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SUNKEN WAGONS OFFER INSIGHT INTO EARLY RAIL TRANSPORT

A Lausanne diver has located the remains of four railway wagons which sank in Lake Geneva in 1859. Gilbert Paillex used an underwater robot he developed himself to locate the wagons which had sunk some 300 metres under water.

A total of six wagons had been loaded onto a freight ship, which set off from Morges on July 8, 1859. They were meant for use on the railway lines connecting Italy and Switzerland. A gust of wind, however, upset the wagons. The rope which had been used to tie the six carriages together came undone and four of them, each worth around SFr 20,000, slipped into the water. No one was injured in the incident.

Using reports and newspaper articles published at the time, and spurred on by his own curiosity, Paillex set about finding out where the carriages had ended up. "In the end, I had to make about 20 journeys to find the precise location of the carriages," says Paillex. With the aid of a self-designed robot, Paillex dived underwater and took photographs of the carriages, which are still in a relatively good state.

Paillex intends to make further journeys underwater to find out more about the carriages, and to gain more statistics for a model being made of them.

In the course of his dives, Paillex has made other notable discoveries. In 1984 he came across a steamer, the *Rhône*, which sank in the lake in 1883, as a result of a collision with another steamer.

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NEWS FROM THE JUNGFRAU UNESCO LISTING?

The Jungfrauoch, long famous as one of Switzerland's most spectacular sightseeing attractions, may soon be recognised by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation) as a World Natural Heritage Site.

The Swiss government has submitted the candidature of the approximately 539 square kilometre Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn high-Alpine region, citing its "exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance". Because the region fulfils the criteria better than any other such area, its chances of being the first Alpine region to be awarded the status of World Natural Heritage Site are excellent.

The Jungfrau Group sees only advantages as acceptance to the UNESCO list would prove very valuable in promoting tourism. Guarantee has been given that all existing facilities would remain and acceptance would be totally in keeping with the concept of "quality tourism".

UNESCO is not expected to announce its decision before 2002. By then, many more visitors will have made the journey to the Jungfrauoch, at 3454 metres, Europe's highest altitude railway station and made their own decision on whether it deserves to be recognised as the first Alpine "World Natural Heritage Site".

ANOTHER TRANSPORT FACILITY JOINS THE JUNGFRAU GROUP

At a meeting of Grindelwald Municipality on the evening of Friday 8 June 2001, it was agreed to sell a share package of 21 500 securities amounting to 30 percent of the voting rights of the Grindelwald-First Mountain Transport Company. With 250 votes for the sale to only 4 against, the decision was almost unanimous. Jungfrau Railways take over the share package for the sum of SFr 5.16 million and at the same time guarantee to replace the Schilt ski lift with a modern chairlift. The company will also provide Grindelwald Municipality with a further SFr 2.5 million for the planned funicular to Terrassenweg. Both board of directors and management of Jungfrau Railways are delighted with the clear decision of the people of Grindelwald and, as future majority shareholders, are deeply aware of their responsibilities towards local inhabitants and holiday guests.

Information supplied by Media Service, Jungfrau Railways



Above: SBB Re 460 012-8 in Radio Suisse Romande livery is snapped at Domodóssola in the sidings waiting for the Italians to go back to work, it being a Sunday! 20/05/2001. Photo: DS.
Below: David Adams took this picture of RhB "Croc" 407 at the east end of Disentis in September 1975.





*Above: SBB De 1661 arrives at Seon on the Seetal with the 1046 to Luzern. 11/05/1988. Photo: Ernie Brack
Below: One of the CF Jura's new Stadler railcars is pictured undergoing tests in the pretty Jura countryside. 6/2001.
Photo: MITV*

