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Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Having just returned from our holiday in Switzerland I thought I would put pen to paper and record a few items I hope will be of interest to readers. The new overbridge at Spiez Station must have been designed with railway photographers in mind. It spans the full width of the station at the Interlaken end, is fitted with clear glass panels up to waist level, and above that the girder work is widely spaced and gives virtually unrestricted views of the Station area, and the trackwork at the Interlaken end. In addition the stairs up to the bridge from the various platforms provide three 'viewing' platforms on the landings, two towards Interlaken, and one back over the Station area, giving you a choice of viewing, or if you wish, photographing heights. If that wasn't enough, the angle iron 'handrails' are about 2" in width which make a steady rest for the camcorder for those long freights, and there were several of those, one with two SBB 460s at the head of 38 German bogie wagons and a BLS 465 as a banker. Travelling slowly they take some time to

clear the station, and you can end up with arm ache or camera shake! From this spot you can see a remarkable contrast between the new raised platforms 2 & 3 and almost full length platform roof of nice new extruded aluminium, and the rusty old corrugated iron of other platform roofs. Truly a wonderful vantage point, and congratulations too the railway authorities for a really helpful (for railfans) piece of architecture. Not so helpful was the distinct lack of platform seats, especially on Platform 1, unless you resorted to the banks of yellow plastic 'potties' in the booking hall, but you can't see much from there! There were just one or two on the island platforms, which were usually full of weary travellers, but to be fair, one or two more did appear over the next week, so perhaps the matter was in hand.

I stayed at Kandersteg and had a day out with George Hoekstra, our resident Society member. We made our way to Lake Geneva intending to visit a live steam model track and Swopmeet at Bouveret, but the weather was so foul and the fog



over the lake so thick that we gave it up as a bad job and contented ourselves with a trip back on the Crystal Panoramic Express. During our journey along the Rhone Valley I remarked to George that I was hoping to catch sight of the new Cisalpino (Pendolino) currently on trials along that line. I had hardly got the words out of my mouth when there was a loud WHOOSH and a streak of white past the window, George remarked, "That was it"!! I was lucky to get shots of it later in the week at Visp, together with 460-023 "RELAX", and 460-022 "TOURING CLUB SCHWEIZ", two new promotional liveried locos. Also seen were BLS 465-001, liveried to mark the 125th Anniversary of S.L.M., and 460-020 "TILSITER" at Thun. We treated ourselves to a lunch trip on the new BLS motorship MS Berner Oberland and very sumptuous she was too, if a little 'rocky', when waiting at a landing stage, due no doubt to her flatter hull form, compared to the other boats. I made use of the Model Shop List supplied by Messrs. Micklethwaite and Howsam, with the last issue of Swiss Express, and can gladly confirm that Stechler Modellbahn Centre, in Bern, is alive and well with a shop full of

goodies awaiting your hard earned francs. I must confess to relieving him of one or two of the latest Roco Swiss wagons which have not yet appeared over here.

Also seen at St. Nicklaus, on the B.V.Z., was what must be the smallest Loctrac, I think that's the term, in existence. A tiny tractor, similar to that which you large land owners use to mow your lawn, fitted with additional rail wheels fore and aft.

Apart from being kept awake all the first night by cowbells as they took advantage of the hitherto good weather to take the cows up to the summer pastures a couple of weeks early, I think it was 11.50 p.m; 12.10 a.m; 3.55 a.m; 5.30 a.m; and 6.20 a.m. (I can only liken it to sticking your head in a cathedral belfry while the bellringers indulge in some lengthy practice), and some indifferent weather, a good time was had by all. But if my wife ever says to me again in the middle of the night, "Quick it's the cows, grab the camera", I am quite likely to do or say something drastic!!! I enclose photos of BLS 465-001 and the little Loctrac at St. Niklaus. Keep up the good work.
Graham Watson.