

The letters pages

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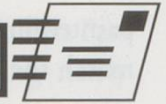
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Letters are welcomed on any relevant subject. Please ensure that when you send an email letter you include your address.

From: Alan Dutton - Woodbridge

What about this tram?



I enclose a photograph taken on our holiday, based in Spiez in July this year, of Zürich tram no. 1016 now in use as a bar-car in Thunerstrasse, Spiez, and which can be hired for parties, etc. with, I understand, a minimum number of 25 persons.

However, I wonder if any member can shed any light on the car's history. None of the reference books appear to acknowledge the existence of this tram, which was confirmed to me as being from Zürich, but the length of time in its present location was not known to my informant. (The owner of the Pub was away on

holiday when I took the photograph.) The Platform 5 handbook refers to no 1019/1929 as being in Germany but also refers to a no 16/1929 as being in Zürich (Be2/2 & Ce2/2 respectively) and there are four other trams in this latter series of numbers. This suggests that at some time there was a renumbering of the trams and therefore that no. 16 is indeed no. 1016 in the picture.

If anyone is visiting Spiez the tram is only about 10 minutes walk from the shopping centre; go in the direction of Thun, keeping the railway on your left side. Bear right at the roundabout, the tram being about 200/300 metres along on the left hand side. There is a bus service but I have no details as my journey was by car.

From: Deryck Featherstone - North Walsham

Down with Dragons - *See the photograph on the inside back page for the full picture*

"Have you seen that awful thing on Lake Thun?" they asked. Having just arrived, we had not. "Well, avoid the Dragon if you can," they said (including our "rep"). Unfortunately, we couldn't and had no option but to suffer a trip from Oberhofen to Thun and return to Interlaken in it. Quite apart from the ghastly and untasteful apparition itself, we found the visibility reduced by at least half. Hoping it would be better on the upper deck, we did the return trip First Class, it was just as bad. When my brother and I went on the third, (promenade), deck there was no one else there and we soon discovered why. The "Dragon" cladding was sucking down exhaust fumes from the funnel across the deck. Poor old MS *Stadt Thun*! In an effort, I suppose, to appeal to children, someone in BLS had dreamed up this idea and turned it into an over-size toy. To a steam railway enthusiast it is bad enough to have to endure funny faces on the front of British preserved steam engines but this was much worse as the entire vessel was disfigured. I am sure I speak for many visitors to the Berner Oberland in hoping that this unnecessary nonsense will be removed at the end of the season and quietly ditched.

What do you think? Look at the photograph on the inside back cover and write in with your views.

From: Denis Stevens CBE - London

SBB in UK

Further to Mr Hoekstra's article (*Swiss Express*, June 2001, p.27) it cannot have escaped notice that one of our railway lines, the Marylebone to Birmingham, has been running under the aegis and expertise of a top-management Swiss team.

This more efficient operation is however only part of the story. The Swiss transport authority, aware of poaching, has doubled the salaries of major executives, making them higher paid than some government officials. Where will this end, with more than a dozen main line stations in London? The Swiss are upset because the doubling of salaries is unusual in a country of general contentment and absence of disruptive elements.

One result is that younger Swiss railway chiefs can hope for earlier promotion, and the other may be that British rail, duly helveticized, will be one of the best systems in the world.

Since receiving this letter news has broken of the Government's new and preferred method of refranchising for a couple of years at a time. Will the SBB or indeed anyone be interested now?

From: D Hughes - Colyton

Correction and thanks

With reference to your photographs that accompany the Interlaken mill letter (June issue), I enclose a further photograph showing the device for redirecting railway vehicles. I do believe this should be called a "sector-plate" rather than a turntable.

With regard to the replies re: the Gsteig headstones I found the information most helpful and I thank the gentlemen for their time and effort.

Pressure of space has not allowed publication of the picture; readers are referred to the previous issue.

From: Peter Pengelley - Watchet

The FLP

I must confess that I have just managed to start reading the March issue of *Swiss Express* and consequently have only now seen your request about the FLP (Ferrovia Lugano - Ponte Tresa). My wife and I travelled from Lugano to Ponte Tresa on 12th June 1998 while on holiday in Lugano. I noted in my diary that the line runs through several villages passing a small lake and the terminus was at Ponte Tresa alongside Lake Lugano. We walked across the bridge spanning the river into Italy. There were long lines of cars each side waiting to pass through Customs. We returned to Lugano on the large launch *Ticino*. The three photographs enclosed were taken at Ponte Tresa station.

Congratulations on the magazine. The colour sections are superb. I would willingly increase my sub. to get more colours.



*Although I was really after pictures of the railway from Ponte Tresa to Luino the photograph enclosed is very interesting when compared to the image on p. 35 of the March 2001 *Swiss Express*. Taken from the same position, but many years later in 1998, one can see the full effect of the new roof garden.*

Photo: Peter Pengelley. 6/1998

From: David Baker - Yorkshire

Active membership

After reading the latest issue of *Swiss Express* I was struck by the new names which turned up. On back-tracking through all six issues of volume six I find that 80 members (plus two noms de plume) have contributed to the magazine in some form or other. Although several Society officials and regulars are among the number, this shows that some 8% of our members are to be considered very active which, I venture to say, shows very well.

Keep it up everyone-it can only help our future!

From: Roger C Barton - Luton

"It'th a myhtewee" by John Jesson

In John Jesson's article, he invites further information on the locations of the seven photographs. I think I know three of these, from my 16 visits to Switzerland (1984, 1987-2001).

Photo 3: Vevey - the double-headed train is arriving on "Voie 3" from the Lausanne direction; the tank loco 8460 waits at the end of "Voie 1".

