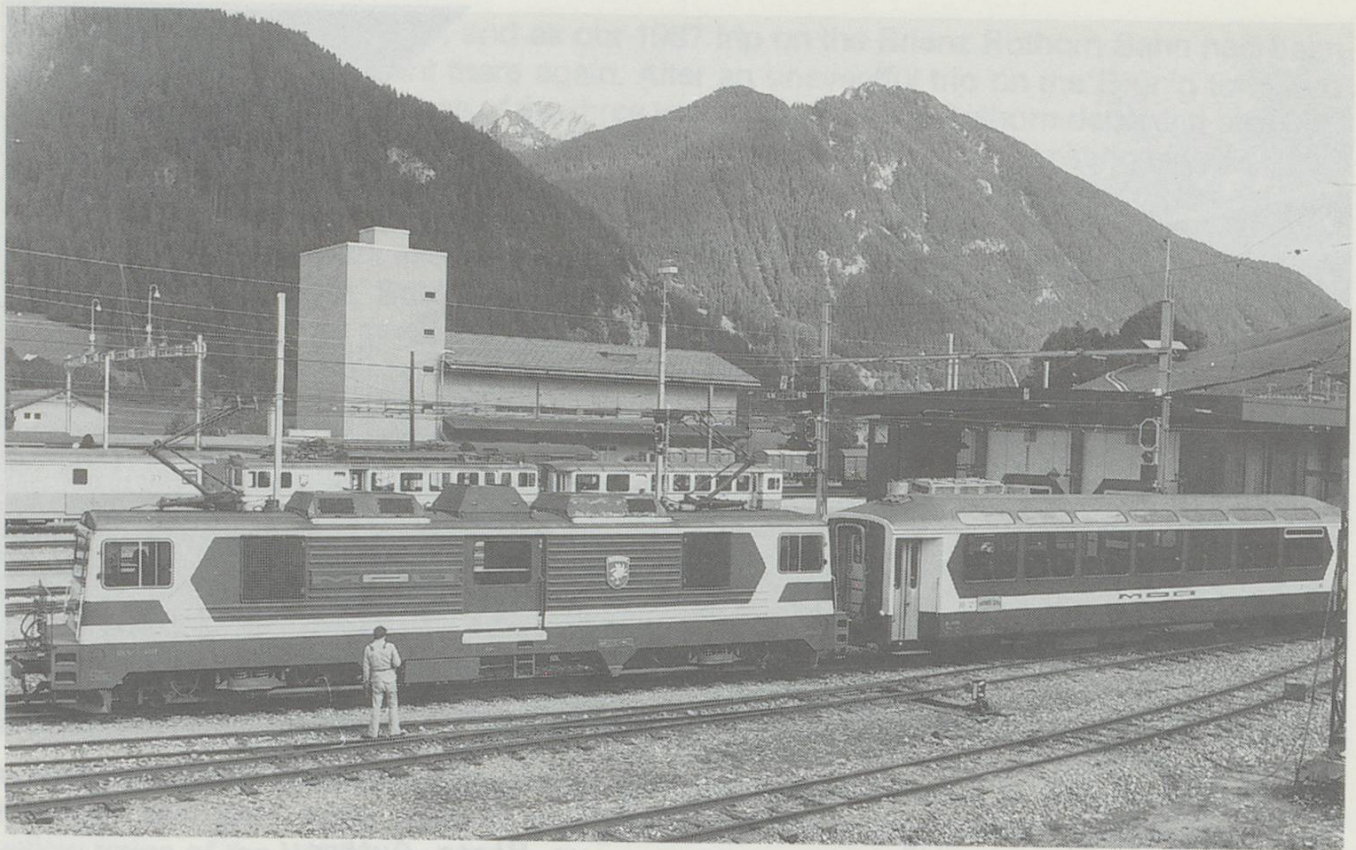


BLS Ae6/8 No207 at Interlaken Ost, loading RhB Ge4/4" No. 632 and BAM Be4/4 No. 11 after Rail-In '88 exhibition. 11am 22:8:88

Photo, Author

The standard gauge exhibition was another mountaineering expedition- in and out of cabs where ever possible. Here there was the contrast of the carbonized electro-mechanics inside BLS Ae6/8 No.203 and the clinical electronics inside the DB 120 and BT Re4/4. A surprise was to find that the FS had sent an E633, and the French had supplied an RATP MI 84 unit as a advertising stand for their Railway industry. The home trade was amply advertised by the comfortable interior of BLS re-furbished open first A-826 with its rotating lounge chairs, (into which we gratefully collapsed). There was also the Bahn 2000 travelling exhibition train made of three converted Mk.III coaches, showing videos and selling literature on the modern Swiss Railway. A nostalgic exhibit for me was BLS De4/5 No.796 (dating from the BN electrification of 1928), looking slightly rusty and unkempt at the rear of the yard. In '87 we had seen this regularly work the Spiez-Interlaken goods trip.

