

Berg and Bahn : a Swiss miscellany. Part 2

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BERG AND BAHN. A SWISS MISCELLANY. Part 2.

By J. Jesson.

We transferred our base to Altdorf, at the foot of the Gotthard, on Monday. Rather than travel all the way by train, we went to Meiringen and caught the PTT postbus over the Susten Pass to Göschenen (Bus service 470.75). On the way Spiez provided coffee and the sight of Ce4/4 No. 313 running light engine to the depot. Also seen was the unusual sight of a passenger train from Interlaken double headed by an S.B.B. Re6/6 and a B.L.S. Re4/4.



Ae8/14 No.11801 running light engine near Altdorf.

Photo: J. Jesson.

The Brünig provided us with a train five minutes after starting time, and then spent fifteen minutes trying to make the brakes work properly. On the outskirts of Meiringen is an army depot, with several tracks disappearing into the mountain. Food for thought, modelling-wise.

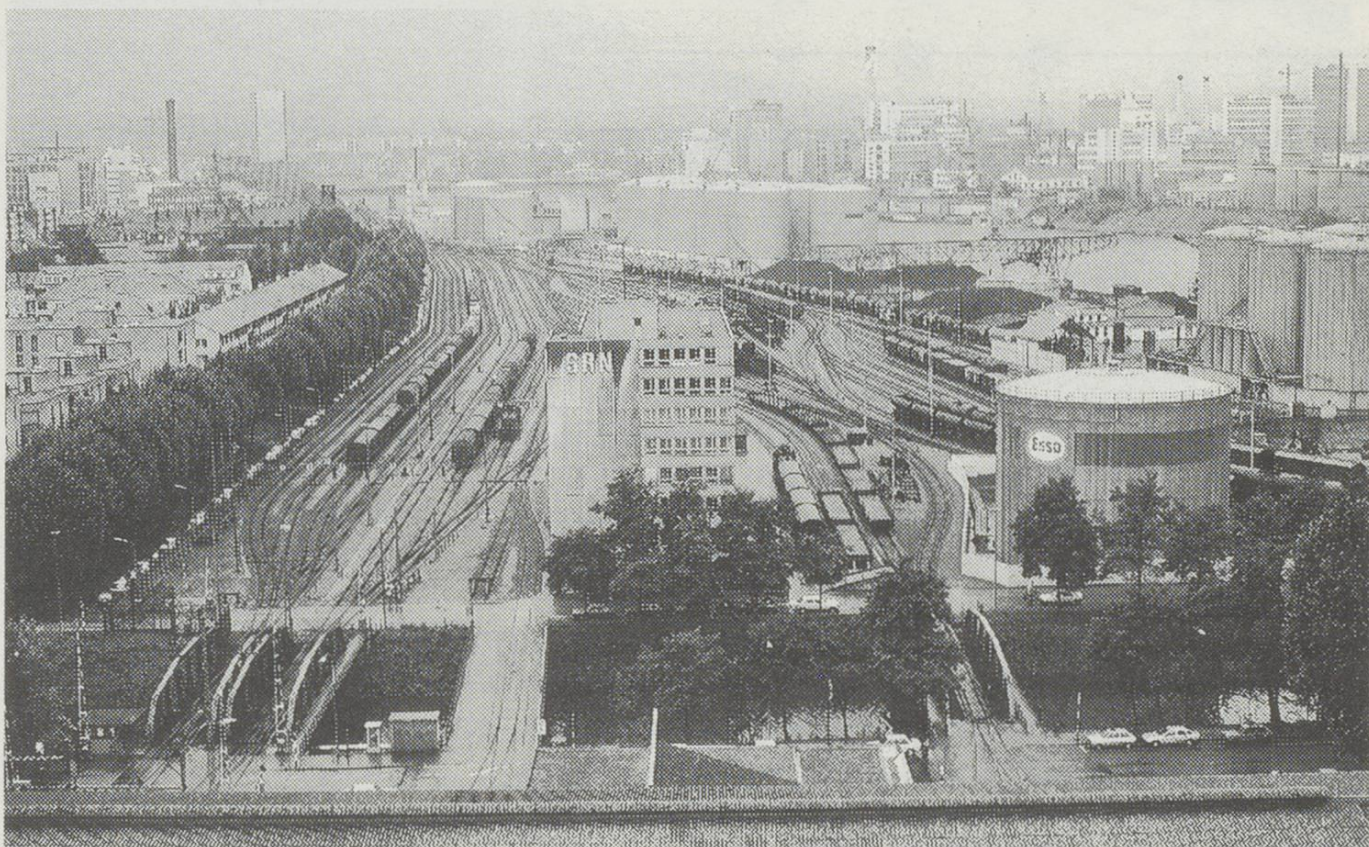
Eating lunch, photographing the preserved Brünig tank locomotive on the station and watching the Sherlock Holmes lot - we'd caught up with them again - occupied the time until the postbus was due to depart. Only about ten people made the journey, which I would describe as one of the holiday highlights. It really is an incredible run, made better by a most friendly driver resplendent with an R.A.F. moustache. For those who have done it, no more need be said, while for those who have not, I will not spoil it. It is heartily recommended.

