

# The letters pages

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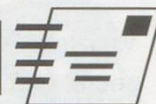
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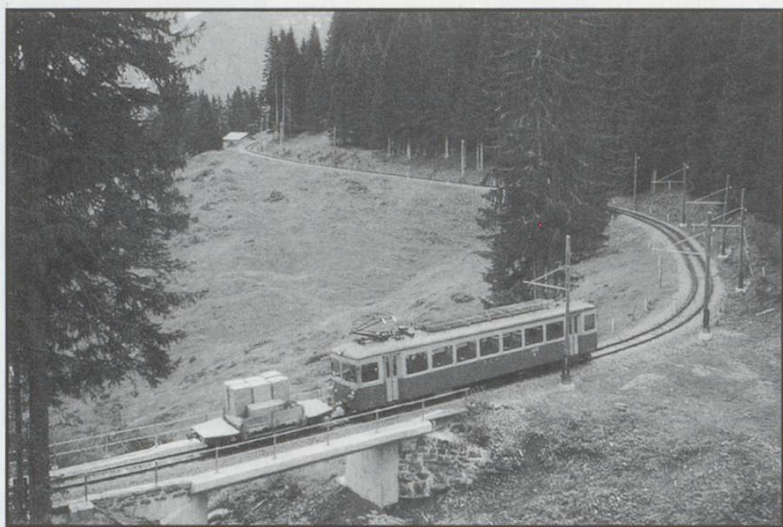


Letters are welcomed on any relevant subject. Please ensure that when you send an email letter you include your address.

### **From: Derek Askew - Church Stretton**

#### **On a Roll**

This is not a letter in the sense of a 'letter to the editor' but just a means to inform you of some possible news. I say 'possible' because firstly I have just visited Switzerland (Wengen) for the first time in three years and secondly I have only been a member of the SRS and receiving Swiss Express for about 18 months, therefore my news might be very old news. If this is the case then please accept my apologies.



1 ). The enclosed photograph shows a Grüttschalp-bound train of the BLH crossing the new bridge over the Staubbach; the previous bridge having been demolished by an avalanche in February 1999, closing the line for a couple of months I believe. The photo was taken on the 13th September 2001

2). The Wengernalpbahn seem to be replacing their Rigggenbach rack rail with what I assume to be the newer Von Roll type (it looks a bit like a single Abt rack rail but is about 2" wide). A few kilometres either side of Kleine Scheidegg has been completed plus another section for some

distance uphill from Wengen station. I imagine this type of rack is easier to clear of ice and compacted snow during the winter. Incidentally, I also noticed some of this rack rail starting to appear on the BOB.

**Note from the Editor - I had not heard about this and so contacted our Own Correspondent, George Hoekstra who kindly supplied the following extra information.**

For a few years now tests have been made on the WAB and the Jungfrau to see if there is a way to cut down on the huge maintenance costs associated with Rigggenbach racks. Digging the ice out of the enclosed rack is very labour intensive. The sections seen by Derek are some of the test tracks: Von Roll CK45 steel open rack rail, 30 to 60 mm wide according to the gradient. It is much easier to maintain: almost no need to remove ice or snow by hand. In due course it is intended to replace most of the old Rigggenbach. On the Jungfrau there is another test section near Eigergletscher where two open sections welded together (a bit like Strub) are being tested.

### **From: Steve Bratt – Crewe**

#### **Hairy Axles**

I am having problems with the Lima HO Re6/6 model with the final gears shearing off the axles after hairline cracks occur along the collar. The locos have the power to pull quite heavy trains but the collars don't appear to be able to stand the torque. So far I have 4 locos, which have done this so it seems to be a design fault, presumably this means other members may have suffered as well. Acquiring spares for Lima locos is not easy (and the recent changes to the company will probably make it worse). Even the Swiss dealers took sharp intakes of breath when I asked if they stocked spares, eventually one in Basel said they could get them and post them on but even they took eight months to get them from Lima - and now the fourth loco has got the problem. So, has anyone found an alternative solution? Does anyone know of suitable glue thin enough to repair the hairline cracks and yet bond the collar to the axle? Or, are any Roco wheelsets suitable as drop in replacements, those used in the Ae6/6 look right but the gears sound as though they aren't meshing correct-

ly. Or am I going to have to undertake complicated rebuilds to put in entire Roco gearboxes as well? If you can help please let me know at [steve.bratt@btinternet.com](mailto:steve.bratt@btinternet.com) or 34 Gresty Terrace, Crewe, CW1 5EW. If you've got the problem but not the answer get in touch anyway and I'll pass any suggestions on.

## **From: Paul Hannant – Bromyard**

### **The Val Morea**

Reference Alan Snowdon's request for assistance in the March SE, on the Val Morea Line.

