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FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

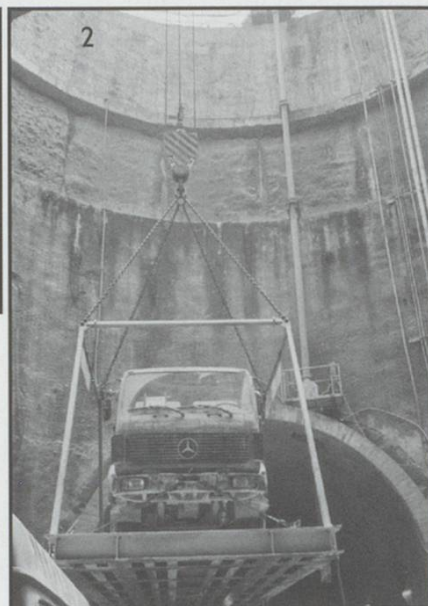
George M Hoekstra

UP, UP AND AWAY

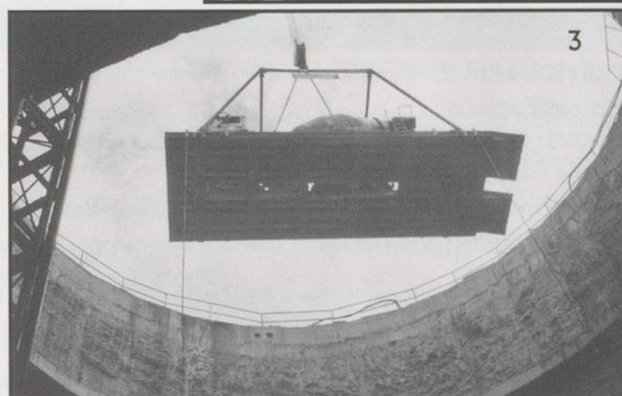
At the moment, the Zimmerberg tunnel is one of the biggest railway construction sites in the Zürich area. This 9.4 km (5.9 mile) long tunnel will form the most important link between the main station in Zürich and the Alp transit line near Thalwil. It avoids the scenic but very sinuous line along the lake. The new line runs for the major part underneath very densely populated areas and in many places very close to the surface. Access to the site is quite difficult. Generally normal access through ramps is impossible and giant shafts are the norm. To illustrate this, at a recent visit for railway journalists, I was able to photograph the lifting of a complete cement lorry through one of the access shafts.



1. Inside the Zimmerberg tunnel, the cement lorry drives onto the loading platform, where it is fixed with chains.

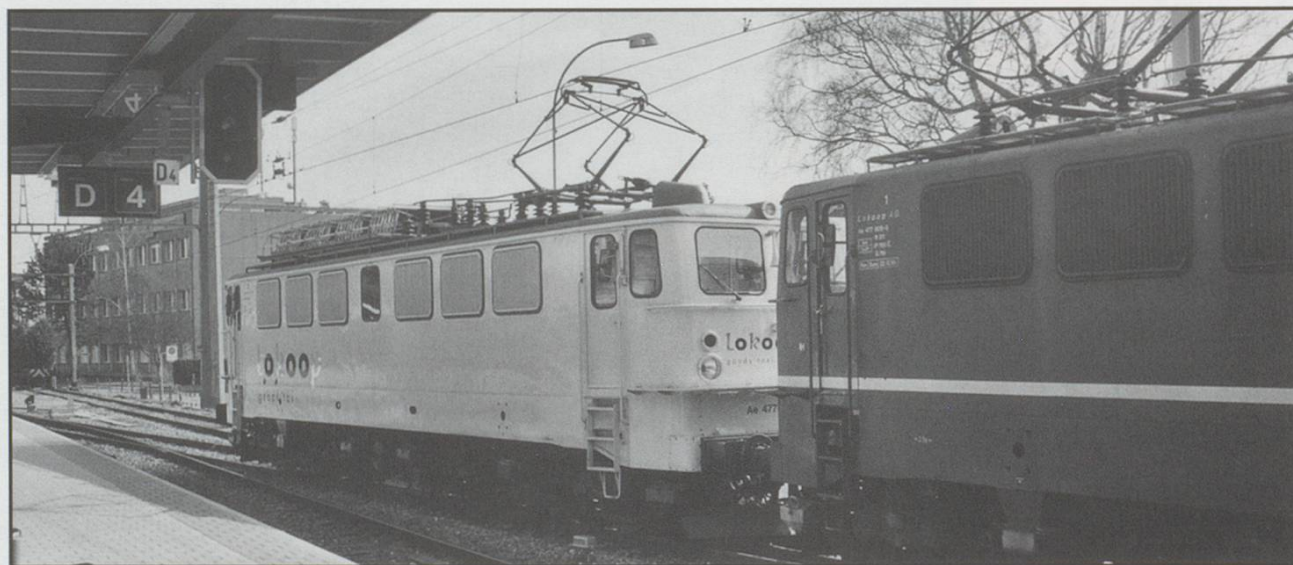


2. The platform with the lorry is then slowly lifted up, and 3. carried clear out of the shaft. The two ramps for the lorry to drive onto the platform can be seen on the right.