The weather, good so far, now took a turn for the worse. In fact, it didn't stop raining at Altdorf for three days. That most effectively put paid to walking in the mountains, but we took the opportunity instead to have days in Luzern, Zürich and Basel. Most of the day in

Luzern was, predictably spent in the Verkehrshaus. A number of full size exhibits were missing while preparations were in hand for the arrival of the American 4-4-0 'Reno'. As usual the day passed quickly - there being just not enough hours in the day to do credit to the museum.

Our day in Zürich was mainly spent shopping. Instead of travelling from Altdorf direct, we went via the S.O.B. to Rapperswil and then into Zürich on a "Chiquita" viole(n)t and yellow unit. Toward the end of the day we killed some time with a quick trip to Winterthur, thence to Bulach behind an Ae4/7, and back to Zürich. On all our journeys into and out of Zürich we kept our eyes open for any sign of the first new S-Bahn locomotive, 10500 (or should I say 450.000-5?), but without luck.

At Basel we wanted to see how close we could get to the Rhineport. Usually, dock areas are somewhat sensitive and visitors, especially with cameras, are not welcome. Basel is different. A number 14 tram goes to the docks, and the terminus is only a couple of minutes walk from the dock area. Access is by public road down each side of a small river. Five railway tracks cross both roads on the level, and the river on low level bridges. Although some of the tracks are protected by half-barriers, others are not, and a shunter prevents road traffic from crossing when a train is shunting.



View from the Tower overlooking the Basel Dock area.

Photo: J. Jesson.

The road peters out by the entrance to the container terminal, but a footpath continues along the bank of the Rhine to the end of the dock area by the coal facilities. This path too is public - Rhine ferries to France work from landing stages along it, and '3-countries corner' is at the far end. Between some of the tracks we had crossed, a wide access road runs under an overall roof into a yard area. We did not think that it was politic to venture along here, but a sign I translated as 'Viewing Tower' beckoned. A flight of metal stairs led to a bridge, and an arrow, which directed us to a small flat lift and an attendant. For the sum of SwF1:00 we were transported to the viewing terrace, which

affords a magnificent view over, not only the docks, but the city of Basel, across the Rhine into France and northwards to Germany and the Black Forest. There is even a FREE telescope installed. Shunting in the docks was being done while we were there, by an SBB Bm4/4 and one of the dock company's own shunters. Much of it being carried out at high speed - the Swiss obviously have complete confidence in both trackwork and rolling stock.

The No. 14 tram took us back from the docks, right through Basel to Pratteln. This is quite a good place to watch the trains go by as, apart from the passenger services in and out of Basel, there are the freight services using the nearby MuttENZ yard. Our short journey back into Basel was on an 'NPZ', which are a definite improvement over the 'Chiquita' sets in comfort, as well as external colour scheme.

Earlier in the day we had spotted a novel advertising scheme on one of the BVB trams. The powered car was decked out as an SBB locomotive, red with white SBB-CFF-FFS initials, while the trailer vehicle was in the SBB coach livery of green/white. We saw it again at the main station, this time in a photographable position and took advantage of the fact.

After a meal, we travelled back on IC695 Basel-Arth Goldau. Comprising only four vehicles (D^{II}, A^{IV}, B^{IV} and B^{IV}) this train, after leaving Luzern, ran not via Meggen and Küssnacht, but via Rotkreuz.

HOTEL TERMINUS-STEINER

It is with great regret that we have to inform members, that this hotel will be closing down at the end of this year. The building is leased, by the Müller family, but this has now been terminated to enable the owner to convert the building into accommodation for his staff.

May we take this opportunity to thank all those members who have, in the past, spent their holidays with us. We hope that when we become established in the future, we will once again be able to welcome you and greet new visitors.

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