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be known as Schweizer Bergwelt, features the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau plus Matterhorn mountain backdrops with a Lauterbrunnen model in build. The active modeller informed John that they were confident the room would be fully operational and open to visitors in the autumn.




Eiger in build.

Photo: John Steedman

Editor's Note

Sometimes these reports contain prior notice of planned work and interruptions of normal services. These are without guarantee. Readers must check locally, or on websites, when travelling to avoid disappointment, but also because such projects can change even at short notice.

Swiss News was compiled by the Editor with input from David Carpenter, Sholto Thomas and Robert Amstutz. 



RhB ABDe 4/4 No. 452 at Mesocco in 1976.

Photo: Martin Fisher

Forty years ago this month, on 9 December 1979, the upper section of the curious line that threaded the Misox valley, straddling the Ticino/Graubünden border north east of Castione-Arbedo, was formally closed. In fact it had been impassable since 6 August the previous year after prolonged torrential rainfall had breached the formation in no less than twelve locations. It was the beginning of the end for the branch which had been conceived with high ambitions but, in truth, was doomed to failure from the day it opened.

The electric railway Bellinzona-Mesocco (BM) stemmed from the idea of a rail connection between the capital of Ticino and the Graubünden transport crossroads of Thusis.

For that reason construction was carried out as far as possible according to the standards of the Rätische Bahn (RhB). It was electrified from the outset at 1,500 volts DC with energy being supplied from a hydro-electric plant at Cebbia, above Mesocco.


The line was 31 km long and its trains had to overcome a height difference of 538 metres over that length which necessitated a ruling gradient of 60‰. In all there were sixteen crossings and halts, crossing facilities being provided at ten points. From Bellinzona to Mesocco the line crossed 26 bridges (total length 561m) and three tunnels (85m). The maximum line speed was 45 kph.

officially closed and lifted.

After the closure of Valmoesa steelworks at San Vittore in 1987, RhB could only offer freight services to a few industrial users in Grono and Cama, these involving the transport of standard gauge wagons on metre gauge transporter bogies. This traffic finally ceased in 2003.

In 2003 a concession was awarded to the Società Esercizio Ferroviario Turistici (SEFT) to operate a preserved railway, which was carried out under the name of Ferrovia Mesolcinese (FM). Services originally operated over the entire remaining line from Castione-Arbedo to Cama. However in 2014 residential property development in Roveredo and expansion plans at Castione-Arbedo resulted in a further reduction in track length to just 3.9km between a point near Grono and Cama. Finally on 5 June 2016, the concession for the final stretch was withdrawn.

Much of the line can still be followed on foot and many of

the station buildings along the valley still stand. Older members may still have in their collection issue 65 of *Swiss Express* for December 2000 in which our current Chairman, John Jesson, describes a walk along it. 

LEFT: 200 Franc share certificate.

RIGHT: Map of Mesocco by Cathy Hickey.



Stamp News



In our last issue we told the story of the Bodensee Trajektfähre (train ferries). As we reported, this year marked the 150th anniversary of the launch of the first ferry in 1869. The Swiss Post Office issued a pair of commemorative stamps in May to mark the occasion which we reproduce here. Originals can be ordered from



www.postshop.ch/shop/en/philately/single-stamps/150-years-lake-line-train-ferry/p/548538.

Swiss Post's collectors' magazine *'Focus on Stamps'* is available in English either as a pdf download or online here: www.magazine-focus-on-stamps.ch/en. 