

Autumnal Bever Valley : Don Gatehouse provides an illustrated guide

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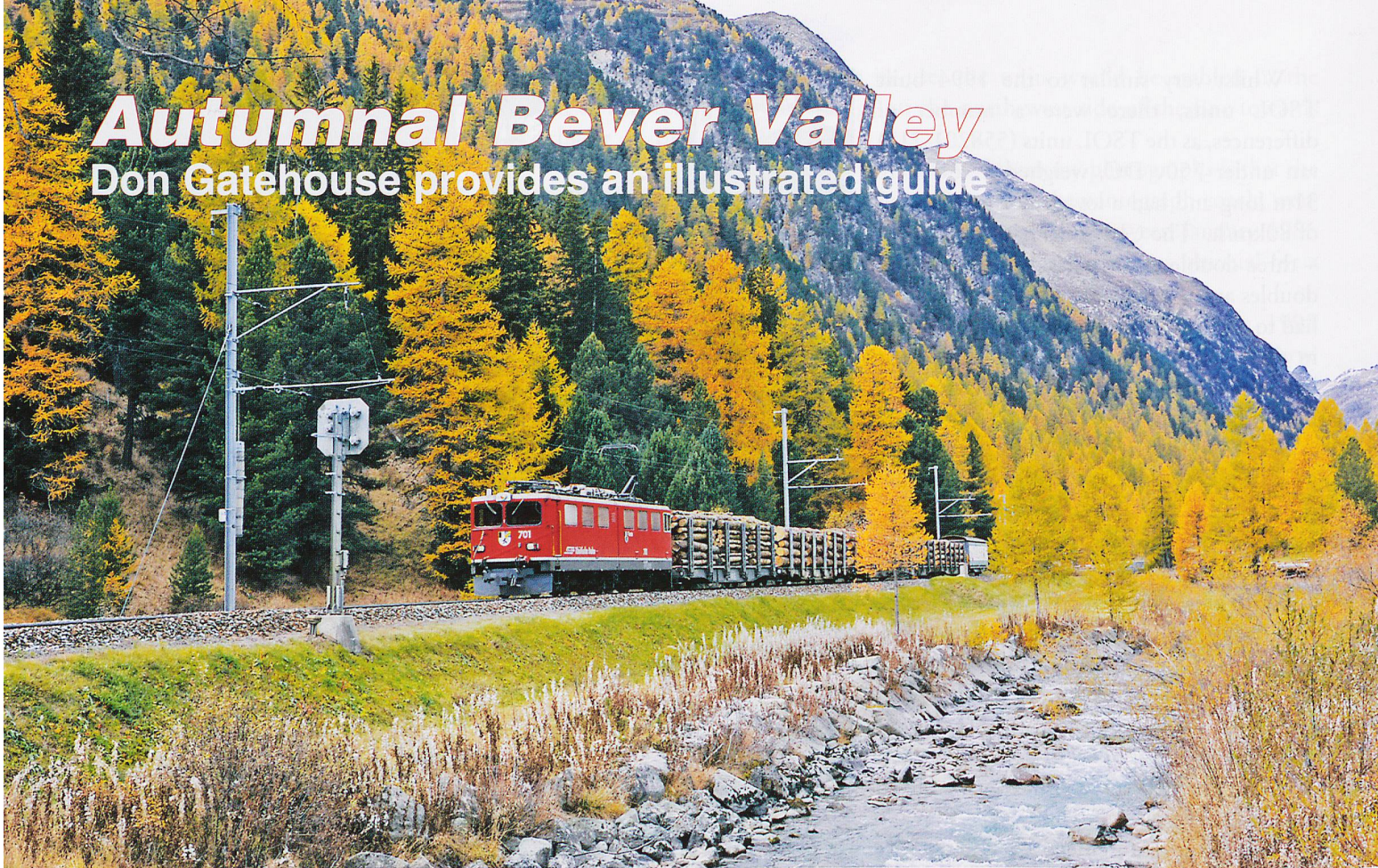
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Autumnal Bever Valley

Don Gatehouse provides an illustrated guide



The Beverin River and a Chur GB to Samedan freight.

All photos: Don Gatehouse

The village of Bever (1710m) in the Upper Engadin (Engadine) Valley is 4km south of the hamlet of Spinas (1815m), situated at the southern portal of the Albula Tunnel on the RhB railway line. Tourist literature advises us that the 'Fairytale Trail' leads from Bever to Spinas through the Bever Valley on the north side of the Beverin River. This fairytale tradition dates back to the 18thC and six stopping-off locations, where visitors can read from a storybook of these stories, can be visited on the Trail. The fairytales were written by local women, and the associated sculptures to be found at each location were created by Graubünden artists. My visits to the Bever Valley have had a somewhat different objective, especially in the last couple of years during the construction of the new Albula Tunnel, that will link the Upper Engadin and Albula Valleys. My walks in the Bever Valley have taken me along the opposite side to where the delights of the



'Fairytale Trail' can be enjoyed. Although I have visited Graubünden at various times of the year, the month of October has proved a very productive time for photo opportunities. For those not wishing to walk the round trip between Bever and Spinas there is the option of the 'Pferde-Kutsche' horse-drawn carriage service, a most leisurely way to survey the route.


For my visits to the area, I have always based myself at the splendid Hotel Grischuna at Filisur where, after an ample buffet breakfast, and my flask filled with boiled water for my morning coffee, it has been so easy to stroll across to Platform 2 and join the 08:02 Inter Regio service heading to St. Moritz. This particular Albula line service provides a request stop at Spinas, where the rising sun first illuminates the Bever Valley. As the train drops down the gentle grade to Bever - where a stop is also made - you return to

ABOVE: RhB 649 heading to St Moritz.
LEFT: A Landquart to Pontresina freight near Spinas.



the shadows, with Bever village not seeing the sunlight of a new day for another hour or so.

RhB Timetable 940 will provide details of the passenger services. However, a more complete picture of train movements that includes freight services can be found in the Graphic Timetable RhB5; both of which are available via the SBB fahrplanfelder.ch website. Added to these sources of information members of the RhB Club will have the bonus of access to the daily RhB 'Lokdienste' for the complete picture of what should be running on a particular service, and any additional workings that may appear. If you do plan to visit the Bever Valley, it is advisable to check which train services will make a request stop at Spinas, otherwise you will need to factor-in the Engadin Valley train (or bus) services with their stops at Bever that, if required, will take you to Samedan to connect with a returning Albula line service.

During my October trips I have normally visited the Bever Valley between 08:30 and 14:30 as the shadows soon take a hold in some central areas of the valley as the afternoon progresses. I have experienced an amazing range of weather conditions during early/mid October that has included morning mist, rain showers and even a blanket of overnight snow! That said, when the sun is up and the Bever Valley landscape is blessed with those colours of autumn it is a joy just to be there. There's even a bench or two where you can sit, take in the view and enjoy that morning coffee from the flask, between trains! 



4. The 'Team' lok approaching Bever.
5. The leisurely Bever-Spinas Pferde-Kutsche.
6. Overnight snow in mid-October, what luck!

1. RhB 605 and 610 with a ballast train from Preda to Samedan.
2. Autumnal 'Glacier Express' 651 heading for Chur.
3. The late morning Pontresina-Landquart freight leaving Bever.

