

Zeitschrift: Swiss express : the Swiss Railways Society journal
Herausgeber: Swiss Railways Society
Band: - (2017)
Heft: 131

Rubrik: Society pages

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In the June edition of the *Swiss Express* you will have read about the on-going project between BRB, Snowdon Mountain Railway and STC, 'Switzerland 2 Snowdon' that was due to take place this September. We have now been informed that this project has been postponed until 2018. We hope to receive more information about this in the coming months.

Member's Area of the Society Website

The Username for 2017 to access the "Members' Area" of the Society website is **MOB@swissrailsoc.org.uk**. The 2017 password is printed on your 2017 membership card.

SRS on Facebook

The SRS has a Facebook presence. Our Facebook page is at: <https://www.facebook.com/swissrailwaysociety/> It is hoped that being on will promote the Society and will be a vehicle where we can put announcements at short notice. We also have a Facebook Group page at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/swissrailwaysociety/> Members can join, ask questions, post photos and videos. Please 'like' our Facebook page and join this closed group and make use of it.

Member's Letters

From: K.L.Turns – Torquay, UK

The European Rail Timetable – I was very interested to read the eulogy of the ERT by Mr Foster (*Swiss Express* No.130) as I have been a devotee of this timetable for years, and I also use it for UK information. However it seems that Mr Foster has been luckier than myself. In 2014 I set out to explore the narrow gauge railways of Northern Spain. I reached Lourdes all right, but on returning early to the station for the onward journey to Pau I saw the train disappearing. As this was the only suitable connection at Pau for my onward journey via Canfranc to Zaragoza this caused this part of my trip to fail. On checking the circumstances it appeared that a special timetable was in operation. This had no relationship to the 'official' one correctly shown in the ERT. Then followed an expensive diversion to Bayonne in order to re-join my planned schedule at Burgos. Such are the vagaries of the SNCF! The next morning I crossed the border to the RENFE station only to find the timetable was completely different to that shown in the ERT, resulting in a frustrating two-hour wait for the next Burgos departure. Fortunately the remainder of the trip went to plan, despite perennial delays on the FEVE narrow gauge system I had travelled to see.

Editor's Note. In fairness to the ERT it can only publish information received from local operators. The publishers of the ERT would have had no knowledge of the changed RENFE timetable unless notified some time in advance. It would seem that the problem at Lourdes was a purely local and temporary issue. Probably your travel problems were more to do with cultural attitudes in France and Spain than the accuracy of the ERT.

From: Edward Vaughan – By Email

Lugano – Another funicular - May I raise one point regarding this article (*Swiss Express* No.130). In it the author states that the equipment in the upper station was present until recently, whilst the sole car was at the lower station until 2012. In 2006 and 2008 I took holidays in Lugano and was

curious to find the funicular almost intact although closed for 20 years. The sole car was present in the upper station and could be seen from the steps alongside the track. Had the car been at the lower station it would have been possible to examine it, however the top station proved impossible to access, even by trying to walk up the track.

Editor's note. A check with a third party has confirmed that the car had been located at the lower station at various times after closure. Perhaps the line was simply 'mothballed' and occasional maintenance moves took place. As noted, much of the infrastructure is still in-situ. In practice it would probably have been easier to finally remove the car from the lower station.

From: David Adams – By Email

Luzern Derailment - I usually turn first to the *Swiss Express News* pages and in issue No.130 I soon stumbled on a factual error. The second paragraph on P.32 states that there are three bi-directional running tracks on the standard gauge approach to Luzern. There are in fact only two tracks for much of this distance. The layout is as follows. Approaching Luzern, at the point where the single line from Rotkreuz joins the double-track section from Emmenbrücke, there are three tracks for approximately 1km to a point just short of where the single line from Immensee joins, near to the Gütsch tunnel and the following cutting as far as the station throat. A third line does appear on the left about 200m before reaching the station throat, but this is only a siding which often houses an NPZ unit. The track layout is clearly shown by following this link <https://map.search.ch/?pos=666784,211668&z=64> and zooming in until the detail required appears.

If there were three lines throughout this section then operational problems would be solved almost at a stroke. I often marvel at the ingenuity required to maximise smooth operations over this section. Crossing from one line to the other halfway between Gütsch and the Luzern station throat allows for some tight timetabling of departing and arriving services but also causes problems when a train is out of course. The only option to improve capacity and operational flexibility appears to be the expensive proposal to resort to tunnelling and make Luzern a through station.

From: Pierre Coester – By Email

Tracing a Ticket – Although not a member of the SRS I am fortunate to see *Swiss Express* thanks to a friend who passes-on a copy to me here in France. I was particularly interested in some of the references to routes and locations in Alsace contained in the item about travelling to Switzerland in July 1914 (*Swiss Express* No. 129). In practice after the German annexation of Alsace-Lorraine that followed the 'Franco-German War', or the 'War of 1870' as it is known in France, the area including its administration and railways, was not under Prussian control but that of the Imperial Government. Although Prussia was the leading State in the North German Confederation that instigated the conflict, it was only one of many, and the annexed lands fell under the mandate of the National Government as 'Reichsland'. In 1916 the area around Petit Croix (part of the French Territoire de Belfort) and Montreux-Vieux (Alt-Münsterol)

was the first part of French/Alsatian territory to be re-taken by the French Army, who then rapidly built a new railway behind the front-line to connect Montreux-Vieux with an existing branch line from Mulhouse further to the north. Today Petit Croix is the junction where the new Rhône-Rhein LGV joins the Belfort-Mulhouse line, although plans for an extension of the LGV on to Mulhouse exist. In 2014 the local municipality acquired the former Montreux-Vieux station and it is now in use as a bistro. The substantial German Customs and Frontier Police buildings are now apartments.

