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Railway Walks - 3 by John Jesson

Andermatt to Wassen

This is a full day's walk, assuming you take it easy and stop (frequently, in my case) to wait for trains at suitable spots. You are on good paths or tracks all the way, so no special gear is needed, although I find my walking boots so comfortable that I wear them anyway.

The only "busy" part of the walk is at the beginning. From Andermatt station, cross the level crossing at the Oberalp end of the station and walk along the road past the barracks. The short snowshed, protecting both road and railway, is a stinking hole, but is soon behind you. Very soon afterwards is the Devils Bridge, which gives superb views of the falls and the FO. It's really a bit too soon for refreshment, but there is a cafe here for anyone who needs its facilities.

From the cafe and the bridge, continue along the old road, now a footpath, under the new road bridge and down through the Schöllenen gorge. The path avoids some of the road, but not all, and it is necessary to walk through the longest of the snowsheds. This is quite safe, as there is a sidewalk all the way. There are some good views

Above: A view from the top of the Gotthard tunnel mouths at Göschenen.

both up and down the gorge, never seen from the train as the line is in tunnel, and which motorists cannot take advantage of because they cannot stop. At the end of the snowshed, the path drops away from the road to cut out one of the loops, then crosses the road and continues down the gorge and across the old packhorse bridge before joining the road again. There are a few good viewpoints to catch the trains and, shortly before the mouth of the Gotthard tunnel, another path leads down past the tunnel mouth, giving excellent views of the FO bridge across the river, and a close-up view of the SBB as it leaves the Gotthard tunnel. A branch off this path leads across the top of the tunnel mouth, allowing shots from above the tunnel down onto Göschenen station, and into the goods yard. A "side trip" to the far end of the goods yard gives a clear view across the valley to the main line immediately north of Göschenen station.

Continuing towards Wassen, a forest track runs alongside the railway from Göschenen almost all the way to Neisen tunnel. Keep an eye open for the signposted footpath to Wassen,



which takes you through the woods, with some lovely views, to the upper end of the Wattinger tunnel. A short trot down a field gives an opportunity to photograph trains leaving the tunnel and crossing the river Reuss. The only snag with doing this, is that a "banker" is desirable in getting back to the path. The field is steeper than it looks. From here, the path crosses the side stream (the Rorbach) and joins the old road, from where it is

Top of page: A southbound train crosses the Reuss near Wassen. It has just left the Wattinger tunnel and is now on the middle level of the famous formation, heading north towards the equally famous Wassen church.

Above: This view of the FO Schöllenenbahn is taken from the new road bridge. The falls are at the left of the picture.

only a short walk to Wassen station to pick up the bus in either direction.