

# Rigi Ramblings 1997

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## Rigi Ramblings 1997 by Peter Arnold

My wife and I were able to enjoy two holidays in our favourite country this year. For us, our love of Switzerland is due to the easy accessibility of so many marvellous mountain walks aided by the various transport links. The fact that refreshments can be obtained at the many mountain hostleries is an added incentive in warm weather! Our first holiday was a 10-day stay in early July at the Hotel am See at Weggis on Lake Lucerne which we can thoroughly recommend.

The weather during our first week was ideal for walking, mostly dry but not too hot, and we got some distant views between the clouds without the haze which often gathers over the lake. On our first day we needed to "break in" our legs with an easy walk so what better than the footpath from Rigi Kaltbad along the route of the narrow gauge Rigi Scheidegg Bahn. I was surprised to see that the former carriage which lies beside the path was undergoing a comprehensive body rebuild. It is still mounted on its original bogies complete with brake blocks and "RSB" axle boxes although the builder's plate has now disappeared from the underframe. It is amazing to think that this carriage has been lying here for more than 60 years.

If I can arrange my holiday around a little bit of

steam then so much the better and it just so happened that the restored vertical boiler Vitznau-Rigi Bahn "Lok 7" (SLM built 1873), based at Arth-Goldau this year, was running again on Mount Rigi. The progress of this loco was easily visible from many of the footpaths which we walked during the next few days with clouds of smoke visible from some miles away! July 5th, being the first Saturday of the month, should have been the highlight of this holiday as "Lok 7" was booked to run in parallel alongside one of the other two preserved VRB steam locos from Rigi Staffel to Rigi Kulm. Unfortunately this was the one totally wet day of the holiday and, with clouds right down on the mountain, there was nothing for it but to visit Lucerne Transport Museum - always an excellent wet weather option.

The weather forecasters kept promising better weather and by Tuesday it had arrived. We risked a trip across the lake and up the world's steepest rack railway to the summit of Mount Pilatus where we were fortunate in getting some marvellous views. Our last full day was Wednesday July 9th during which we sauntered up, in brilliant sunshine, from Rigi Staffel to Rigi Kulm whilst I filmed "Lok 7" during its many round trips.