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from either diesel or electric power. The auxiliary diesel engine was fitted to provide power over the short section at Meiringen, where the SBB runs at 11,000v.

The antique Mannheim trams were a marvel to travel on with their wooden bodies, black and white enamel signs and flickering light bulbs. Towards the end of their life the MIB hired a single unit from the BOB, for example ABDeh 4/4 No.301 of 1949, which also worked the freight traffic. This unit worked on the line from 1988 to 1996, until a new railcar arrived from Stadler/ABB - Be 4/4 No.8. The reserve vehicle is now Be 4/4 No.74 of the Vereinige Bern Worb Bahn dating from 1961. This now carries MIB No.9.

The new 1996 railcar arrived in a smart red livery, but has since been repainted blue and become covered in advertising, for which roof-level boards were added. Today trains run every half an hour at peak times between the MIB's own station in Meiringen and Alpbach, Aareschlucht West (for walkers to access that end of the Schlucht), Aareschlucht Ost, Unterwasser, Innertkirchen Post (the village centre) and Innertkirchen MIB, which is the works depot of the KWO. The MIB is an interesting anachronism of a railway, and it is an experience to ride on it.

Glyn Jones rides a MAGICAL POSTAUTO TOUR

Many SRS Members will know that Meiringen's PostAuto Station, situated at the rear of the Zentralbahn Station, is the start of many memorable PostAuto journeys

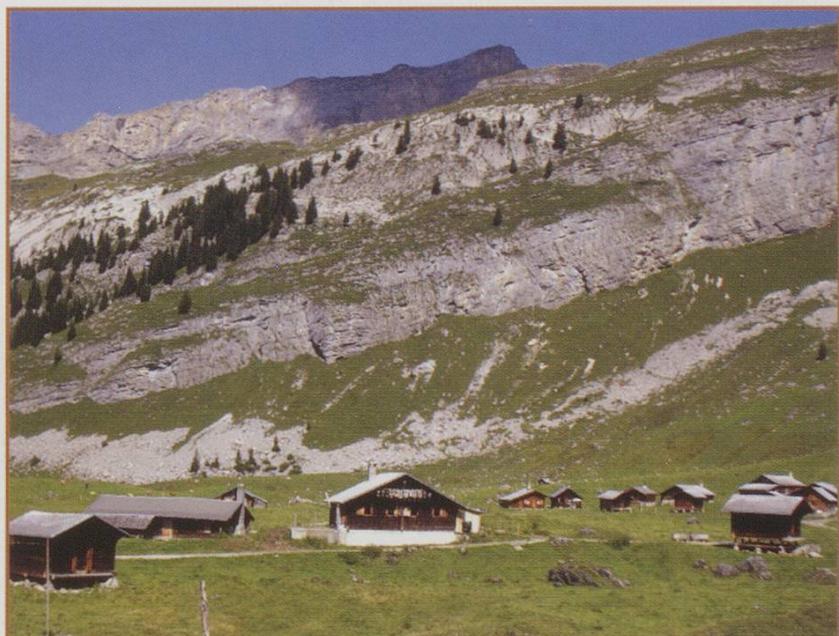
over the Susten & Grimsel passes. There is another route that starts here that is mostly unknown to foreigners and we were recommended to do it, but only on a clear day. It is to Engstlenalp and the Engstlensee – where is that you ask? It is situated at 1850m and is reached by a left hand turn off the Susten pass road between Innetkichen and Gadmen.

The four trips a day (in high summer only) take 50 minutes and are subject to the Alpine Ticket supplement if you are using a Swiss discount pass. We arrived for the 10:45 departure from Meiringen. There was a large queue for the bus but we were the only "Brits" and most people seemed to have through tickets from various parts of Switzerland. There was some discussion between the drivers as to if a second bus would be required but there was just enough room. Is it only in Switzerland that a relief bus is there waiting just in case? The service is, I believe, operated by Autoverkehr Grindelwald (AVG).

The bus turned off the Susten pass route onto a narrow mountain road and there was much sounding of the PostAuto's characteristic horn. The road eventually becomes a private toll road, maintained to a

Englestenalp.

PHOTO: Glyn Jones





Engstlensee.

PHOTO: Glyn Jones

very high standard – no pot holes here, and there are views back to the Schreckhorn and Wetterhorn above Grindelwald. The valley widened and we arrived at Engstlenalp, a totally unspoilt Alpine community with the ring of cow bells from the 400 cattle on the high alpine summer pastures. Although the bus was full, and most of the passengers were not dressed as serious walkers, they soon dispersed and tranquillity returned. Here also is the Hotel Engstlenalp, where we had our lunch, but it is also a proper hotel which is open from May to October and also during the winter period when the road has been cleared of snow.

Hotel Engstlenalp.

PHOTO: Glyn Jones



It is a short walk to the Engstlensee which is a favourite with fishermen; rowing boats can be hired from the Hotel. The one thing that strikes you apart from the tranquillity is the total lack of seats – no mod-cons for tourists here, if you want to rest it is the grass or nothing, and the lake is totally clear. You could see the fish swimming around

although the anglers didn't seem to be having much luck. A path from here leads to the Joch pass at 2209m. There are chair lifts ascending and descending both sides of the pass for the journey to the Trübsee. In the distance you can see Titlis above Engelberg and its revolving cable cars.

It was only when researching this article on our return to the UK that I discovered that on the path from the hotel to the lake you pass a tall rock with a large pine tree standing next to it. The radiation emitted at this point is equivalent to the energy emitted by the pyramids at Giza. At 27 micro X-rays per hour, the natural radioactivity of the region is the same as the Himalayas and compasses will not function here for some inexplicable reason. It is looked upon as a magical place by the Swiss – we agreed with this but for a different reason!

The waitress at the Hotel was intrigued to have English customers and wanted to know where we came from and all about us – when did that last happen to you in Switzerland? When it became time to leave a

relief bus had been sent and this was in the AVG livery and could only take passengers who had pre-paid tickets – presumably the driver (who wore a jacket proclaiming him as “The Singing Driver”) could not collect cash. We chose the “proper” PostAuto and alighted at Innetkirchen where, after a walk around the village, we caught the Meiringen Innetkirchen Bahn (MIB) for our return to Meiringen. It was the first time we had travelled on the MIB and the 16:02 service was well patronised.

Kälti takes a POST-HORN GALLOP PAST GROSSE SCHEIDIGG

“You MUST try the bus ride from Grindelwald to Meiringen” said the guide on one of our first Swiss holidays. As a railway enthusiast I had my doubts, but we had hardly left Grindelwald and Grosse Scheidegg and the glacier behind when I realised this would be a bus journey like no other.

As we took gradients and hairpin bends at what seemed like breakneck speed, our admiration for the driver of our bright yellow Autoverkehr Grindelwald (AVG) bus increased by the kilometre. The road, perhaps better described

as a single track, beat a path through wild and craggy countryside, the post-horn being sounded regularly on blind corners. At one time we pulled in to let a lady driving a car pass – and she was left in no doubt that she should have not been using that stretch of road at a time reserved for the buses. Soon after that another bright yellow bus appeared, going in the opposite direction, and presumably an extra working as it had no passengers. Somehow that driver managed to squeeze past us and I swear his offside wheels must have been hanging over the edge of a sheer precipice!

After our long, journey we turned a corner and were suddenly back in habitation at Schwarzwaldalp, where we had been warned we would need to change vehicles. The joint timetable run by AVG and the PTT PostAuto service which operates the onward journey to Meiringen allowed a long enough break to have a quick drink at the

Postbuses at Meiringen, 2/9/1991. PHOTO: Kälti

