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STEAMY SUMMER ON THE RIGI

Ron Smith



ALL PHOTOS: Ron Smith

This coming summer the vertical boilered No.7 of the original Vitznau Rigi Bahn (now all part of the Rigibahnen along with the Arth Rigi Bahn and the Weggis to Kaltbad cable car) will once again be pounding its way up the mountain. This loco, H1/2 of 1873, is probably the only remaining operational standard gauge rack fitted vertical boilered loco in the Europe. In 1882 the railway changed all the boilers from vertical to horizontal, but No.7 escaped this treatment and eventually was sent to the Verkehrshaus in Luzern where it stayed until 1996. To celebrate the 125th anniversary of the railway, it was renovated and brought back to thrash its way up the Rigi during the summer season. Then it retired once more to the peace of the Verkehrshaus. In 2008, the museum was undergoing some rebuilding work, and to make space, No.7 was sent to Vitznau where it is being refitted in the Rigibahnen workshops by the lakeside for operation

again in 2009.

The 2009 Summer Timetable for the Rigibahn may look complicated at first sight, but it shares No.7 evenly with both sides of the mountain, and gives the maximum opportunity to sample this wonderful veteran conquering the gradients.

● From 30th May to 29th June the loco will operate a daily Vitznau - Summit return trip every Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday. Leaving Vitznau at 09.16, after arriving at the Summit it will run several shuttles to Staffel and back until 15.00 when it will return to Vitznau.

● From 1st July to 17th August, No.7 will operate daily (except Tuesdays) from Arth Goldau. Departing at 09.15 for the Summit it will operate frequent shuttles to Staffel and back returning to Arth Goldau at 15.00.

● From 21st August to 27th September No.7 will run on Fridays and Sundays

departing from Arth Goldau at 09.15 for the Summit, repeating the shuttles to and from Staffel, then leaving the Summit at 15.00 to descend to Vitznau.

● From 22nd August to 29th September No.7 will run on Saturdays and Mondays departing from Vitznau at 09.16 for the Summit, repeating the shuttles to and from Staffel, then leaving the Summit at 15.00 to descend to Arth Goldau.

The fare structure follows the pattern of the timetable. In addition to a regular ticket supplements will be payable. These will range from CHF3 for the Summit – Staffel shuttle up to CHF40 to ride on the open luggage platform in front of the boiler from Vitznau to the Summit – an experience not to be missed!

The complex operations of No.7 will be in addition to the regular steam operation that will see H 2/3 No.16 of 1923 and H 2/3 No.17 of 1925 (Photos on P.41) taking turns to work each Saturday from 1st July to 28th September on the 10.15 from Arth Goldau to the Summit and down to Vitznau, and on the following days on the 10.55 from



Vitznau to the Summit and down to Arth Goldau.

Reservation is recommended for all these trips, as they will undoubtedly be popular and the capacity restricted. No.7 can only push one two-axle coach up the hill! The regular steam trains are also frequently full. Reservations can be made by telephone to the Rigibahnen on + 41 41 399 87 70, (English spoken), or go to www.rigi.ch. It really is going to be a steamy summer on the Rigi!

