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Walking the Gemmi Pass


Phil Emond



MAIN PICTURE: Looking back down on Leukerbad.
LEFT: The cablecar up from Leukerbad.


Photos: Phil Emond

On Page 9 of the March *Swiss Express* Paul Jenkins states that he has always fancied the walk to Kandersteg along the Gemmi Pass from Leukerbad. I recommend anyone to do it. My friend Mike Rourke and I did it in 2013 on a very grand Alpine summer day with T-shirts and shorts as the dress code. We started from Montreux in the morning taking the train to Leuk, then by bus to Leukerbad. This is the easy way with very little climbing in this direction, as we first took the cable car from Leukerbad (1432m) up to the Pass at 2348m. There is a Hotel Bar half way along the route, followed by a fantastic ride down into the Kandertal on the Sonnabull Cable Car. From its base station it is an approx. 45 to 60min walk to Kandersteg station and en-route there are small bars either side of the rail bridge for some deserved refreshment. There is a bus every hour to Kandersteg from the Sonnabull base station, but at the time Swiss Passes were not valid. At the rail bridge you have two ways to the station. On one you pass the Crystal Bar (if you call-in say hello to Doris for me!) and follow the road into town turning left at the famous Church. Turning left before the Bridge you pass the World

International Scout Centre that I have written about in an earlier edition of *Swiss Express*. Here the new building on your right is the one from the Lötschberg Base Tunnel work site and over the river the first part of the main building is all that is left from the original tunnel work site. You can follow the river and path all the way to Kandersteg station. It was a great day out, and we returned to Montreux by train back from Kandersteg to Brig, then down the Rhone valley. 

“Where’s Heidi?”

How well do you know Switzerland? Heidi Marriott’s father and husband (not called Peter!!) are both SRS members and she visits Switzerland regularly. On her travels she takes lots of photos and has suggested a possible short series of photo tests to see if you can recognise where some of her pictures were taken.


Do you know where this statue is? I’m sure most of you will have been there. *The answer is on Page 41.* 



MODELLING NEWS

It fits an irregular wall-profile and I could not afford the input to a swear box that would be required if I had to dismantle, transport and re-erect an exhibition layout.

The layout is supported on 2" x 1" timber. The shelving lower down helps to give the structure rigidity. The timber varies in height according to whether it supports the actual baseboard or a lower-level surface for scenery below the line of the railway. Those lower-lying areas are usually supported on thin ply; Sundeala supports the railway. I have used Sundeala for many years as it can be cut easily to any curved profile and readily takes track pins. However, Sundeala does need adequate bracing, roughly every 18" x 12". Careful thought needs to be given to the bracing in advance to avoid having timber exactly where you are going to install an under-track point motor. Sta. Maria is my first layout to use a traverser-style fiddle yard as including Valcava meant I had not got the space for a traditional fan of turnouts. I knew my lack of technical know-how might cause problems but overcame this by simply fixing the fiddle yard baseboard to plastic-coated chipboard runners that slide on a sub-base of the same material. This provides for smooth operation, the runners being kept in place by more pieces of chipboard that are fixed to the sub-base. Bolts lock the assembly in place for each of the four possible track alignments.

In Part 2, I will provide a commentary on track-laying, wiring and scenic work plus a brief look to the future. 

5. A brace of Ge4/4's; No.612 'Thusis' arrives at Sta. Maria, passing No.624 S-chanf on shed.

6. ABe4/4 No.502 has left Sta. Maria and makes its way up the valley.



NEW - SRS 2016 Calendar

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So where was Heidi?

The statue is outside Zürich Hauptbahnhof.
Easy - or was it?

