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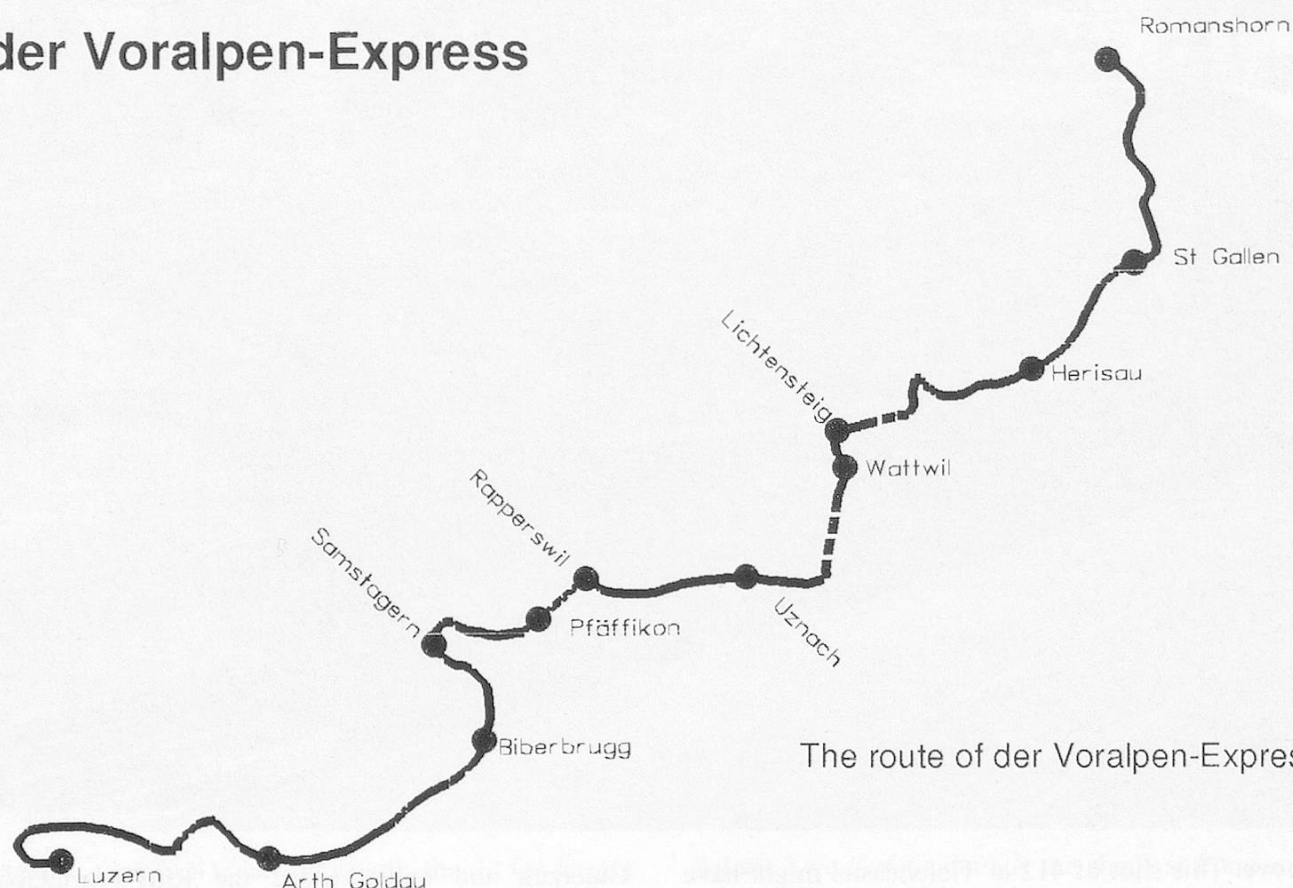
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der Voralpen-Express



The route of der Voralpen-Express

In the last few years, the long standing service between Luzern and Romanshorn has undergone a welcome upgrading. Jointly operated by the SBB, Südostbahn (SOB) and Bodensee-Toggenberg (BT), the trains now operate under the overall title *Voralpen-Express*. Although the practice of naming a service rather than a specific train has its counterpart in the *Glacier* and *Bernina Expresses*, the underlying motive is radically opposed. The proliferation of named metre gauge trains has arisen because of demand, particularly from tour operators. The *Voralpen-Express* title provides an identity to a useful service and making its promotion as a tourist attraction a more straightforward matter than it would be were the commercial department forced to extol the virtues of the Luzern - St.Gallen - Romanshorn trains.

The standard make up of the *Voralpen-Express* consists of one first and three second class EW IV saloons together with a bistro car. It is loco hauled, of which more anon. The service requires three sets of coaches, which would make it logical for each of the participants to provide one set apiece. That is not the Swiss way, to emphasise the fact that their

railways co-operate rather than compete, the make up of each rake is more than likely to include vehicles from all three organisations. One feels that it might be a good idea for some of our legislators to spend a little while studying the Swiss system to see how public transport ought to be run.

However, the locomotives used are even more interesting. The SOB is the most conventional to date, simply because they only have Re4/4^{III}s for the job conventionally painted in standard red livery. Their unique feature is that they are from the "mountain" Re4/4^{III} series. The Bodensee Toggenburg makes good use of its modern thyristor controlled Re4/4s which until recently appeared in the line's elegant dark green and cream livery. However this year No.93 suddenly appeared in what can most politely be called a striking finish, sponsored, we understand by HAG. This carries the idea of a pictorial livery to new heights, with stylistic representations of the pastoral scenery through which the service runs.

The SBB usually rosters the ubiquitous Re4/4^{II}s to the service, but the Re4/4^{III}s have appeared from time to time. This year, a Re4/4^{IV} was seen working the train on at least



one occasion, lending substance to the rumour that the SBB are trying to sell this small, non-standard but useful class to the SOB/BT locomotive pool.

Der Voralpen-Express links the Bodensee to the Vierwaldstättersee, connects with the Appenzellerbahnen at Herisau and St.Gallen and, at Biberbrugg offers a connection to Einsiedeln. It is therefore an extremely useful route for the railfan as well as those of us who enjoy a trip on a lake. The service operates at two-hourly intervals and takes an hour and

Bodensee-Toggenberg Re4/4 No.93 in *Voralpen Exprtess* "livery" at Herisau,, 27 August 1994.
Photo R.Smith

three quarters for the complete run. Although we have frequently made use of it, we have no idea what the bistro is like, since not only is it usually at the other end of the train from the first class, but the mini-bar trolley usually appears before any of us have summoned the energy to explore further.

Exhibitions

Oberfreidhof

2-4 Dec Manchester
20-21 Jan Huddersfield
25-26 Mar Southampton

Keine Name

17-18 Dec Bradford
-o-o-o-
10 Dec Mirfield fire station.
Swiss presence. Proceeds to charity.

Swiss stock on international trains

On 17 October, EC2 *Rembrandt*, Amsterdam to Chur via Emmerich and Düsseldorf, was composed entirely of SBB stock, including a restaurant car. The coaches were apparently refurbished Swiss UIC and both the seating and ride quality was excellent. In the Netherlands, the Swiss dining car attendant served drinks through the train, but had to retreat to the dining car when in Germany, where their own trolley service was provided.