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Railway Walks - 2 by John Jesson, photographs by author Oberalpasshöhe to Andermatt

In contrast to the Rhône valley walk, this one gives almost continuous views of the Furka-Oberalp line. Although there is no marked path for most of the way, the route is obvious, if somewhat muddy in one or two places.

From Oberalpasshöhe station, walk back towards the snow shed and cross the railway to the side of the Oberalpsee. There is a path along the edge of the lake for the whole length of the snow shed. At the end of the lake, cross the stream (Oberapreuss) and just wander along the slope towards Andermatt. There are various convenient rocks to sit on while waiting for the trains to come. Just behind the railway is the Oberalp pass road, but I found the traffic unobtrusive.

About 2½ km from the lake, there is a small dam and pond (it's too small to be called a lake!) and a bridge crosses the stream. The path goes up to the road at the point where it crosses over the railway. There is not a lot of choice but to walk along the road about 1 km to Näschen, both road and railway descend in a series of zig-zags to

Andermatt. Most of the road can be avoided, as paths cut off most of the corners. There are several good photo viewpoints on the way down, and you end up by entering Andermatt alongside the river and walking through the town to the station.

Being about 2,000m above sea level means that the sun can be quite powerful, so dress accordingly. Waterproof boots are also recommended for the muddy bits, where streams drop down from the mountains to the south. The walk takes about half a day, taking it very easy, and when I did it, I followed it up by a trip from Andermatt up the Gemstock cable car, from where part of the route can be seen in plan view!

Above: Not far from the end of the Oberalp pass, a Furka-Oberalp Deh4/4 propels a local train towards Andermatt.

Opposite page: Glacier Express 'C' on the climb out of Andermatt towards the Näschen and the Oberalp pass.