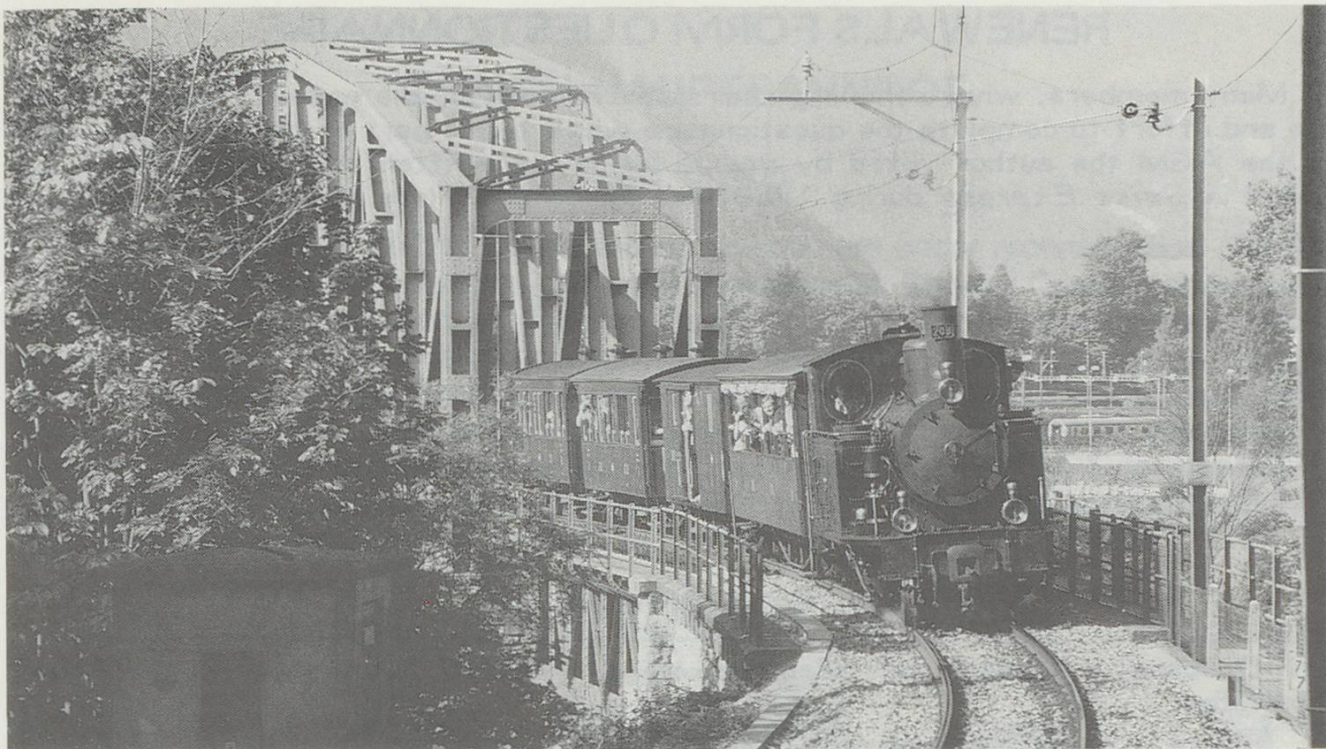
Having suffered the heat on the Wednesday, Thursday was spent high in the mountains, walking from the First chairlift top station to Bachalpsee. Still very hot even at 2000 metres. It was interesting to see that the Japanese tourists were now taking to the paths in their walking boots- the result of skilful marketing of the real Swiss experience? Terrific views and some of the best photographs of the holiday were taken. Friday was also taken lightly, since the at weekend was the big event- the steam parade through Darligen station. However, we managed to lose our packed lunch on the DS Lötschberg (recovered later), and see No.208 steam across the Aare bridge. Later on I had a good look at the Interlaken Ost goods and empty stock yards, photographed the green and cream visitor on the Brünig, Bière-Apples-Morges (BAM) Be4/4 No.11, and witnessed the arrival of DB 01.1066 from Stuttgart at Interlaken West in the evening. I had gone to West on the 19.25 local from Ost, formed of an STB pendelzug, built for the BLS as a BCFZe4/6 in 1938, with unusual outside frame bogies and roof mounted fans like a grasshopper's head. The strange looks and livery caused the locals to scratch their heads and doubt it was their train, (they have short memories).



