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An open letter to the Editor by A. C. Griffin

Dear Editor,

Firstly, let me say how much the family enjoy reading Swiss Express and, secondly, that my writing to you was prompted by Glenn Allen's article. We have visited the area ourselves.

Although I have Swiss cousins, the first time I visited Switzerland was in 1957, the year my wife and I married. Joan won a Swiss holiday in a Civil Service raffle which was valued at £56. We travelled with Leroy tours and this was as follows:-

We travelled by coach to Lydd where we stayed overnight in an hotel, evening meal, bed and breakfast (all included). Coaching to Lydd Airport we boarded a DC3 and flew to Basle, boiled sweets and lunch included. Boarding a coach we travelled via Olten and Luzern to the Grand Hotel, Brunnen. Very Posh it was too! Staying there for a week and having a number of excursions (The three Passes etc.). On the Sunday we travelled down to Bern to meet the changeover coach. We arrived at 4 p.m. and it seemed to get dark. Shortly after, all the street lights came on, for it was now like nighttime! You've got it, a mummy and daddy of a storm!

Making the changeover some time later, we started for the Imperial Hotel in Montreux. We were travelling in a continental coach with the exhaust stack going up the back and terminating at the roof of the coach. Just as well, I have never seen such an amount of water on the roads. We went across a viaduct and the water was falling over the parapet! and we even saw water going through the front door of a chalet and cascading out the back to run down the hill! God's truth!

While at Montreux we went on an excursion to Stresa via Domodossola and I should mention at this point that both hotels were full board! so that when we went out for the day we were given a good packed lunch. Arriving just outside Stresa, the coach pulled into the grounds of a large hotel and there, on the lawn, the tables were laid for lunch, tablecloths, linen napkins, cutlery, the lot! all we had to do was buy the wine, beer, whatever. Can you imagine it!

At the end of the two weeks we coached it back to Basle Airport and our journey home and would you believe it? the only days rain we had was at Bern. (I took my sister to visit our cousin at Basle a few years ago and it rained 11 days out of the 14!). All our Swiss honeymoon cost us was the

spending money. I think it was then S.Fr.8 to the pound sterling. About 18 months ago I took Joan and our son Nicholas to stay at the Beausite hotel in Interlaken (Which I can thoroughly recommend) for ten days, half board, and the whole cost, including travel etc. cost well over £2000!

It was to be many years later that we were able to go abroad again for our son was born mentally and physically handicapped. In 1981 the year before I retired and Nicholas was now home from the special boarding school, my wife suggested that we might try to go to Switzerland again and taking him with us. Our first attempt was to be non-package, so we had to do all the arranging. The Swiss Travel Bureau in London was very good, sending us maps and brochures. One of them showed the BLS route down to Brig and I treasure this. After staying 3-4 days in Basle with my cousin and her husband, we set off for Spiez, our first stop. I have to say that this was one of the best holidays we have had.

Spending a few days in Spiez, we visited Interlaken, Murren (a place we loved) and travelled on the MOB to Montreux, marvellous! We then entrained for Domodossola and then Bellinzona, where we stayed the night. Up early the next morning to get the 8 am postbus via the S. Bernardino pass to Chur. Quite a journey but our son loved it and stood up to it very well. The green slopes of the snow covered mountains and all the different coloured trains thrilled him. We visited Arosa (amazed by the train travelling along the streets of Chur) and also Pontresina, St. Moritz and Davos.

Then it was on again to Brunnen via Andermatt, travelling on the Glacier Express. It was June so there was still some snow about, it was magical. Spending a few peaceful days, going on the boat to Luzern etc. it was time to head back to Basle for a few more days before the journey home. Little did we realise that nearly every year since then we would be back in Switzerland again.

The years have passed and with them many happy memories of some very wonderful journeys by train, postbus and boat. we now have a great many video tapes, both professional and my wife's very good efforts. During the long, dark winter months we get them out and enjoy afresh the wonders of our lovely Switzerland. we are thinking of Solothurn as a venue this year.