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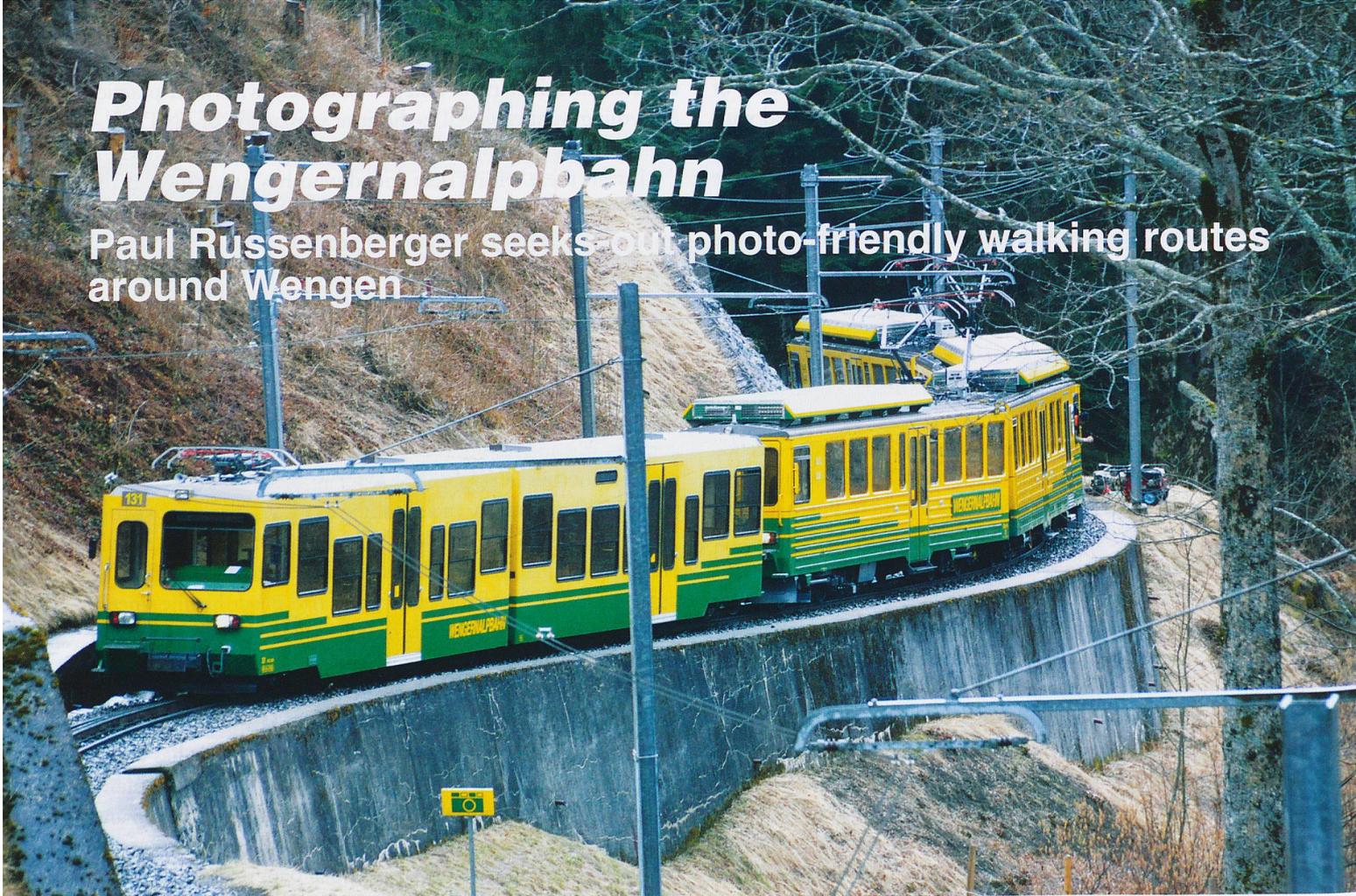
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Photographing the Wengernalpbahn

Paul Russenberger seeks out photo-friendly walking routes around Wengen



No.131 on the difficult to access section of the WAB.

All photos: Paul Russenberger

There have always seemed to be two sections of the Wengernalpbahn which are relatively inaccessible for lineside photography – the line immediately above Wengen through the woods to Bannwald and the more interesting section between Lauterbrunnen and the 248m Chehr Tunnel below Wengwald. Here the line clings to the very steep slope, which almost forms a cliff below Wengen where there are, inevitably, few paths and dense woods. An afternoon of light drizzle during a skiing holiday in March gave me the opportunity to find out just what photographs could be achieved – and it can be done.

From Wengen station go northwards along the main street

away from the railway. After passing 'Inter-Sport' on the right, any left turn will bring you down to the railway. However, you can continue on and fork left at the top of the short slope after the pharmacy, following the signs to the Hotel Bellevue. On the left, before the Hotel, a path leads down, crossing the line to Wengwald station, which affords some photographic opportunities. Retrace your steps across the railway and immediately turn left going away from Wengen. The path leads downhill and swings round across the tunnel; you can take a short cut down some steps. Just after crossing the tunnel mouth the path is close to the railway for a very short distance before dropping down very steeply through the woods. There is no railway

boundary fence, so at what point is one 'on or about the lineside', i.e. trespassing, is not clear, but trains can be photographed here easily?

The continued descent through the woods is steep with a very long sequence of hairpin bends, but it was never slippery. There are occasional glimpses of the BOB line immediately below Lauterbrunnen. I passed a group of half a dozen British walkers making the ascent who responded rather blankly to my 'Gruezi' and a Swiss who was actually sweeping leaves off the path. Eventually the path comes out of the woods and

WAB No. 31 entering the Chehr tunnel.



joins another. Lauterbrunnen is signed in both directions, but turn left (the right-hand path indicates 'über Alte Kirche'). First Lauterbrunnen station and later the WAB bridge over the Lütschine are clearly visible. After a few hundred meters the WAB can be seen a little above on the left. A path leads up to cross the line on an over bridge, which provides further opportunities. Lauterbrunnen station is reached by continuing along the original path.

There is a foot crossing about half way up the railway between Lauterbrunnen and Wengwald. I was not able to establish how this is accessed for certain, but there is a path below the railway at Wengwald station in the direction of Wengen which, from a close study of 'Landeskarte der Schweiz - 5004', may lead to it. A round trip from Wengen back to Wengen, including photography, took two and a half hours with relatively leisurely walking.

Postscript: Taking the first opportunity on the Monday of the holiday due to poor skiing weather to explore these walks, instead of the Wednesday as planned, proved fortunate. An accident on the Tuesday left me somewhat disabled, but an enforced visit to the MRI scanner in Interlaken enabled me to update my photographs of Wilderswil! 



1. WAB No.147 complete with snow plough seen from overbridge at the bottom end.

2. Wengen in the snow.

3. WAB No.131 immediately below the Chehr Tunnel.

4. A BOB train below Lauterbrunnen.

5. A 'aerial view' of Lauterbrunnen.

