

The Gotthard over 40 years ago : David Adams gives us a snapshot of operations in the 1960s

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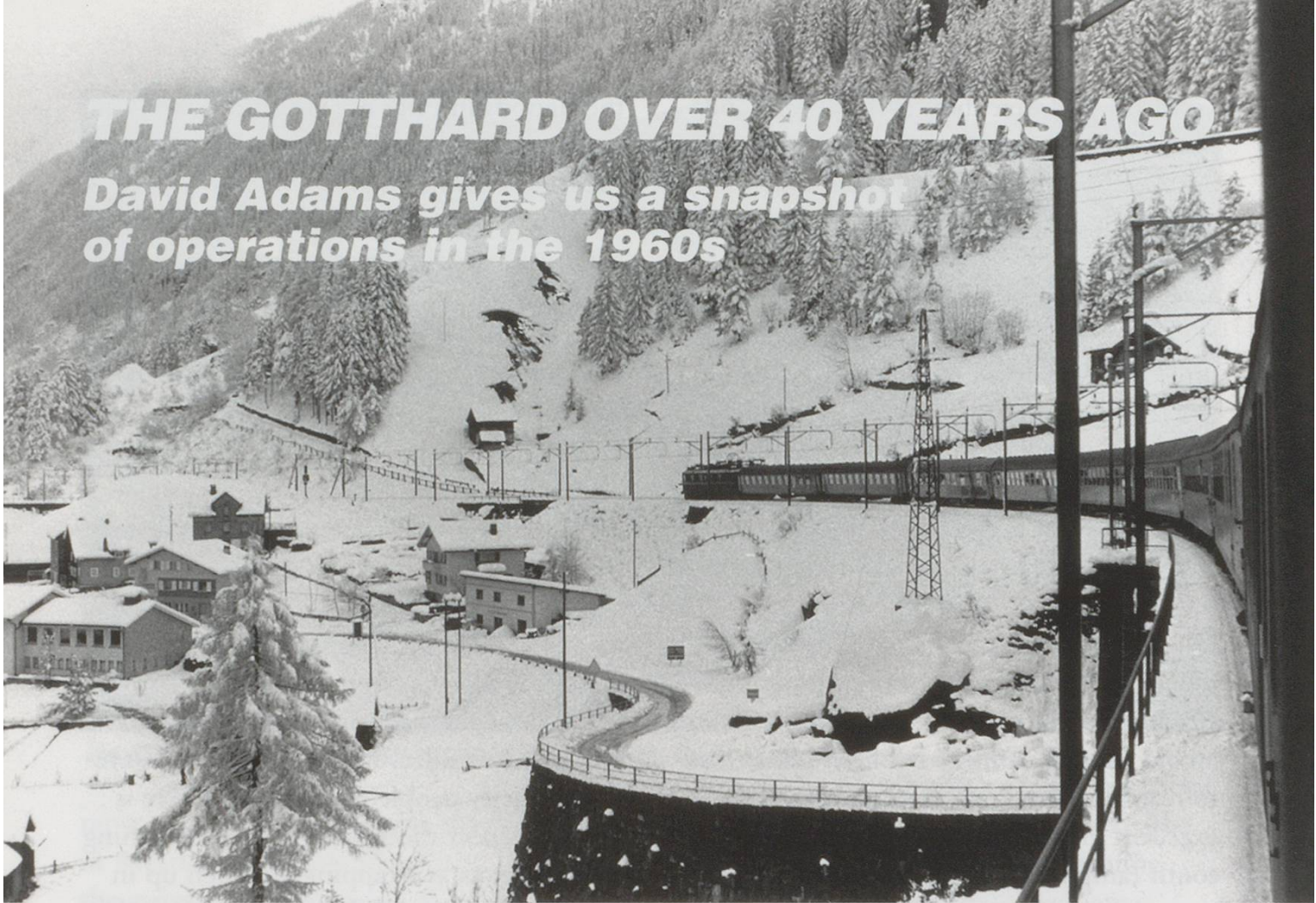
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THE GOTTHARD OVER 40 YEARS AGO

David Adams gives us a snapshot of operations in the 1960s



An Ae 6/6 has just crossed the Meienereusseviaduct with a Milano - Basel service and is approaching the short tunnel that leads to Wassen station.

PHOTOS: David Adams, taken circa 1964/5

Changes on the Gotthard have been plentiful since the middle sixties and the following are a few of the things that are now just distant memories from my early visits.

There was still a semaphore signal at Arth Goldau, and a level crossing just north

of Flüelen station. Access to passenger trains at Erstfeld was across the tracks and only local stopping services called there. Wassen had no Autobahn and heavy snow in May was not unusual. The stations that have since closed between Erstfeld and Bellinzona had an irregular stopping service and, like others, I used the train to access Wassen.

Ae 6/6s, several of which were still to be built, dominated the motive power scene on both passenger and freight services, although Ae 4/6s could be seen on a few of the

Flüelen, an Ae4/6 approaching with a southbound passenger train.



passenger workings and Re 4/4s in push-pull mode worked the stopping services. An Ae 4/7 was fairly regular on an afternoon train from the north which terminated at Flüelen. The long distance trains to and from Milano were also irregular in pattern and often loaded up to 16 vehicles. Thankfully, additional SBB/FFS coaches were added for internal Swiss journeys at Chiasso and Basel as the through international accommodation was generally packed with Italian migrant workers. TEE services worked by RABDe 12/12 multi voltage sets also made a few appearances daily. A well patronised car shuttle operated through the Gotthard tunnel, usually headed by either an Ae 3/5 or a Be 4/6. The latter, together with Be and Ce Crocodiles, were also used as helper locos on southbound freights from Erstfeld to Göschenen, often being placed about one third of the way back in the train. The three Ae 8/14 twin units were also regular on freights between Erstfeld and Bellinzona, but freight traffic in general was less intense than it is today. And of course the station bells still clanged out at every signal panel en-route.

TOP: At Flüelen, an Ae4/7 departs with a northbound local service.
MIDDLE: At Göschenen, Be4/6 12321 running round a car shuttle at the northern entrance to the Gotthard Tunnel.
BOTTOM: At Bellinzona, an RABDe 12/12 TEE unit approaching with a Zürich - Milano service. Ae8/14 11851 can be seen in the depot yard.

