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4. While staying at Zurich in June 1963 we joined this steam special on the Sihltalbahn.

5. Swans nesting by the sidings at Stansstad in April 1964. If staff wanted to move coaches in the nesting season they could be faced with aggressive swans!

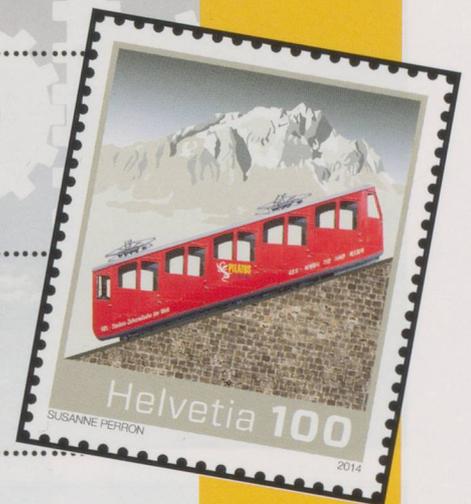
6. 11 June 1965. The author's 'Emergency Escape' from the Gemstock cable car, Andermatt.

Photo: A. B. MacLeod

Pilatus Philately

Michael Farr

125 Jahre Pilatus Zahnradbahn 125 ans du chemin de fer à crémaillère du Pilatus
 125 anni delle ferrovie a cremagliera del Pilatus 125 Years Pilatus cogwheel railway



This year's postage stamp issue with a railway theme celebrates 125-years of the steepest cogwheel railway – the Pilatusbahn. Swiss Post issued a CHF1.00 stamp on 8th May and this will be available from post offices for a year, or until stocks are exhausted. A sheetlet of 10 stamps is also available as well as a "maximum card" – a postcard with a picture of the little red railcar dwarfed by the mountainside as it climbs at a remarkably steep angle. The card can be bought only at the special philatelic counters, or by post.

The railway began operating on 4th June 1889 after 600 men had toiled for 400 days to construct this, still the steepest cogwheel railway in the world. Due to the gradient of the line the engineer Eduard Locher-Freuler (1840-1910) designed a unique rack system, named after him, and because he later turned his efforts to bridge and tunnel

building no other railway uses this particular design of rack. He also chose a gauge of 800mm and introduced some particularly small radius curves as his line conquered gradients of up to 48%, almost 1 in 2, over 4.5km.

Mount Pilatus, 2,132m high, is shrouded in legend. Its name is said to come from Pontius Pilate whose soul came to rest in a small Alpen lake as he wrestled with his guilt over the crucifixion of Christ. According to the legend anyone disturbing his spirit would cause a devastating storm and in an effort to protect against this the Council of Lucerne forbade people from walking on the mountain, which became known as the forbidden mountain. This restriction was lifted at the end of the 16th century, so today's visitors can wander at will. There are, however, no guarantees about the weather! 