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DB 2-6-2T 64 518 at Ramsei on Sunday 13 June 1993.

Steam Sunday

by Cyril Freezer

Photographs by the author

After a quick perusal of VTB News, Nick observed that there was steam on the EBT on our first Sunday. As we were then based in Bern, it seemed a good idea, so we headed for Langnau where the EBT train was waiting. A short run took us to Ramsei, where we found Ex DB 2-6-2T No 64 518 at the head of three coaches, surrounded by a small group of interested viewers.

We were in good time for the 10:45 departure, long enough to inspect the waiting Wasen service, which as members may recall, was supposed to become a bus with the change of timetable. All I can say is that a De4/4 and Bt is the oddest bus I've ever seen.

Information on the steam service seemed meagre, so selecting a knowledgeable looking individual, Doris enquired in her best German and discovered that for a single trip to Huttwil there was a SFr 5 supplement, which would be collected on the train, a joint venture of the EBT and Eurovapeur.

The train has headed by two green balcony ended EBT coaches, a B and a BD, the latter looking a little the worse for wear with some rusting at the bottom of the side panels. The last coach was quite different, a bar car, nicely restored externally and discretely branded Eurovapeur. As the majority of the intending passengers seemed quite happy to admire the locomotive, Doris, Tony Friend and I boarded this coach, selected a table and left Nick to wander round with his camera. Actually, we needn't have bothered for although more passengers joined the train shortly before departure time, it was far from crowded.

Shortly after departure we were sold our ticket and shortly after that we got our drinks. The only thing wrong with travelling on a steam special is that you only get the noise and, if you open a window the smuts as well, but we'd had ample opportunity to take photos at the start, and were to get more at the end.

Meantime, there was the scenery to look



Beautifully restored Eurovapor *Emmentalerstube* at Ramsei.

at, the beer to savour and a chance meeting with another SRS member to enjoy. Graham Ta??? (steam specials are also jerky and my note is all but illegible) was a comparatively new member, but a very experienced Swiss traveller.

At Huttwil we had some time to wait for our train to Wolhusen, which gave Nick a chance to record the coaling of 64 518 and the fine array of vintage EBT and SMB BoBos standing idle in the yard, five at one end in a bunch and one lonely one consorting with more modern stock at the other. Our train arrived, we settled down for the run to the main line, where we made our connection to Luzern.

We made a very short stay, straight out, across the bus station to the Bahnhofquai where, to our delight, the *DS Schiller* was waiting to take the 13:15 service to Flüelen.

As we left some fifteen minutes later, we were intrigued to see the *Europa* tied up in the dockyard with most of the superstructure covered in tarpaulins. Does anyone know what happened? It looked, at some distance, as if

the former *Unterwalden* has been in trouble again.

The weather was indifferent, but as the *Schiller* has the finest saloon on all the Swiss lake steamers, we were perfectly happy to spend the majority of the trip in the ambience of its art nouveau panelling, enjoying a substantial lunch and watching the ever changing aspects of the Vierwaldstättersee unfold as we made our leisurely way south.

At least, half the party were content, after lunch Nick spent much of the time on the upper deck, I had to inspect the engines and then do a little viewing from above. My main regret is that due to the general overcast and the fact I was certain I'd photographed most of the lake in bright sunlight, I left my cameras zipped in my shoulder bag as we steamed close in to the Schillerstein and so lost my best opportunity so far to record the inscription.

One of the most useful features of the Swiss Pass is that you don't have to commit yourself to a fixed itinerary. We had a choice, we could get out at Brunnen and wait for the



EBT De4/4 266 and Bt, the Wasen shuttle train at Ramsei, 13 June 1993. On the far left, DB 64 518 is gently simmering at the head of the steam special.

return paddler or, if we thought fit, stroll through the town to the station; alternatively we could continue to Flüelen and take the train. We chose the latter, arriving just as it finally decided it was going to rain steadily. Bang went my latest opportunity to record that metallic sculpture commemorating the Rütli salute. The gesture has differing meanings in different countries, none of them complimentary.

As it was, we made a quick dash to the station where the train was waiting. There was no real rush, it was the Sunday afternoon extra Gotthard line Schnellzug which just happened to start from Flüelen, we settled down in the first class

coach for the run to Zürich where we changed to the direct Bern train and headed back to base. All in all it was a very enjoyable day, for the most part the rain kept off when it mattered, we covered a decent slice of Central Switzerland and had two enjoyable steam powered trips into the bargain.