From: Geoffrey Bryson – By Email

Switzerland 1902 - It really was a different country! - This article (*Swiss Express No.130*) made me look at my original 1908 edition of Baedeker's Switzerland - although published six years later not a lot changed quickly in Edwardian times! There was just a half-page about motoring that noted "*Motors Cars entering Switzerland are subject to a Customs Duty of 40 Gold Francs per 100 Kilograms and 60 francs if leather upholstered*" - which seemed a bit harsh - "*refundable on departure if within six months*". Members of the Automobile Club de Suisse, or associated clubs, were exempt from this Duty and the driver's own countries driving licences were accepted. It notes that many roads in Switzerland were entirely forbidden to motorcars and motor cycles including the entire Canton Grisons, plus the Furka and Grimsel roads, mountain roads in Valais and certain mountain roads in Uri and Glarus. All the great mountain passes were also barred, except the St Gotthard, Simplon and Brünig. These were open at certain times only. Pedal cycles had similar rules and were subject to Customs Duty of 12 Gold Francs each. Between the 1865 foundation of the Latin Monetary Union and 1914 there were 25.222 Gold Francs to One Gold Sovereign (£1 sterling). The values of the Gold Franc and the Gold Sovereign were based upon the actual gold content of the coins and acted as a baseline for the exchange rate of the respective currencies.

Lugano – Another funicular – This article was also in the same magazine. My Baedeker also contained information about the Hotel Bristol that was subsequently (in 1913) served by the funicular. In 1908 the hotel had 100 beds and charged between CHF9 and CHF18 for full pension/person/day, or between 7s 2p and 14s 4p at the exchange rate current at the time. For comparison it was noted on P10 of *Swiss Express No.129* that in 1914 the Polytechnic Touring Association were offering a fully inclusive 2-week Swiss holiday, including travel to/from London, for £10/person at

a time when a skilled craftsman's wage was some £1.50/week. In 1908 the Chaplain of St Edward's Anglican Church (opposite the hotel) was the Revd. V. T. T. Orgil, MA, and this was apparently one of 52 'English' Churches in Switzerland at the time. My Baedeker notes that Anglican services were also held in over 80 other resorts local protestant churches or hotels, etc. It was not just a different country, but a different time!

From: Frank Hornby – By Email

A Commune Takes Pride in its Past - I was fascinated by this article as it was a revelation to me and brought back vivid memories of my own experience of travelling by rail through Switzerland as a serviceman 30 years later - in April 1946. This was in the course of a journey from Calais to Napoli on one of the 'Medloc' trains, which brought service personnel from the Middle East to and from home leave in the U.K. In my case the homeward journey had been by troop ship to Southampton but on my return, to my great surprise, we were taken to Dover and shipped across the Channel to Calais where we joined a train of Italian stock, hauled initially by an SNCF 'Nord' 4-6-2 for a long and uncomfortable journey, mainly overnight, by-passing Paris by the 'Ceinture' and thence down the PLM main line through Dijon to Vallorbe. I had been noting down the numbers of locos seen and recorded our new SBB 'electric' there as '4-6-2 No. 18511' which I now believe must have been a mistake. However I did better thereafter, particularly at Lausanne, where many of the residents were on the platform to greet us with gifts of chocolate! I recorded four steam 4-6-0s and one 2-6-0 there, and subsequently examples of electric classes 'Ae3/5', 'Ae3/6' and 'Ae4/77'; also with tantalising glimpses of private railways en-route through Brig to Domodossola. I was so enthralled by this brief experience of Switzerland that I resolved to go back, and although it was 1959 before the opportunity arose, I have returned many times since.

Member's Advertisements

For sale:

New Book - Swiss Narrow Gauge South and West (2017): Softback; A4; 36-pages with 120 colour photographs. Direct from the author @ £10.00, including postage. Send to: Jason Sargerson, 17, Muirfield Park, Westbourne Avenue, Hull, East Yorkshire, HU5 3JF. Contact Tel: 01 482 446 451, or by Email: jasonsargerson88@gmail.com Cheques payable to Jason Sargerson. Please see my website for further details: www.jasonsargerson.uk. 

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Philip Nalpanis

beyond these limits, you need only pay the fare from the limit onwards (e.g. to reach Preda you buy a ticket Spinas-Preda). There is a CHF10 deposit, but this is refunded if the card is returned at the end of the stay. This is an amazing deal, surely even better than the Ela-card mentioned in *Swiss Express No 127*, although the visitor's tax is CHF3.35 per night! For more information, and a list of participating hotels/hostels, see <http://www.engadin.stmoritz.ch/sommer/en/bergbahnen-inclusive/>. 