Last summer whilst at an exhibition in Milano, a couple of us travelled from Val Morea to Lugano behind a "Tigerli" and 2 ex. wooden bodied bogie coaches built in 1924. At Mendrisio the loco was changed for a Ce4/4 preserved electric attached for the run on the Gotthard to Lugano. Members of the "San Gotthardo Club" who own and operate the line to Val Morea showed us around the preservation site at Mendrisio. At the Mendrisio end there are a number of private sidings, which serve various industries. I understand that the SBB are allowed to operate over this by agreement with the club. They mentioned while we were there about the possible link to Malpensa airport and were most upbeat about the revenue possibilities it would bring the club. They explained that the SBB would lay a double track on their track bed next to their line for a few miles before it took a new alignment towards Malpensa, where the triangular junction is already in place for future lines to the Gotthard.

The Club address is: Club del San Gotthardo, Casella postale 1250, CH 6850 Mendrisio

Incidentally if you have the MITV video on the Gotthard South ramp, they show a clip of the club and also "Raymond" the driver of the Re6/6 who also drives the Tigerli on the Val Morea branch. He told us he was having a summer holiday in England to travel on the preserved steam lines here !!!

## **From: Andreas Theiler - Switzerland**

### **The Mystery at Kaufdorf - this refers to a query in the December 2001 issue.**

By chance I read the question in the last issue of *Swiss Express* concerning the steam loco in Kaufdorf. As I live close by and as I have often wondered about its origin when I passed by train, I tried to solve the puzzle.

First I called the owner, Mr Franz-Walter Messerli. He was smiling, but he was of little help, as his father had bought the thing, and he is still waiting for some money to arrive from somewhere to help pay for the restoration. But he knew that it was called 'Tigerli' (meaning a young or small tiger), and that it was in use till the sixties as a shunting loco. He thinks that it was owned by the steel mill Von Roll in Balsthal / Klus; a similar one worked for the same company in Court in the Bernese Jura (line from Biel to Delémont); this last information I got today from the station master in Uetendorf, when I talked to him about the question.

I called the library of the SBB in Berne to find out which type was called Tigerli, but they were unable to give me that piece of information. So this morning I just took a short trip to Kaufdorf - I had the time between two appointments - and had a look at it. Back home I tried to find it in the brochure of the SBB about all steam engines that was first printed in 1976 and had a better version in 1997.

I guess that it must be a E 3/3 with the serial numbers from 8451 to 8533; they were made between 1902 and 1915 by SLM; an older version carries the numbers 8401 to 8425 and was made between 1896 and 1901, but those were all disposed of until the end of the Second World War. By contrast I found on this engine the year 1963 as the last revision year! And the second series was not taken out of service according to the brochure until 1966. So far this is all I have managed to discover.

*Note from Ed: the letter was sent to Mr Hitchin who sent it on to Swiss Express. This still leaves the question of a categorical identity. Any more ideas?*

## **From: Paul Russenberger – Mortlake, London**

### **Whose Is the Most Powerful?**

In the March *Swiss Express* Ted Scott cites the January issue of *Modern Railways* and asks whether the new Eurotunnel locomotives are more powerful than the Re6/6. The answer is "No, they are not!"

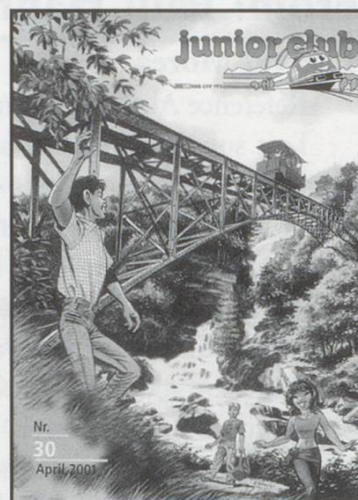
The February issue of *Modern Railways* published two letters pointing out the error. It is not the first time that these Eurotunnel locomotives have been advertised as the most powerful. When they were ordered

a similar statement was made in the same journal. The following month a letter appeared from a Society member correcting this and a photograph of an Re6/6 at Airolo by Colin Boocock accompanied it. At the same time Eurotunnel were advised of the error.

## From: Peter Pengelley –

### Oh to be young again!

I cannot recall having seen much reference in the Express to the SBB Junior club. Last July I spent an interesting hour or so with members of the Club at Meiringen station. The Club was holding a special week there with stalls selling all kinds of interesting goods suitable for young and old. Special excursions for young people were arranged in the week on the Brünig and to Innertkirchen and the Aare Gorge. I was made very welcome when I mentioned my Society membership. I am sending the Club magazine I was given which I thought might be of interest to you (the cover is reproduced here), another gift was a Club 2001 Calendar with wonderful colour pictures of various trains including fine pictures of the 'Blümlisalp' paddler and a Post auto on the Grimsel.



