

# A Swiss re-discovers an almost forgotten pearl

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## A SWISS RE-DISCOVERS AN ALMOST FORGOTTEN PEARL.

Like every good cosmopolitan who loves his native country best, I passed my fortnight's holidays in my native land. This time my steps led me to a little known place, at least outside Switzerland, namely Brienz, situated at the head of one of the two small lakes of the Bernese Oberland, the Lake of Brienz.

It is an old and, as yet, unspoilt village, of some 2,800 inhabitants, one long main street, bordered each side by the traditional Bernese chalets. Going along this street the delightful music of the song "There's an old fashion house, in an old fashion street, in a quaint little old fashion town", came involuntarily to my mind and it was almost impossible for me to stop humming it.

Having decided to make Brienz the centre for my stay in Switzerland, there now came the question of how to make the best of my holiday, to see as much as possible and to the best financial advantage. The problem was not an easy one and on the advice of the Hotel proprietor I went to see the Station Master of the S.B.B. He is one of these charming people who are only happy when they can help others, in this case passengers and travellers, who all come to ask for his advice which in my circumstances was very valuable and financially sound indeed. I wish to thank him here for his great help and consideration.

As my intention was to explore thoroughly the Bernese Oberland he suggested that a 200 km. holiday ticket would best suit my purpose. The price is Frs. 25.— for a fortnight's validity. It would enable me to go to the Rothorn, the Schynige Platte, Lauterbrunnen and the Trümmelbach Falls, the Gorge of the Aare at Meiringen, and if used up before expiration of its validity, to a 50% reduction on the usual fares on most of the railways of the Oberland. This is a great money saver and at the same time affords an opportunity of seeing a great deal and of visiting many of the beauty spots of Switzerland.

My first trip was to the Brienz Rothorn. Having been to the Jungfrau Joch with its highest Hotel in Europe on two previous occasions, I did not promise myself any particular thrill from this journey. I therefore quite unconcernedly and with little enthusiasm took my seat, amongst various foreign speaking people, in the steam-driven little cog-wheeled railway, expecting soon to be dozing off in spite of all the noisy conversation going on around me.

Hardly had we travelled a few 100 feet up, than the panorama of the lake with the villages dotted on its shores presented such an attraction that it kept my attention fully occupied. Firstly the lake was on my right, then hardly noticing how it happened, it was on my left, then soon again on my right, so that I began to wonder whether I really had indulged in a short nap without having been aware of it. Soon we reached the first and only stop of the ascent Plan Alp, where the few inhabited chalets testify to the frugal and hard life the mountain farmer and his family are forced to live, yet seemingly quite happy and contented.

Leaving the station behind us, I now saw how the railway follows the contours of the mountain side,

sometimes climbing steeply, sometimes almost on a level, but always skywards. A few more minutes and we have reached the leaf-tree border and the vegetation became less luxurious. Pine trees of all kinds took the place of leaf-trees, by and by to give way to mere rock and grass. Although not as long as lower down, the grass is of a more nutritious quality and the fine grazing cattle on these slopes are living proof of its excellency. The view now, as it presents the traveller the whole panorama of the Bernese Alps, is a majestic one, filling him with his own sense of insignificance in sight of such immense grandeur of nature as lies before him.

Eventually the saddle of the Rothorn is reached where the bodily wants of the inner man can be attended to at a well-kept hotel, where the reasonableness of the prices will astound many a visitor.

A somewhat sharp climb brought me to the 7,700 feet high summit, from where I had a view which is still fresh in my mind's eye, long after I have returned to London and my daily occupation. The cloudless blue sky, the clear air and the wonderful view have left me with an unforgettable impression of the greatness of the creator of such wonders as was then presented to my eyes. Now when recalling that trip to the Rothorn, and comparing it with any ascent I have ever made by rail there is none which equals it in change of scenery during the ascent and beauty of panorama from the top.

Brienz as a centre for excursions like the Grimsel Pass, the Furka with the Rhône Glacier and the last word in Alpine road construction, the Susten Pass, is unbeatable. The Hotel accommodation in the village is suited to all purses and the position by the lake really makes Brienz a beautiful pearl in the diadem of the Bernese Oberland.

My stay in Brienz will be as unforgettable to me as the view I had from the Rothorn and anyone wishing to have a really beneficial and restful holiday in beautiful Switzerland could hardly do better than to select Brienz.

*Basilicus.*

### CITY SWISS CLUB

Will Members kindly note that the next

#### MONTHLY MEETING

will take place on **Tuesday, September 4th, 1951, 6.30 p.m. for 7 p.m., at Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, W.1.**

The dinner will be followed by a game of Jass, Bridge or Canasta.

Members wishing to attend should send their cards to The Manager, Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, W.1, to reach him not later than Monday, September 3rd. 1951.

CH. GYSIN,

Hon. Secretary.