Photo 4: Lausanne - the freight train is being brought into "Voie 3" by a 4-6-0, westbound. This platform is generally used these days for eastbound services towards Montreux and Brig. The photo was taken from the present Bern platform (Voie 1).

Photo 5: Bouveret - 4-6-0 806 waits with a southbound train towards Monthey and St Maurice.

From: Clyde J Hanselman - Gilbert, USA

Winco

I just felt that I should write this letter thanking Winco for their excellent service and great inventory of Swiss model railroad equipment. I know that for many of you there across the sea this is a known fact, but over here in the US it is sometimes very difficult to find anything Swiss. Here in Arizona it is especially difficult. Each time I had a question, Yvonne or Peter would always respond to my e-mails. I can wholeheartedly recommend Winco to anyone interested in Swiss Railroad models. Thank you Yvonne and Peter Brett. Your business is an asset to our hobby and a godsend to those of us in the US.

From: Steve Horobin - Haverhill

Tunnel workings

In the letters column Michael Feaver asks about the tunnel workings which, as you know, are in early stages of construction. On the Lötschberg there is a massive site at Blausee where construction has started. Two huge boring machines have been buried and tunnels are being constructed outwards both north and south. Most BLS regional buses now call at the site where there is an exhibition centre explaining the work going on. The exhibition is free and open from 10am to 7pm.

Also on the Furka Oberalp at Sedrun is the construction site for the test bore tunnel of the Gotthard Base Tunnel. The site sits at the bottom of the valley and is connected to the FO by a new rack-fitted line and a handsome metal viaduct. It was seen from the train on 29th July and definitely needs further exploration.

On my trip which was primarily to visit the 100 years of the BN and celebrations which turned out to be a bit too low key but much better was the Sunday when the standard gauge Bremgarten-Wohlen line celebrated 125 years with steam on the standard represented by ex-Seethalbahn E3/3 *Beinwyl* and Ce 4/4 No. 10 with *Sommerwagen* on the metre gauge. All interspersed with regular BD/WM service trains; great fun.

From: Phil Weaver

Swiss Express

I have just returned from Switzerland (beginning of August) and have a few observations that may be of interest to other members. Firstly the amount of freight traffic seems to have increased markedly in the last couple of years, especially on the Lötschberg route. These are usually in the hands of pairs of Re465s on the hills,

while those on the Gotthard are trusted to Re4/4, Re6/6 combinations. On the flat sections Ae6/6s seemed to be well employed on all manner of services. An Re4/4¹ was seen on station pilot duties at Basel.

There are new signals appearing all over the SBB, which I hadn't noticed before, especially on any new bits of track that come into service. These had been tested, I understand, on the Olten - Luzern line. Basically they are round 3 aspect signals, red at the top (12 o'clock), green at 4 o'clock and yellow at 8 o'clock. Some display a number underneath, which if multiplied by 10 gives the line speed applicable. All the signals appear to have a ground repeater associated with them. A full description can be found at:

<http://smi.exit.mytoday.de/asr/ensigchsysn.html>.

Maybe an article could appear in *Swiss Express* at a later date.

While at Erstfeld for a couple of hours, I found out that the ticket office staff are proud of their historic locos. From there you can buy T shirts and mouse mats. The only T shirt, at the moment, is of the brown "Croc" and costs SFr 28. The mouse mats come in various designs, Re460, Be6/8, A3/5, Be6/8, and one with a mixture of locos including Limmat, "Croc" and TEE. They cost only SFr 10. I don't know whether they can be bought by mail order but their address is reisebuero.erstfeld@sbb.ch

From: Brian Hemming - Chobham

Accident in Berner Oberland

I hope that noone will mind the correction but in the article on p9 *Swiss Express*, June 2001 (The Rothorn), the accident referred to did not happen at the Giessbach Falls but several miles away on a tributary of the Lüttschine above Wilderswil.

From: David Robinson - St Neots

Filisur - 18th to 23rd June 2001

I would like to add my praise for the Hotel Grischuna at Filisur. My wife and I stayed there for a week in June and regard the hotel as excellent. Frau Uffer is an excellent and friendly host who speaks very good English. We stayed in one of the newer rooms with a balcony overlooking the Albula valley and the RhB. We spent most of our time in Filisur travelling around on the excellent RhB. Our journey to Switzerland was by car and we spent a second week in Zell am See in Austria. A wonderful holiday with sunshine almost every day!

In connection with Filisur Station. Back in the late 1980s there was an splendid model layout of Filisur created by Barrie Kelsall. It was featured as Railway of the Month in the March/April 1986 issue of *Continental Modeller* with also some photographs shown in the September 1987 copy of the BEMO catalogue. Does anyone know if this layout is still around and does it still go out to model railway exhibitions. I would love to be able to see it again.

From: Geoff.Morse - Hitchin

Chabisfest

There is a reference in the DampfBahn Bern section on p45 of the June *Swiss Express* to the Chabisfest. The Chabisfest is a "Cabbage festival". *Chabis* is the Bern dialect for cabbages which is the main crop in the Gürbetal. I assume that the Chabisfest is to celebrate the end of the harvesting of the cabbages - seems like just another excuse for a booze-up to me. It's a pity we don't have more of them in this country!

From: Andy Micklethwaite - Derbyshire

A few Adjustments.

Just a couple of notes following information in the last issue of *Swiss Express*.

- (1) My email redirection address as printed no longer works - it's now andymick@email.com
- (2) Beat Schar's model shop in Bern is reported closed.
- (3) The SRS Model Shop List is now on the Internet - there is a link from the SRS homepage.
- (4) I have compiled an index to recent issues of *Swiss Express*. Copies are available from the Sales Office.