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Autor: Gavazzi, Mario
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Mario Gavazzi Reports...



110 years old, but very fit, P/S 'Piemonte'.

Photos: Mario Gavazzi

Rhätische Bahn

This year is an important one for all Rhätische Bahn (RhB) enthusiasts of the 'national railway' of Canton Graubünden – as it celebrates two jubilees in one year! It is 125 years since the first metre-gauge trains ran between Landquart and Klosters, this local line developing into the 384km network that operates today carrying some 10m passengers annually.

This year is also the 100th anniversary of the opening of the line from Chur to Arosa in 1914. This was originally an independent railway company but it became part of the RhB on January 1, 1942. The jubilee weekend celebrating its 100 years is planned for December 13th/14th at Arosa. By the time that you read this the RhB management should have published the festival details on www.rhb.ch

An important part of the train services operated by the RhB are the historic trains. These nostalgic trains are operated not only by RhB, but also by a number of organisations that work together under the umbrella of the Association RhB Historic. This group includes: Verein Dampffreunde RhB; Freunde der Schmalspurbahnen; Club 1889; Interessengemeinschaft Zügen/Landwasser; Pro Salonwagen RhB; Albula-Bahn-Club Bergün, and Bahnmuseum Albula Bergün. They organize and coordinate the special programmes and the nostalgic trains.

Historic Steamboat Trip

Closer to my Luzern home there was an organised a train and steamboat trip between Northern snow and Ticino springtime. On Saturday March 29th the association Verein Historische Seethalbahn (VHSTB) organized an excursion to Lago Maggiore to ride on the 110-year-old historic steamboat 'Piemonte'. This wonderful old ship sailed from Luino to Locarno in the sunshine but with snow on the surrounding mountains. The beautiful flowers showed that

summer is beginning – and the excursion guests were very happy enjoying a break from the winter weather north of the Alps. The 'Piemonte' only operates 10/12 times a year for charters. The VHSTB was pleased with the fact that this trip was the first public steamboat excursion in Switzerland in the springtime season of 2014.

Vintage motor boat 'Reuss' finds a new owner

It was announced in January that the entrepreneur Samih Sawiris (who is developing a major new resort at Andermatt), has bought the vintage motor boat 'Reuss'. The ship, dating from 1926 was taken out of service by the Lake Luzern Navigation Company (SGV) in autumn 2012. It has now been the subject of an extensive internal refurbishment by the SGV-Tochter Shiptec that has just been completed. Samih Sawiris has noted that the reason he wanted to preserve the ship was that it formed "part of the cultural heritage of the Lake Luzern region. It is planned to use the ship in the future mainly on charters. 

RBe 4/4 No.1405 and a composition of Draisinen Sammlung Fricktal DSF operated for VHSTB excursion as a special train between Luzern-Luino (Italy) and return.