*MOB GDe4/4 shunting Panoramic Express stock at Zweisimmen. 21:8:88
Photo, Author*

What a shock it was to wake up to low clouds and rain on the Saturday morning. We struggled out to Darligen on a packed and steamy local train, to find that just about every vantage point around the station was already booked. We opted to go up the long approach road uphill from the station in the hope of getting some view of the proceedings. When we did find a space we practised taking photographs under and around all the brollies! To add to the misery, the parade ran incredibly late- in fact timekeeping went to pot. When the first parade loco appeared, SBB Eb3/5 No.5819, a cheer went up. The parade was good on variety, the darling exhibit in this my eyes was the little steam railcar, CZm1/2 No.31 of the Uerikon-Bauma Bahn, especially since there are no preserved equivalents in the UK. We eventually got fed up with the wet and took a local back to Interlaken West to see the end of the parade there, (wishing we had stayed at West). Having seen the last parade train, the 1930's Rheingold Blue and cream Pullmans behind 01.1066, we straggled back home to find some warm and dry. By the evening, the rain had slackened off and we ventured out again. We walked along the river path to Unterseen, and abandoning the family at what passed as a playground I walked on to West station, promising not to be long. When I got there, what should I find but most of the parade locos lined up in platform 2. I madly rushed around taking the photographs missed on the parade itself. Having found out that the locos were staying another half an hour I went to collect a rather cold and miserable family (where had you got to?) and brought them back to the station. The atmosphere was terrific- as darkness fell the loco fires lit up the damp air. Finally, at about 21:00 a BLS Re4/4 propelled ex DB 23.058 onto the end of the line of locos. Coupling up, they were all towed away, whistles sounding and surrounded in clouds of steam. This more than made up for the miseries suffered earlier in the day.

Sunday morning looked just as grey as the day before so we upped and went in search of the sun on the shores of Lake Genève. This meant an enjoyable ride on the MOB, with the slight loss that we missed the procession of steam excursions on the Interlaken branch that afternoon. However, for the family as a whole, discovering warm sunshine and a stall with 30 flavours of ice-cream more than made up for this!



SLM 2-6-0T No. 208 on the daily (July-Sept) 09:45 Interlaken Ost-Brienze crossing the Aare Canal bridge at Goldswil. 15:8:88

Photo, Author

Monday was the Rail-In '88 clear-up day, and we did our best to see how it was done. From the balcony we could see an Ae6/8 shunting at the exchange sidings behind the Brünig ramp. No time had been wasted, for by 10am most of the metre-gauge static exhibits were on transporter wagons awaiting collection. We took the quickest route on foot to the exchange sidings. From the road paralleling the BLS Bönigen branch we were able to photograph RhB No.632, the BAM powercar and the complete train from the Chemin de Fer de Jura (CJ) on their transporters. Nipping round to Ost station we were in time to see the first load (632 and BAM No.11) come through behind the immaculate BLS Ae6/8 No.207. Another photograph was due especially as we don't have this sort of fun in the UK. We turned our attention to the next express waiting to leave - the Interlaken portion of EC6 The Lötschberg. As we were looking on, No.208 steamed in from Brienz and ran round its short train- yet more camera work! Later on, after a damp walk up the Heimwehfluh, we passed through West station to see the RATP unit waiting to go back to Paris, and I waited at the level crossing by the Harder Kulm funicular 'tal station to see and photo Ae6/8 No.207 take the CJ train away at about 18.30. Almost all traces of the exhibition were now gone, and the site of the narrow gauge exhibition had been taken over, with much else of Interlaken, for military manoeuvres.

BRB No.7 climbing the Brienzer Rothorn 16:8:88

Photo, Author

