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SUMMER NOTES FROM THE GRAUBÜNDEN

Michael Donovan's return to Tarasp 18th – 30th June 2016

On my outward journey to Tarasp along the Prättigau from Landquart I observed the remains of a major washout that had affected both the road and the Rhätische Bahn east of Furna, resulting in a huge pile of mud and other spoil being piled-up between the line and the road. At Küblis, little progress had been made since my report in *Swiss Express* No.125 (P38) with just one track still in place through the station, although it appears likely that there will be four platforms. One of these appears to be a bay platform that would support a shuttle service from Landquart. On my return journey, canopies were being erected. Also on my return journey it appeared that a new section of road along the valley was being declared open, with lots of people scurrying around, a marquee erected (for the usual "Bier und Bratwurst", one presumes), plus a small grandstand that had been erected on part of the new road. An unexpected "spot" on the outward journey was a Ge6/6^{11} working a Scuol/Tarasp to Disentis/Mustér service. These are usually worked by Ge4/4^{11}s.

On the first 'working day' of my holiday, I walked along to a farm shop – well, farm produce with an honesty box for payments! This took me past the sawmill that I mentioned previously but although it was working, neither of its trolleys was outside, so I was limited to measuring the track gauge – around 750mm.

A really interesting element of the working along the Engadin was related to engineering work between Saglians and Susch, where it appears that the 232m Sasslatsch I tunnel was being overhauled. Track had been lifted and the overhead line removed. In consequence, all trains were diverted via the tunnel station of Saslatch Nord, in the Vereina tunnel from Saglians to Klosters. Here they reversed. Automated announcements were made in only German and English (on-train announcements in the Engadin are usually made in German, Romansch and English, in that order). No notices about the work were seen, and no re-timings of services were published. The usual crossing movement between the Pontresina – Scuol/Tarasp services at Susch was moved to Saslatch, and other crossing movements on the Engadin were adjusted as necessary in an ad-hoc manner. This meant that connections at Saglians between the Pontresina to Scuol/Tarasp services and the Scuol/Tarasp to Disentis/Mustér services resulted in the latter departing late, with possible impacts on other services en route. West of Saslatch, trains were running with the locomotive on the "wrong" end – usually, the driving trailer vehicle is at the Pontresina end. Probably in connection with this work, the station pilot at Zernez, Tm2/2 90, was supplemented by engineers' Tm2/2 97, equipped with a lifting arm, and this was observed on 27 June scuttling towards Susch.

On two occasions I observed a St Moritz – Landquart two-hourly service that was formed with one of the new rakes of coaches being built for the Chur – St Moritz service, although still without the driving trailer vehicle. A regular performer on the Engadin shuttle was blue-liveried Ge4/4^{11} No.619, "Samedan". The livery was advertising the southeast of Switzerland - but it was inevitable that I came to think of it as "Gordon"!The 10.15 arrival at Scuol/Tarasp from Disentis/Mustér regularly conveyed a bogie pallet van. The station pilot locomotive No.111 would be champing at the bit when the train arrived, and would shunt-off this vehicle and position it alongside the loading dock within a couple of minutes of the train coming to a halt. On one occasion, having observed the train arrive from my bus from Tarasp, the van was already being emptied by the time the bus arrived at the station, some ten minutes later! Work was being undertaken on a short viaduct to the west of Ftan Bagalia with the red safety netting, in which it was draped, being very visible from across the valley. The siding at the station had been lifted, with the panels of track fitted with steel-sleepers stacked in convenient places, in order to create a worksite for the contractors undertaking the work. On my return journey to Landquart Ge6/6ii No.703 was observed on a freight train at Klosters Platz, together with an engineers' Gmf4/4 No.242.

Finally, it occurred to me for the first time that it cannot be a coincidence that the overhead line stanchions on both the Engadin and the Landquart valleys are almost invariably situated on the opposite side of the train to the best views. *Can it ?*