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THE BURGERBAD AT LEUKERBAD

An experience to add to your next Swiss trip.

George Hoekstra



It was a glorious day on the 14th of March this year. The outside pool with its water jets presented itself in full glory. I did not want to get out!

PHOTOS: George Hoekstra

Going up to Leukerbad (1411 m. - 4630ft) and visiting the Burgerbad is not about "just going for a swim". Europe's largest Alpine thermal complex has no less than ten large pools on several floors, four of them outdoors. As this is a thermal complex, the water temperatures range from 28 - 43°C, or 80 - 110°F. The pools include everything from kiddie-pools via jacuzzis, whirl- and jet stream-pools, to 25 m normal swimming pools! One of the large swimming pools and a kiddie-pool are on top of the roof, in the open air. Also in the open air and reachable both on foot or by swimming

through an air-lock are a big jet stream pool and a jacuzzi. In winter, swimming from the warm inside pool through the lock into an equally warm jet stream pool outside, with the mountains and the snow all around you is quite an experience. And in bad weather, you could be surprised: due to the warm water it is still nice, if the weather is not!

The name Burgerbad implies that the complex is owned and run by the Citizen Council of Leukerbad. As I have explained in previous articles in Switzerland citizenship of a community is hereditary. It is passed on by the



View of the station at Leuk. The SBB line has recently been straightened and now passes into a tunnel. The old line used to run just left of the LEUK - LEUKER BAD building. This used to be the depot of the metre gauge line that ran up to Leukerbad. It closed in 1967 and the buses that replaced it use it as their garage.

PHOTO RIGHT: Rob Morrey

Swiss father to his children. It has nothing to do with actually living in the community concerned. All the people that live in a community are its inhabitants. They do not get citizenship rights just because they happen to live there. Anyway, back to the Burgerbad. The complex is open every day of the year from 8 am till 8 pm. Apart from the ten pools there is plenty of room to sit or lay about if you get tired, both indoors and out. Are you Hungry? Try the Self Service or the Grill! Forgot your bathing-costume? No problem, rent one! For the children, there is not just the pool; on the roof there is a 70 m slide down several floors. Adults pay just SFr19 (£ 8) for a three



hour ticket - plenty of time to sample a lot of bathing experience.

Have a look at www.burgerbad.ch. Children up to 8 years are free, older ones pay 50 - 30% less than adults. The Steam Bath and Sauna, as well as all the massage- and wellness-facilities cost extra. Leukerbad is accessible by a 30 min. bus ride up the mountain from Leuk railway station, which itself is on the Rhone Valley main line, less than 15 min. from Brig. Needless to say Swiss Passes are valid!