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generally is taking its toll on Swiss tourism. All in all I thoroughly enjoyed my trip down 'memory lane' and the chance to fill in some of the blanks in my Swiss experience. Not everyone would wish to travel quite as intensively as I did but of course the more use you can make of it the better value the Swiss Pass becomes. It did occur to me in one idle moment that there could be an opportunity for someone to present some suggested 'Swiss Pass' itineraries in book form. Add some recommended hotels, and maybe market some fixed price accommodation vouchers, as Thomas Cook did in the very early days of Swiss tourism, and it could be just the thing to fill some of those empty seats! 

TOP LEFT: Elderly but still smiling, Be4/8 No 42 about to depart Ponte Tresa for Lugano on 7th July.


BOTTOM LEFT: The Rhb 'Bernina Express' bus operates the daily 10 a.m., 3-hour long, service from Lugano to Tirano.

TOP RIGHT: Rhaetian Railways Allegra, No. 3510, runs along the street at Chur as it arrives from Arosa on 11 July.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Rigiabahn No. 16 runs down towards Vitznau with its train of vintage stock on 13th July.



Puzzle picture

No prize for recognising Basel SBB, but the picture raises an interesting question. All over Switzerland, there are cases where a third rail is added to ensure that trains of different gauges (usually metre- and standard gauge) can use the same alignment. Does any reader know when the third rail was added to the track through certain platforms at Basel SBB? Was a metre gauge train or tram expected here? 

Tracks in Basel SBB on a sunny winter morning.
Photo: Bryan Stone



50 years of the Luzern-Stans-Engelberg Mario Gavazzi

On 19th December 1964 the first through service trains ran on the newly formed Luzern-Stans-Engelberg (LSE) line, after the completion of the link between Hergiswil and Stansstad that enabled trains from the former Stansstad-Engelberg-Bahn (StEB) to run through to Luzern along the SBB's Brünigbahn. The StEB was built as a metre-gauge line utilising sections of Riggensbach rack, opened in 1898, and was electrified (3-phase @ 800V) from the beginning. At the opening it was the longest electrified railway in Switzerland. The connection to the rest of the Swiss rail system was by steamer from its lakeside station at Stansstad to Luzern. However it was always its intention to have a physical link to the network, but it was only in 1956 that it obtained a Federal Concession to build this. After some years spent raising the necessary capital, work on the 1780m Lopper tunnel commenced in 1960 and this was completed in early 1964, along with the track to link the new line to the original at a relocated Stansstad station. The last StEB train ran on

the 27th August 1964 and in the next 3½ months the old section of line was upgraded to Brünigbahn standards, and the electrical supply was converted to the SBB standard of 15.000V, 16.7Hz. New rolling stock arrived to replace the original equipment that was still soldiering-on 66 years after the first opening of the line. The LSE remained an independent company until 2005 when it was merged with the SBB's Brünigbahn operation to become the Zentralbahn (ZB), in which the SBB has a two-thirds shareholding. The 50th anniversary of the opening of the LSE was celebrated by the ZB between 19th and 21st December with various events and decorated trains. On each day all passengers on the IR trains between Luzern and Engelberg were presented with a small book outlining the history of both the StEB and LSE, and ZB staff distributed jubilee chocolate and postcards of the rolling stock to everyone using the line. At Engelberg the cinema showed a special film about the development of the LSE. +

Photo: Mario Gavazzi

Puzzle picture on page 11 – an explanation

The third rail, inside the standard gauge running rails, is not a running rail but a check-rail. If a train or vehicle were to derail in the station, it might severely threaten the stability of the overall roof that is carried on the elderly cast iron columns shown in the picture. The check-rail is therefore a precaution. It could not be a narrow gauge running rail, as it is on the wrong side, and would remove a narrow gauge train from the platform face. No metre-gauge service was ever planned here. Thanks to Bryan Stone for this. +

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