

Other Swiss walks. Part 4

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Lester continues his series of walks making use of Postbuses and the mountain transport systems

The following walks make use of Postal Buses and various forms of mountain access, and it is wise to be well informed of timings, particularly last operations. Full details are in the *Kursbuch*.

In order that walkers might be better prepared for the ups and downs on walks where there are large variations in elevation, I have shown altitudes in metres.

MELCHSEE-FRUTT

The base station of the LSM multi-cabin cableway is at Stöckalp, reached by Postal Bus from Sarnen+ SBB-Brünig. Melchsee-Frutt+ 1902m is a delightful place, offering scenic outlooks, gentle strolls, or more serious walking. Hotels and restaurants are to be found here too. A short walk around the lake could be just about 45 minutes, or take the good path to Tannalp+ 1974m in about an hour. Then there is the SSMB chair-lift to the Balmeregghorn+ 2230m (base station just across the lake) from which point a ridge walk via the Erzegg down to Tannalp+ with its small chapel and hotel takes about an hour. On the ridge the path is

not always well defined. Another alternative would be to follow signposting to Distelboden 1900m for the LDB cableway to the Bonistock+ 2160m. This is a plant-life protected zone and is at its best in spring and early summer. Walk down via Chringen to Tannalp in an hour. For the more ambitious, a round walk taking in all the above points without using the chair-lift or the cableway would take about four hours at a very conservative estimate. Check the last operation of the cableway back to Stöckalp!

Return to Sarnen+ SBB by cableway and Postal Bus.

THUR RIVER WALK - WILDHAUS-LISIGHAUS/STEIN

Reach Wildhaus-Lisighaus+ (Note: this is NOT the main Wildhaus bus-stop) by Postal Bus from Buchs SBB+ or Nesslau+/Neu St. Johann+ SBB/BT. Take the minor road opposite the Post Office following signs towards the Oberdorf cableway. Beyond the base station a sign on the right points to the riverside path leading to Unterwasser+ and on to Alt St.

Johann+. Here cross the river and the main road and continue westwards along the village street. This becomes a track, passing a water mill and follows the right bank of the meandering river Thur. At Starkenbach the track crosses the river, but here continue along the footpath on the right-hand side. There are views across to the Churfirten, the seven bumpy mountains alongside the Walensee. Soon the valley narrows at Burg and the

Melchsee-Frutt.

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Alt St. Johann. Photo: Lester Weeks



Churfirsten from Wildhaus.

Photo: Lester Weeks

path climbs steeply through woods over the Iltishag before dropping down to a minor road leading eventually to the village of Stein+. Walking time 2^{1/2} hours. (One can continue via the path on the opposite side of the river to Nesslau+; a further hour is needed.)

Return by Postal Bus to Buchs SBB+ or Nesslau+/Neu St. Johann+ SBB/BT.

BEATENBERG / JUSTISTAL / MERLIGEN / (SIGRISWIL)

Beatenberg+ 1121m can be reached via the funicular from Beatenbucht+, served by BLS ships and STI buses from Thun and Interlaken. There is also a Postal Bus service Interlaken-West/Beatenberg. From Beatenberg TBB+ (also the bus terminus) turn left on the minor road and continue into the Justiztal (it is said

that during WWII many Swiss treasures were hidden in caves here) to Gron+ 1124m where the road makes a u-turn. On the bend a signposted path follows the fast-flowing Gronbach down to Merligen+ 568m. If there is a lot of water about, the path may not be all that easy to negotiate lower down and is not particularly recommended in such conditions. The alternative route is to continue on the minor road to Sigriswil+ and thence by STI bus to the Thuner See at Gunten+. BLS ships and STI buses operate from both Gunten and Merligen to Thun and Interlaken.

Walking time Beatenberg / Merligen is 2^{1/2} hours; about 35 minutes more would be required for the Sigriswil alternative.

