

Zeitschrift: Swiss express : the Swiss Railways Society journal
Herausgeber: Swiss Railways Society
Band: - (2019)
Heft: 137

Artikel: Bad weather is sometimes good weather! : Mario Gavazzi looks at 2018's Seetalbahn Remisenfest...
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-853801>

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Bad weather is sometimes good weather! Mario Gavazzi looks at 2018's Seetalbahn Remisenfest ...



Lots of guests on the area of the Remise at Hochdorf.

Photo: Mario Gavazzi

Eight weeks of exceptionally hot weather was good for some, but threatened the operation of the annual Remisenfest (Depot Festival), organised by the Verein Historische Seethalbahn (HSTB) at its restored Hochdorf Depot on the first weekend of September. Then the weather broke. The end of August brought rainy and cold weather, which allowed the suspension of all steam trains operated by coal-fired locomotives to be cancelled, so the event could go ahead. So the conclusion this year for the HSTB and all its visitors is that bad weather is sometimes more welcome than (too) hot temperatures!

Hochdorf in Canton Luzern is an important small town with some industry and an increasing number of residents. It is also an important station on the SBB's Seetalbahn, with a long history (see www.historische-seethalbahn.ch). The HSTB depot is served by some industrial sidings that unfortunately have not been too well maintained. Unless essential remedial work is carried out it may not be possible to run the special steam service to Hitzkirch that is a big feature of the annual event.

Special guest in September 2018 was Dampfbahn Bern with the Eb 3/5 No.5810 and two coaches. This guest train made special trips to Luzern or Eschenbach, together with ex SBB De 6/6 'Seetal-krokodil'. HSTB's museum train, headed by E 3/3 No.456 (originally Nordost-Bahn, later Von Moos Eisenwerke Emmenbrücke, then restored at Balsthal) made special trips to Hitzkirch. Steam loco E 3/3 'Beinwyl' was also present at the festival. The trains to and from Hitzkirch were 'shared' by passengers with the 'oldtimer' motorbus operated by Kaspar Bechter: one group used the bus to Hitzkirch, the other the train. At Hitzkirch passengers could change between train and the 'oldtimer' Seetal-Krokodil De 6/6 No.15302.

Photo: Mario Gavazzi



bus. Despite, or perhaps thanks to, the weather, all visitors, who also enjoyed the model railway exhibition that was open on the depot site, had a good time.

... and Philip Elwin adds his observations on the event

For the second year running we made the journey to Hochdorf to enjoy the Remisenfest. This is perhaps not the biggest of events, but this family-friendly show brings together steam locomotives, the surviving 'Seetal Crocodile', and a mixture of operating and static models from Switzerland and across Europe. It goes without saying that the most important part of any real Swiss event, the catering, is first class. Production of endless quantities of two sorts of sausages; steaks; fries, and an assortment of drinks, was carried out by the usual stalwart group of volunteers, the whole being accompanied by a typically Swiss brass band.

Arriving at Hochdorf, steam and smoke signalled the way via the underpass to the depot, which was free to access. All four locos were employed on the trips described above by Mario, the smaller two topping-and-tailing their trains and making plenty of noise. Rides could be had for a reasonable CHF15. The model railway exhibition is under cover in the loco shed and provides inspiration for those of us interested in this side of the railway hobby. Among this year's layouts were ones featuring; Saxon narrow gauge; Belgian electric trams; and US operations, all accompanied by some finely detailed dioramas. A miniature steam loco was providing rides for the younger element in the car park.

The 2019 event is planned for 7/8th September. Keep an eye on their web site. 



1. Ex NOB E 3/3 No.456, built in 1894. *Photo: Philip Elwin*
 2. Splendid model scenery in the Remise at Hochdorf. *Photo: Mario Gavazzi*
 3. HSTB train at Hitz. *Photo: Mario Gavazzi*
 4. E3/3 Beinwil of 1882 vintage. *Photo: Philip Elwin*
 5. Trains and the sound of music by Musikgesellschaft Baldegg. *Photo: Mario Gavazzi*
 6. Eb 3/5 No.5810 (called Habersack) with train of Dampfbahn Bern. *Photo: Mario Gavazzi*