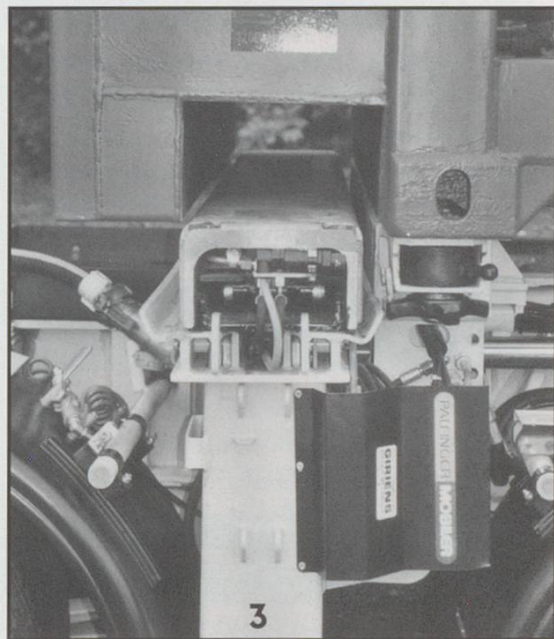
EX-GDR LOKOOP LOCOMOTIVES GO BACK TO GERMANY

After the SBB had taken over the MittelThurgau Bahn, one of the first things it did, was to withdraw the 18 former East German electric locomotives. They have now all been sold: twelve went to the Westfälische Almetalbahn in Altenbeken; the remaining six went to Rail Logistik in Berlin. This picture of two Ae 477 locos, one in original DR paint, the other one in Lokoop livery, taken last year in Weinfelden, is now history.



CONTAINERS? NO CRANE? NO PROBLEM

Containers have revolutionised the handling of freight. Until recently, the only limitation was that you needed a crane to move them from one vehicle to another. Now, however, there is a system called Mobiler, whereby the container can be moved sideways off a freight wagon and onto a lorry, or vice versa. In Switzerland, this system is used by MacDonald's, Coop, Chemoil and others. I have been able to attend demonstrations by all three of the firms and can confirm it works well. The necessary modifications to the wagons and containers are minimal. The wagons, which need to be of the type equipped to carry two normal containers, only need four flat steel strips welded across their surface. They then can carry either normal, or Mobiler-equipped containers. The containers themselves have two strong steel channels welded to them. This, however, does not impair them in any way to be carried as normal containers. The main conversion is to the lorry. They are equipped with the Mobiler transporter. This consists of two heavy steel channels, inverted towards each other, with a hydraulic lifting and shifting mechanism inside. The top channel lifts up, slides out and goes down again. Then the bottom channel slides out as far as the top channel has reached. The top channel goes up and slides out again and so on. The lorry is parked on any hard surface next to the freight wagon. The two Mobiler channels first reach out till they are underneath the container channels. The container is then lifted by the mechanism and the channels then slide in reverse order sideways back onto the lorry, carrying the container with them. The whole operation takes less than five minutes and is operated by the driver of the lorry.



1. Locomotive "Chemoil" with a train of liquid cargo containers meets the lorry, equipped with the Mobiler system.

2. The driver of the lorry controls the transfer of the container from the wagon to the lorry with a hand-held controller. Photo Solvay/Mobiler.

3. The secret: the upper channel lifts up into the channel on the container, presses it up, then the lower channel slides the load as required.

