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FAR FROM THE MADD(EN)ING CROWD

Rob Morrey's personal Swiss A to Z

PHOTOS: Rob Morrey.

I love Switzerland, its trains and its buses. I do not, however, like crowded places. This may explain why I watch football at Port Vale! The Swiss Pass is to me one of the Wonders-of-the-World, so I have written my A to Z of places to visit in my favourite country with a Pass, whilst avoiding the hordes.

A - Les Avants.

A lovely village at the top of the MOB's climb out of Montreux. A funicular on offer too.

central Zürich up to a green hilltop. Peace and tranquillity!

E - Echallens.

Headquarters/depot of the LEB metre gauge line from Lausanne to Bercher. Nice, peaceful town and steam hauled trains at weekends

F - Frauenfeld.

A big town but not on the tourist beat. Frauenfeld-Wil Bahn trains run through the streets, their striped livery is not for those of a nervous disposition.



B - Boudry.

This pretty wine village is at the end of the tram route from Neuchâtel. Vintage trams on occasions too.

C - Chexbres.

High above Lac Lemman, on the quiet Vevey to Puidoux line. Lovely walks (downhill!), spectacular lake views from the trains.



D - Dolderbahn.

A rack railway that takes you out of

G - Grandvaux.

A station on the Lausanne to Bern line, high above Lac Lemman. Wonderfully

scenic walks to the lake or along by the railway to the halt at Bossière (all gently downhill).

H – Heiden.

Arrive by standard gauge rack railway from Rorschach or by double-decker bus from St Gallen. Nice. Pleasant. Quiet.

I – L'Isle-Mont-la-Ville.

At the end of a branch off a branch. Not a tourist in sight. The trains (which are sometimes a minibus) run from Apples – the core of the BAM system.

J – Juf.

At 2126m the highest Swiss village inhabited all year round. At the end of bus route from Andeer, on the San Bernardino road. Tiny village, one pub (the Juf hostel?!).



K – Klosters Dorf.

A delightful downhill walk with, gorgeous views, from the bustling Klosters RhB station.



L - Ligerz.

Photogenic village on a single track section of the Neuchatel to Biel mainline. The back gardens of houses are virtually on the platform. Vine-growing area. Also a funicular up the Tessenberg.

M – Montbovon.

Junction of the MOB and the TPF(GFM). Street running by Bulle trains. Worth stopping-off here – although the cocooned tourists of the Panoramic Expresses never do.



N – Nesslau – Neu St Johann.
Country terminus of an SOB branch in North East Switzerland with an adjacent bus depot. Post Buses (often double-deckers) run to Buchs, Schwägalp (for Säntis cable-car) and Urnäsch.

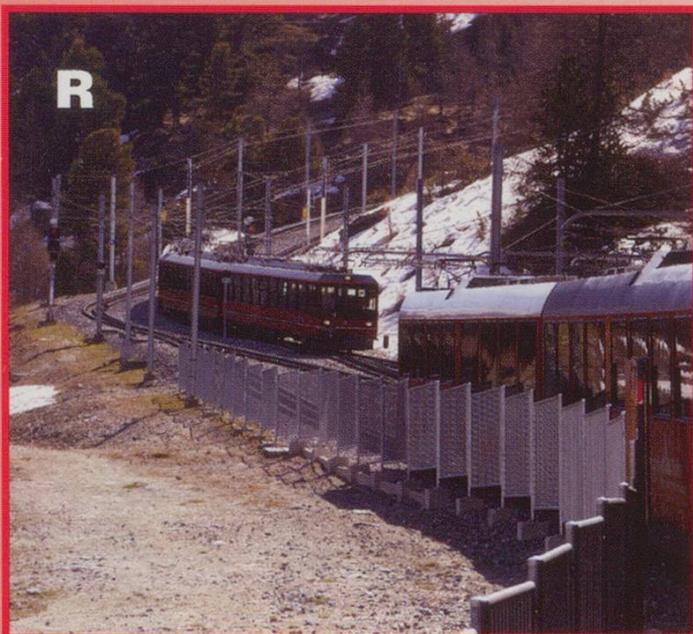
P – Passo del San Bernardino.
Better views than from the tunnel beneath! A typical alpine pass road with numerous hairpin bends on the eastern side. Summit hostelry serves Scenic Coffee.