LAUTERBRUNNEN / WILDERSWIL

From Lauterbrunnen+ BOB take the subway exit to the car park. To the left of the car park building a steeply inclined, rather stony, path leads down to the Weisse Lütschine. Cross the bridge and proceed downstream parallel to river, road and railway. At Zweilütschinen BOB it is necessary, where our arm of the river is joined by the Schwarze Lütschine, to cross to the left side temporarily. At the station cross the tracks and regain the right bank. Eventually the path climbs to meet a minor road into the village of Gsteigwiler+. Continue forward crossing the rails of the Schynige Platte Bahn and down to Wilderswil BOB+.

Walking time is about three hours.



Piz Palu from Alp Languard.

Photo: Lester Weeks

MUOTTAS MURAGL / ALP LANGUARD

The lower station of the Muottas Muragl funicular is to be found a few minutes walk from Punt Muragl RhB. Having reached Muottas Muragl MMB+ 2453m take the good path leading into the Val Muragl. After crossing the bridge over the Ova da Muragl there is a choice of two routes. The easier of the two is the right-hand path that follows a wide curve around the flank of the Schafberg. There are spectacular views up here above the tree line of the snow-topped mountains of the Bernina group and other mountains and glaciers all around. Take special care in places where there is loose scree. The path continues via the Unteren Schafberg until the green meadows and the upper station of the Alp Languard+ 2270m chair-lift is reached.

The alternative route from the Ova da Muragl bridge is via the somewhat sharply inclined zigzag path up to the Segantinihutte+ 2731m. (Giovanni Segantini, a famous Engadin artist, is buried here.) A safe path

leads around the side of Piz Muragl and Las Sours down to Alp Languard. The base station of the SPM chair-lift is about 15 minutes walk from Pontresina RhB+. Walking time for the Schafberg route is 3^{1/2} hours and for the Segantinihutte route 2^{1/2} hours according to local guidebooks, but in practice one certainly needs to allow more, taking into account the last operation of the chair-lift, likely to be around 17.30, regardless of season.

THE RIGI

Rigi-First+ RB 1484m is the starting point of this walk and can be reached by the Rigi-Bahnen from Arth-Goldau SBB+. Take the uphill, rather stony path from the station to the Hotel Rigi-First and on a good path to Rigi-Kaltbad RB+ 1423m. A short detour via the Felsenweg should not be missed. This is sign-posted on the left and is literally a cliff-edge path, albeit well secured with railings. Continue past the Hostellerie Rigi and the partly concealed Felsenkapelle to Känzeli 1464m where a wide panorama opens up.



Rigi Staffel.

Photo: Lester Weeks

From here the path is fairly steep in a series of zigzags to Rigi-Staffelhöhe+RB 1552m and continues in less of an incline to Rigi-Staffel+RB 1603m where the two arms of the Rigi-Bahnen meet. Cross the tracks and follow the path, steadily rising, over mainly open country to the Kulmhütte+ 1676m. (Note: this is NOT the same place as Rigi-Kulm+RB.) There are outstanding views at almost every point on this walk. Descending now, a path

I wasn't sure about putting this picture in as it is a spectacular view photographed at a subtle time of day. I hope the printing does it justice. Mount Pilatus as seen from the Rigi. Photo: Lester Weeks

curtail the distance. An alternative, less taxing, entirely descending route, between Staffel and Klösterli via Des Alpes would reduce the walking time by about an hour. Rigi-Kaltbad can also be reached via the RB from Vitznau SGV or by the LWRK cableway from Weggis+SGV. In the latter case, the base station is 15 minutes walk from the lake at a considerably higher elevation. In addition to the SGV ships, Weggis has an SGV bus connection from Küsnacht am Rigi SBB.

snakes down to the Schochenhütte+ 1473m via Höreli. The way continues via Trib followed by a few zigzags to ultimately arrive at Rigi-Klösterli+ RB 1302m with its pilgrimage chapel of Maria zum Schnee and convent. Return to Arth-Goldau SBB+ via the RB.

Walking time is about four hours. Starting or ending at any one of the RB stations en route can, of course,

Note: + indicates food and drink available.
+ placed after the railway name, e.g., Arth-Goldau SBB+ indicates a station restaurant.

