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SWITZERLAND IN GUINEAS

It is probable that few people under the age of 50 have ever undertaken a financial transaction in guineas, indeed many will probably not even know the monetary value that a guinea represented. Prior to the adoption by the UK of decimal currency in 1971 its value was 21/- (£1.05), a sum fixed in 1816 when the original guinea coins were replaced by the pound. However by the time of its official demise it was generally only used in specialist, often upscale, transactions such as professional fees, payment for land, horses, art, etc. It was somewhat archaic even then for Ian Allan Ltd. to advertise in 1963 a railtour to Switzerland that was priced in guineas.

The original of the leaflet, reproduced here, was unearthed by SRS member Phil Crews when undertaking one of those, possibly unwelcome, 'clear-outs'. Priced at 59gns the 11-day/10-night, three-centre railtour, including 1st Class rail travel from London, appears at first glance to be cheap in 2013 terms. The price is just £61.95 in today's currency. In 1963 the average wage was some £16 a week, so was it such a bargain then? At today's values the tour would have cost £1,100, whilst the current average wage in 2013 was apparently around some £500 a week. I wonder if our friends at the STC could calculate the equivalent cost now? Once the travellers arrived in Switzerland their £1 would have bought them CHF12, a far cry from today's exchange rate.

It is also interesting that the company was advertising a Juvenile Tour aimed at unaccompanied children as young as 13, something that I suspect would not be countenanced now. Worth noting is that the tour for children, and the adults accompanying them, is simply priced in £sd. No guineas for this spectrum of society!

A PHOTOGRAPHIC *SwissTip* Bryan Stone

A comment I often hear from visitors to Brienz is how difficult it is to successfully photograph the Brienz-Rothorn-Bahn (BRB) steam engines. Generally this is from people who are not travelling on the line, but call in at the station to observe what is happening. Well, I agree with you. 40 years ago you could wander about the BRB station and its environs with out any problem, but today limited space and – on good days – large crowds, mean that some serious safety management is required. Barriers, turnstiles and a steeply sloping site do the rest. My SwissTip is to go west along the main street (or slip through the back by the parking area) and then turn first right up the hill. At the next corner you are practically on the track, and can clearly see all the engines you like. You can, with care, cross the line, or back on the road which zigzags back to the west, walk 100m further to the bridge over the Trachtbach, where again an uphill footpath takes you along the trackside. Here you are near the lattice metal bridge where the BRB crosses the stream. Still further up (now you need a village plan and a car) is the Alpweg, a narrow and winding lane, climbing at about 25% (1 in 4), which brings you to meadows above the village and woods where there is a long section of the line in full view. You must park clear of the road in case forestry vehicles come down. I often spend an hour or two up here. Remember trains often run in two or more sections, so watch and listen. At this point you are up among the heavy boulder walls of the Tracht flood defenses. Don't climb on them, it is both dangerous and forbidden, but enjoy the little engines thumping away just in front of you. A warning though, you must bring your own shade (or shelter) and picnic. 

Photos: Bryan Stone

RAILTOURS TO SWITZERLAND 1963

organised by

Ian Allan Ltd

ADULT TOUR

Depart Friday, May 24th. Return June 3rd (Whit Monday).

Staying at INTERLAKEN, LUGANO and ZURICH.

Visits to MURREN, RINDERBERG, JUNGFRAUJOCH, AUSSERBERG, MONTE GENEROSO, MILAN, ESSLINGEN, UETLIBERG and SIHLBRUGG (special steam train).

FIRST CLASS fare and hotels (not de-luxe) throughout ... 59 gns.

SECOND CLASS fare London to Bale, FIRST CLASS fare and hotels (not de-luxe) in Switzerland 55 gns.

For the first time a juvenile tour is planned for 1963 for younger enthusiasts. The tour will be fully organised and carefully supervised, and will provide a wonderful opportunity for children to see the railways and other interesting features of Switzerland.

JUVENILE TOUR

Unaccompanied, or accompanied by adults.

Depart Friday, April 12th (Good Friday). Return Sunday, April 21st.

Staying at RAPPERSWILL YOUTH HOSTEL (or accommodation available in hotels for adults with children, at extra charge).

Visits to ISLAND OF UFENAU, APPENZELL, St. GALLEN, EINSIEDELN, TANNENBODENALP, MOUNT SAENTIS, ENGELBERG, ZURICH, LUCERNE and MOUNT PILATUS, and including visits to zoos, model railway, Zurich Airport, Castle and Transport Museum, using special trains, PTT coaches, lake steamers, trolleybuses, suspension cable car and rack railways.

FARE and ACCOMMODATION

JUVENILES	10-14 years	£29 10s
	14-16 years	£31 10s
	16-20 years	£33

ADULTS £36 10s

SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

There will be a special arrangement for the supervision of children by the staff of Ian Allan Ltd., but bookings for juveniles between the ages of 10 and 12 years will be accepted only if the child is accompanied by a responsible adult.

For full details and booking form please apply, as early as possible, to the address below.

Ian Allan Ltd (SWISS TOURS) HAMPTON COURT, SURREY

Thanks Phil for this glimpse of Swiss rail holidays over 50 years ago. Were any of our members on either tour? If so please contact the Editor. 