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A link with an old era disappears



At the Flüelen cargo port, shortly before scrapping; right side ex-SGV-motorship "Reuss". All photos: Mario Gavazzi

Mario Gavazzi reports on the scrapping of the last Trajektschiff on the Vierwaldstättersee

In *Swiss Express* No.134 Bryan Stone recalled the era of the freight steamboats that operated on the Thunersee. The Vierwaldstättersee also once saw the movement of railway wagons on steam ferries (Trajektschiffe). The scrapping of a vessel at Flüelen in June 2018 destroyed a link to this past.

Following the opening of the Gotthard railway in 1882 a series of railway freight links by water were developed along with the new rail connections. In 1890 such operations commenced between Luzern, Flüelen and Stansstad. The principle of the steam-powered ferry boat was that it was able to call at any ship landing stage. The main landing stage at Luzern was originally at Bahnhofplatz, but after the opening of the Hauptbahnhof in 1895 this landing stage was moved to a position near the shipyard of the Dampfschiffahrtsgesellschaft (DGV, today's SGV). The Trajektschiff operation ended officially in 1920 although there are records of movements later in the 1920s. The first Trajektschiff was ordered by DGV and constructed by Escher Wyss Zürich. It entered service in 1890 as DGV1. In 1895 DGV purchased two Thunersee Trajektschiffe: one was immediately sold to Northern Italy but the other entered service on Lake Luzern as DGV2. DGV1 was subsequently sold in 1923 to a company called Diwig GmbH in Berlin leaving DGV2 on the lake.

After 1930 a freight company based at Luzern called 'Seekag' operated DGV2 on their own account, subsequently purchasing it in 1932. During WW2, by order of the Army, DGV2 had to be ready for the transport of military freight. After the war it was laid up out of use for many years. In 1963/64 the ship was converted into a road freight vehicle ferry and at the same time the steam engine was replaced by a diesel unit. The vessel was renamed the mv 'Luzern' and registered as LU11. LU11 was finally replaced at the end of

2017 by a new larger capacity freight ferry called 'Fritz'. LU11's final trip in June 2018 was a voyage to Flüelen for scrapping. Thus with that scrapping the last tangible link to what was once a Thunersee Trajektschiff has gone, although it is thanks to these photographs and the archaeology revealed by Bryan Stone that this era will never be forgotten. 



ABOVE: Shortly before the last trip to Flüelen for scrapping. BELOW: The last days at Flüelen, June 28, 2018.

