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CENTENARY STAMPS

Michael Farr



PHOTOS: Michael Farr

As well as the centenary of the Bernina line that was noted in the December magazine, the Niesen funicular also celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2010.

Swiss Post will mark the two events with an issue of stamps on 6th May but as the details – and designs – are not being unveiled until 26th March, sadly this misses the press date for the current issue. You will also be too late to order first day covers by the time the June Swiss Express appears!

If members want to obtain details, they can contact Swiss Post, Stamps & Philately, Marketing and Sales, Ostermundigenstrasse 91, CH-3030 Berne or by email at stamps@post.ch. If not already a subscriber to their excellent and free collectors' magazine, *Focus on Stamps* you may wish to order a copy. I anticipate that the new railway issues will be illustrated in its March issue and an order form will be included if you do not happen to be visiting our favourite country beforehand.

RIGIBAHNEN ROUNDUP

Ron Smith

The Rigibahnen (RB) reports that 2009 will have shown a modest 5% increase in passengers over 2008, a very creditable result in the prevailing economic conditions. The RB continues to press ahead with innovative ideas to attract customers such as the "RigiEvent" marquee at Staffel that brings attendees at conferences, product launches, weddings, etc. to their trains. Packages for monocyclists, apparently a growing sport, were introduced in 2009. However, riding down the Rigi on a one-wheeled cycle is certainly not many people's idea of fun!

In another move to boost ridership, along with business in the mountain hotels and cafes, the RB announced that from last December they are accepting Swiss Pass cards for free travel over their lines from Vitznau and Arth-Goldau to Rigi Kulm, and on the Weggis to Kaltbad cable car. Previously the RB only gave a 25% discount on its

operations. The change also means that the RB will be included in the Swiss Pass publicity.

Reconstruction of the Station at Rigi Kaltbad restricts the public steam trains using locos No.16 and 17 to operating on the Arth-Goldau route this summer. Departures to Rigi Kulm are at 10.15, returning at 14.05, and operate every Saturday and Sunday from July to September. Vertical-boiler No.7 built in 1896, and the highlight of the 2009 operations, left Vitznau on the 28th November and will be taking a well deserved rest in the refurbished Verkehrshaus at Luzern in 2010.

A series of other events also planned this summer including: guided natural and botanical walks: a Swiss Folk Music and Dance Festival at Rigi Staffel; early morning extra trains from Arth-Goldau on some Sundays to view the majestic sunrise from the summit; a Dixie and Swing weekend at Rigi Kaltbad; a weekend Alpine