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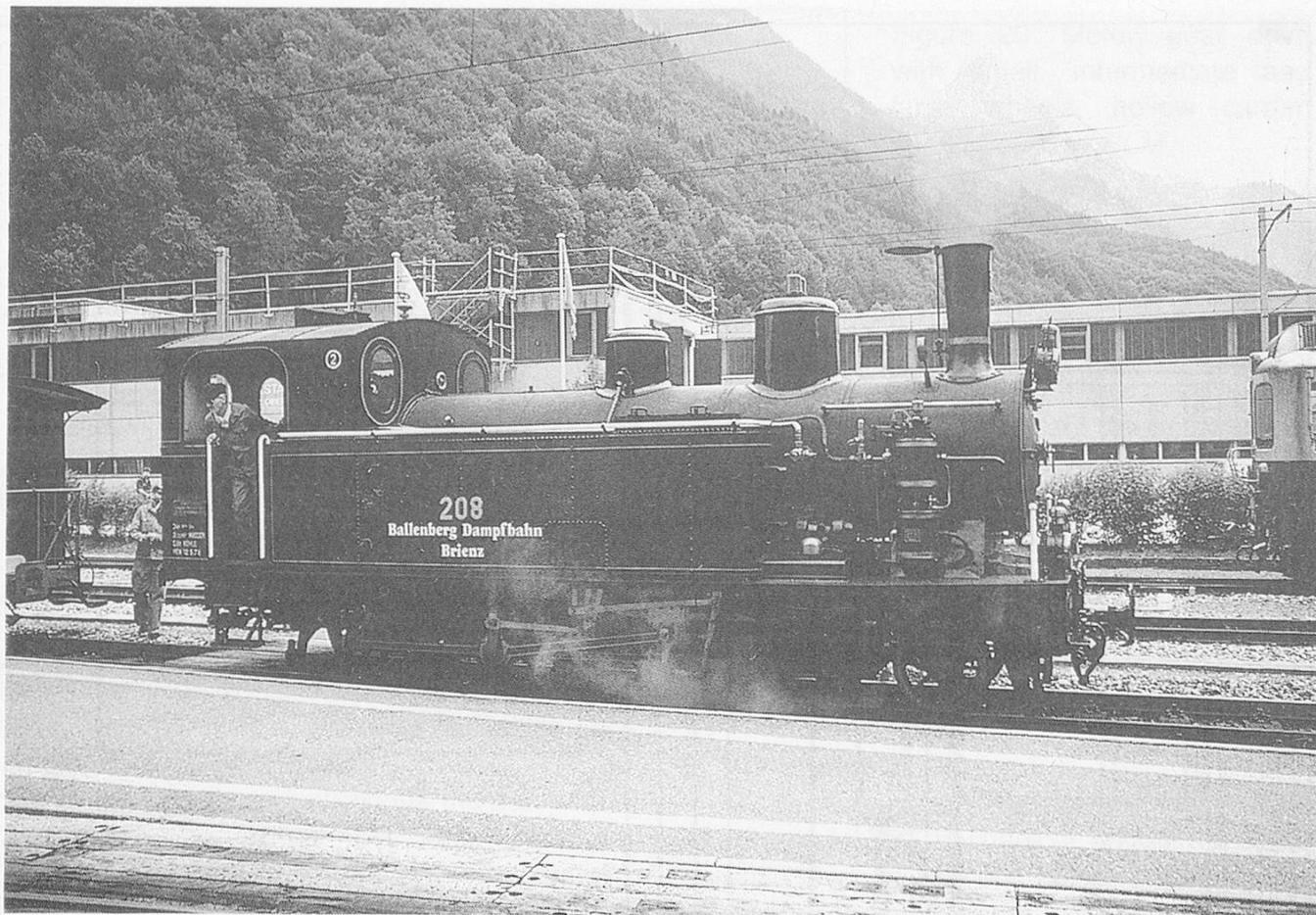
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A Different Perspective

by Ron Dawes

Photographs by Allan Dawes

Whilst on holiday last year with my brother Allan and fellow SRS member Steve Horobin, we decided we would try to travel on rail and tram routes in an out-of-the-ordinary manner so that we could see them from a different point of view.