Photos 1 & 3: George Hoekstra

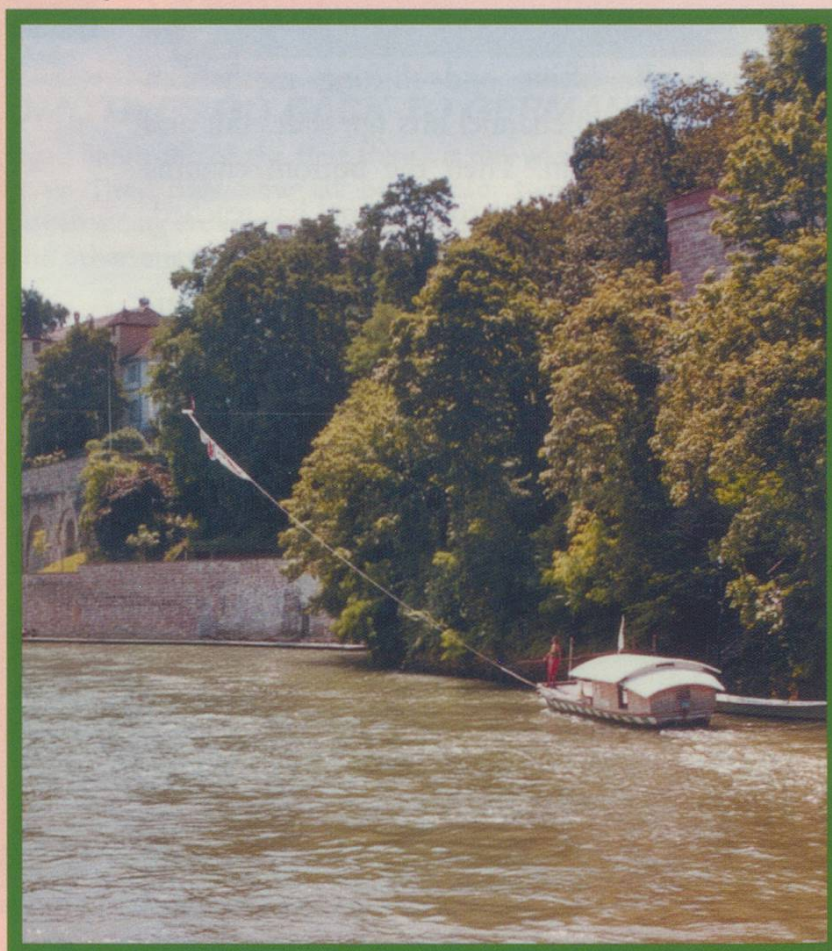


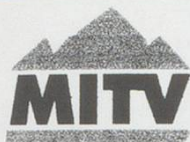
A DAY OUT WITH SCHÖLLERS TRAVEL

My friend and railway journalist colleague Hans-Bernhard Schönborn organises tours for railway enthusiasts all over Europe. Recently he had a four-day tour called "Railway Freight in Switzerland" and invited me to join them for the day they spent in the Basel region. First we went to the Rhine harbour. We started at the harbourmasters office with an illustrated talk about this hugely important gateway, where a lot of goods are transferred from river to rail. We then went up onto the viewing platform from where we had a birds-eye view of everything happening. As it was lunchtime, we took the Lunch boat up the river back to Basel city. We then transferred by tram and train to Rheinfelden, where the steam shuttle was ready to take us to the Feldschlösschen brewery, which transports a large proportion of its output by rail. After a tour of the huge complex, the refreshments offered at the end were very welcome. Being suitably fortified, the tour then went on to visit the shunting complex at MuttENZ, complete with a tour of the signal box,

ABOVE: I know you have seen other pictures of this little Feldschlösschen train, but I just love it!

BELOW: We crossed several of the small ferryboats, powered by the strong current. They are attached to a high cable strung across the river. According to the way they point their bow, the current will push them to the left or to the right.





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We can now be reached by E-mail. Our address is: Sales@MITV.freemove.co.uk**



From the viewing platform in the harbour, you have a wonderful view of all the activity on the Rhine.

from where the whole shunting yard, including the retarders, is controlled with the help of computers. Yes, help: the people control, computers are only an aid!

If you are interested in these tours for the real rail enthusiast, you can contact:

Dr. Hans-Bernhard Schönborn, Schöllers Travel, Büelmatt 7, CH 6204 Sempach-Stadt.

Tel/Fax: 00 41 / 41 460 24 46.

Internet: www.schoellers-travel.ch



SUCCESSFUL START FOR THE OSTWIND TARIFF

The Ostwind tariff is an alliance of more than 40 railway and bus operators in the Cantons of St. Gallen, Thurgau and both inner and outer Appenzell. About 700 000 people live in the area. In the first year of its existence, about 200 000 monthly and yearly season tickets were sold: a huge success! In only ten months, 80 000 day tickets were sold. The total sales volume was 40 million francs (almost 18 million pounds). The management is in the hands of the new Schweizerische Südostbahn - the SOB. The Ostwind tariff is also the core of the first international Euregio day ticket, which includes additional areas in Germany and Austria. Further information on the Internet: www.ostwind.ch and www.euregiokarte.com



Admit it, you thought this would be an excuse for the editor to stick yet another BT/SOB picture. Well you were wrong. Geoff Dunster took this RHB (not the RhB) ABDeh2/4 no.23 in Rorschach Bhf on 11/9/02. This route to Heiden is now part of Ostwind, and Euregio for that matter.

Text by George Hoekstra