I was also given a book of Swiss Railway posters down through the years, and some postcards of various locomotives. Roco too were exhibiting and running a Swiss scenic layout. It's typically enterprising of the Swiss to encourage the younger generation to take interest in their railway system.

## From: Peter Chadwick - Saltburn by the Sea

### Edmondson Tickets

Following the article by Michael Farr in *Swiss Express* 6/8, readers may be interested to know that tickets of the Edmondson card type are still issued by the RhB for single journeys from Bergün to Preda to intrepid travellers who intend to make the return journey by toboggan.

The railway operates an hourly shuttle service between the two stations using specially adapted coaches with bench seats along each side, leaving plenty of room in the centre for sledges. The train returns to Bergün as empty stock.

### George M. Hoekstra

#### EXPO 02; MORE INFORMATION

In the March issue of *Swiss Express*, Anthony Lambert contributed a lot of information. Here are some more tips:

#### ACCOMMODATION

The two main types are the classic hotels and the new Teepees.

Prices in Hotels, per night and with continental breakfast, in a double room, range from 50 francs for a one star establishment to 100 francs for three star. Single rooms cost 25-30% more. Teepees are arranged in village style groups of eight to ten, with their own washing and toilet facilities. They come in two types: the larger type sleeps 12 in a dormitory for 40 francs (children up to 16: 20 francs a night, no breakfast is included but food is available; family teepees sleep up to 5 persons for a flat fee of 195 francs per night. They are located in Neufchâtel, Ipsach and Anet. Bookings can be made on the telephone: ++41(0)900020 202.

#### OPENING TIMES

The sites open at 09.30 am. The exhibitions close at 8 pm. The Arteplages, where all the shows are held, close at 2am every day in July and August, Friday and Saturday only in May, June, September and October. Other days, the Arteplages close at 12 am. There is a special evening ticket, valid after 6.30 pm for 10 francs. Most of the shows on the Arteplages are free, only some of the late afternoon and late night shows charge extra.

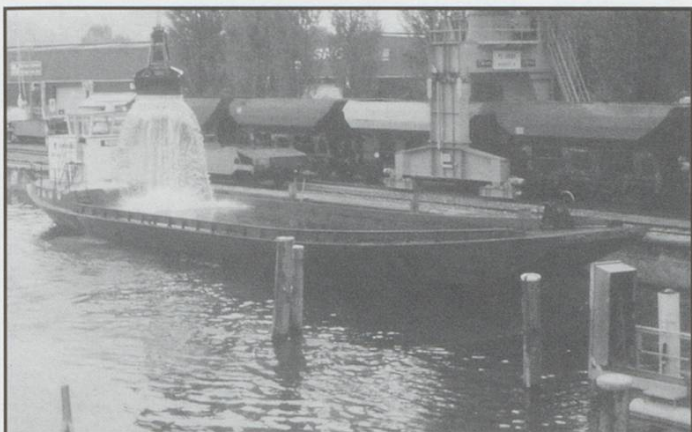
#### TRAVEL BY BOAT

Travel between the sites can also be made on the lakes. Tickets on the special "Iris" catamarans cost 20 francs and on the traditional boats 15 francs per trip. A day ticket, valid on both Iris and normal boats cost 30 francs. There are no reductions for holders of half fare or general passes on these special day tickets.

## From: Margaret Smith – Harrogate

### A couple of things

Here I am again with some comments and photographs arising from the March 2002 issue of *Swiss Express*.



The article by Ron Smith (no relation) revived memories of the visit my husband and I paid to the Luzern stone terminal in August 1999. At the conclusion of the unloading sequence, the deck of the barge was washed down by filling the crane grab bucket with water from the lake and releasing it over the deck (see photograph). This operation was repeated until the crew were satisfied. We watched the loaded wagons being taken to Luzern yard by a diesel shunter, Em 3/3 18822 (see photograph). The Christmas cards feature included one showing DS *Unterwalden* leaving Stansstad. We have

always been intrigued and entertained by the shrinking manoeuvres required to enable this vessel to pass under the bridge linking Hergiswil and Stansstad. The 3 photographs show different stages in that process. A video is really required to do it justice. As we discovered that year DS *Unterwalden* does venture further afield as we passed her going to Flüelen while we sailed to Luzern aboard DS *Uri*.



Three views of DS *Unterwalden* as she passes under the Alpnach bridge with her funnel and ventilators down. All the photos on this page are by Leslie Smith and are from August 1999