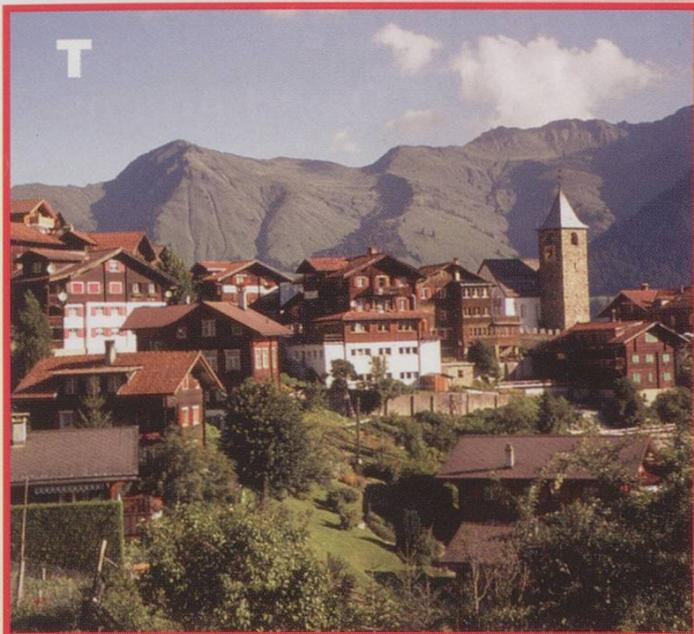
O – Orbe.
Walled town, very French in appearance, at end of short branch line from Chavornay. Frequent buses to Yverdon-les-Bains too.

R – Riffelalp.
The crowds go up to Gornergrat, the discerning alight halfway at Riffelalp. Level walk, or restored battery tram to hotels/eateries. Breathtaking views of the Matterhorn.

S – St Gingolph.
Occasional trains from Monthey, or boats from Montreux. The town is split with the Swiss/French border cutting the community in half. Station has panoramic views of Lac Lemman and the Swiss Alps. The railway westward to Evian is disused – which says a lot about SNCF...



T – Tschierschen.
Catch the bus from Chur to this magical village at the end of the road – therefore no through traffic. Lovely



views of the Arosa line across the valley. Super public toilet as well – I mention this in passing!

U – Unterbäch.

No buses or trains – just a cable car from Raron. Panoramic view of the BLS Südrampe.



V – Val d'Illiez.

Crossing place on the AOMC line to Champéry. Picture-postcard buildings and scenery.

W – Wildlisbach.

On the Solothurn-Niederbipp-Langenthal line. Really charming historic main street in this little known backwater.

X – Kerzers.

Yes, I know that it does not start with 'X' but two railways (Murten to Lyss and Bern to Neuchâtel) cross here on a diamond crossing. Station dominated by a large mechanical signal box – now a museum.

Z – Zweisimmen.

A busy place, but only for passengers changing between the gauges. Station has much of interest for those prepared to linger a while. Few do.

So there we are. Yes, I accept Q and Y are missing – but I just have not been to any suitable candidates. Yet. I have been to all the others listed, and enjoyed every minute. The versatility of the Swiss Pass has made it all possible – only Riffelalp was not “free”. For my next Swiss holiday (the 25th consecutive one) I intend to go from an A to a Z, Adelboden to Zinal. I do hope that I do not meet crowds on the way!!

Editor's note: - To add a 'Q' to his list I am sure Rob would appreciate Quinten, a tiny community on the north shore of the Walensee. No roads lead there – it is a boat from Murg on the south shore, or a good walk from Walenstadt at the east end of the lake. Rob has not referred-to Yverdon-les-Bains on Lac de Neuchâtel, but I understand that it is too busy for him. However, for another 'Y' there is the small Commune of Yens that Rob would have passed through whilst riding the BAM (Bière-Apples-Morges) en-route to L'Isle. I do not know of a community whose name starts with an 'X' in Switzerland, so we will allow him Kerzers!