Our first such journey arose from the notice in the June edition of *Eisenbahn Amateur* of a celebration by the Bern tramways of 20 years under the present administrative set-up. This was to take place over the weekend of 19/20 June at their depot at Burgenzien. We arrived there by tram and were surprised to find how low key were the celebrations. Just one end of the depot was in use for a display of various old buses and trams, together with a modest sales stand. However the jewel in the crown was the opportunity to take a free ride in a 1929 bus around the city and a ride for only SFr.5 each in a 1940s tram trailer from the depot along Route 5 through the city centre to

This page: Ex Brünig HG3/4 No.1067 is overtaken by a service train at Zweilutschinen, 25 June 1993
Facing Page: At Schwilndi bei Grindelwald, 25 June 1993

its terminus on the far side of the city and then return. This ride showed us the way the Bernese used to travel up to the early 1960s, but unlike the UK, where fans would have lined the routes to record the occasion, there were none around except outside the depot. (*This may have been due to the low-key nature of the affair. We were in Bern the week before and saw no posters advertising the event. Ed*)

We then set out to look at the Gotthard route from a different perspective, initially by travelling in the new first class Panoramic coaches on the *Euro-City Ticino*, returning on the former TEE unit forming the *Euro-City Gottardo*. The panoramic cars, with their large curved windows, increase the scope of your vision and gave a superb view of the towering cliffs as the train winds its way up the North Ramp and then down the South Ramp into Ticino. You soon realise the problems faced and overcome by the line's builders. The old



TEE stock is a complete contrast; it is beginning to show its age and could well do with refurbishment, but it has the undeniable advantage of two movable seats in a compartment behind the driver's cab in the unit's ends. These give an unsurpassed view of the track, the rear seats providing a good opportunity to watch the track rolling away beneath you and giving views of the tunnel portals unobtainable in any other way.

As Steve had noticed that a DB ICE unit was running over the main SBB Zürich to Basel route, we managed to make reservations on this service only 45 minutes before departure on our day of travel. When we boarded our first class coach we were pleasantly surprised by the sheer luxury on offer. The seats are well upholstered and laid out with large luggage space together with a cloakroom area. It certainly is an up-market mode of travel and is highly recommended by all of us.

Another different way to travel is, of course, by steam and Steve had obtained leaflets advertising travel over two sections of line from addresses given in the Kursbuch. The first section of steam haulage we experienced was from Interlaken Ost to Grindelwald, for which a

single fare of SFr.25 was charged. We were unable to get across to Interlaken in time for the locomotive's return trip of the day from Interlaken to Brienz, so we arrived at Ost to find the locomotive gently simmering at a BOB platform with a baggage van, in use as a bar car and two early 20th century coaches. On first inspection we noticed that the locomotive was not equipped for rack working and we wondered how it would fare on the rack section towards Grindelwald but at Zweilutschinen our apprehension was eased. The engine came off the train and ran into the BOB shed; moment's later the bells at the level crossing at the Lauterbrunnen end of the station rang and another steam locomotive appeared at the head of three coaches of modern vintage. Once this engine had stopped, we saw that it was rack equipped and would haul our train forward to Grindelwald. This locomotive also retired to shed to allow the service trains from Grindelwald and Lauterbrunnen to arrive and couple up for their journey forward to Interlaken. Once this train had left, our steam locomotive reversed out of the shed, coupled up and then we headed up the valley under full steam. More was to come, we stopped at



Schwendi to take on water whilst being passed by service trains in both directions. This gave everyone the opportunity to photograph our ancient stock and the modern BOB railcars passing against the magnificent mountain scenery.

The next day we travelled to Liestal for steam haulage on the Waldenburger Bahn, for which we paid a fare of SFr.7 on our half-price cards. Whilst this journey was not as arduous as the previous day's, the locomotive still had to work hard and produced a lot of clag, which must have caused consternation among the residents along the roadside sections of our journey.

Our final attempt to obtain a different perspective was on our last day, when we took the *Golden Pass Express* from Luzern to Interlaken Ost over the Brünig Pass. We had previously noticed that an observation first class coach is included in this rake and we were lucky enough to find three vacant seats in this. This coach is split into two halves by the central entrance, each section has ten revolving armchairs, five along each side, facing the

WB No.5 *G.Thommen* at Waldenburg, 27 June wide, deep windows. This enables the traveller to swivel round to enjoy the views on either side without the need to dash from side to side - if space permits.

In addition to the above, Allan and I decided to travel over the Chur-Arosa line before the street-running part is eliminated. Although the day began fine, we arrived at Chur to find drizzle, low cloud and the Editor and his party who were coming to the end of their visit in Chur. Despite the unpromising weather, we all decided to press on and got the last first class seats in a crowded train. To our surprise, the inclement weather actually added something extra to the journey, for as we worked our way up the valley we discovered the clouds drifting along the other side of the gorge, in due course, some were below us. This proved our theory that it can be just as rewarding to travel on mountain lines, even when the weather is inclement.

I trust that all this has given you ideas on how to get that little bit more from trips over your favourite lines.