

Avoiding the commonplace

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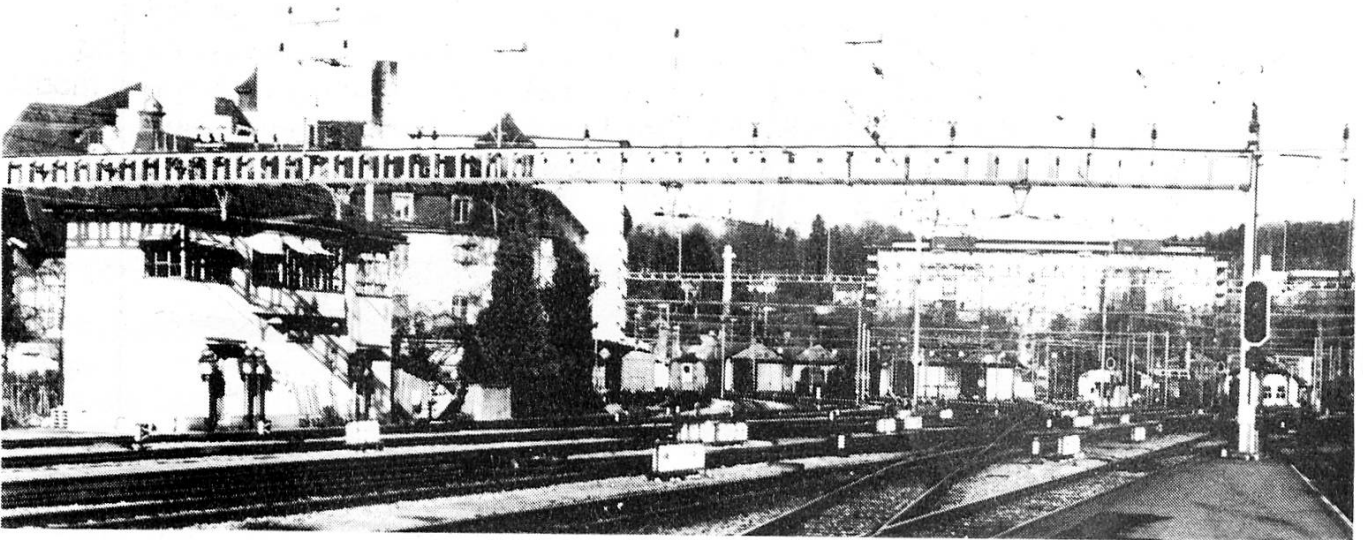
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AVOIDING THE COMMONPLACE By Martin Coupe

I have nothing whatsoever against Re 4/4 II locomotives; on the contrary they are excellent machines but one can have too much of a good thing I hoped that my July 1985 holiday in North-Eastern Switzerland would provide opportunities for travel behind more venerable motive power. I was not disappointed.

Helpful locomen at Zurich depot provided details of passenger services likely to be worked by Ae 3/6^I and Ae 4/7 locos. One of them was the 16.19 Rapperswil Linthal train, which on the day of my visit was headed by Ae 4/7 No. 10927, hauling four passenger coaches, all of the double centre - entrance type, and a 'D' bogie brake van. I had travelled the linthal branch before, but it is an interesting and scenic line which will justify a second visit. In any case, the Rapperswil - Ziegelbrücke section was new to me. Ae4/7 no. 10916 was also present at Rapperswil on a train of P.T.T. vehicles, and one or two Ae3/6^I were visible in the locomotive depot, together with preserved Be6/8 III Crocodile no. 13302. At Ziegelbrücke, where the branch to Glarus and Linthal leaves the Zurich

Chur main line, two more Ae 4/7's were visible in the yard and sister loco 10933 was on an empty stock train (identical in composition to mine) in a station loop. However, these locos do not monopolise the Linthal trains - we crossed Re 4/4 II 11371 at Nafels - Mollis; but the Ae4/7's quickly re-established themselves at Glarus, where 10934 on a parcels working crossed my train.



*View from platform end Winterthur locomotive depot, stronghold of vintage motive power.
Photo Editor.*

Incidentally, at Glarus, the largest station on the branch, there is what appears to be a small steam locomotive in a shed - anyone able to provide details? At Luchsingen-Hatzingen we crossed a further Ae 4/7 on a passenger working. The upper reaches of the Linthal branch are steeply graded and sharply curved and our elderly Ae 4/7 made a pleasing sight as it climbed along the valley bottom with the snow-topped Glarus Alps on each side.

Arrival at Linthal coincided with a downpour, wide-brimmed regulation hats were accordingly donned by 10927's crew. The loco ran round its train, then the entire cavalcade reversed towards the sidings at the far end of the station to couple to a P.T.T. 'Z' type bogie coach, of a type similar to the Roco model. The 'Z' was working to Zurich, complete with travelling sorters. Also present at Linthal was

diesel tractor Tm^I 442, in new SBB red livery.

Shortly before our departure from Linthal Ae 4/7 10933 arrived on the train I had seen at Ziegelbrücke, but the next Linthal bound passenger train, which we crossed at Luchsingen, had a Re 4/4^{II}, as did the 1819 train from Rapperswil to Linthal, crossed at Nafeis-Mollis. Several more Ae 4/7's were observed on my way back to Zurich via Pfaffikon, all either light engines or on parcels workings.

The following day, I presented myself at Winterthur station. The Winterthur area is a stronghold of the Ae 3/6^I, Ae 4/7, and Re 4/4^I classes, and I was to see many examples during the next few days. I watched Re 4/4^I no. 10035 arrive on a train from Schaffhausen, then caught the 10.37 train to Wettingen, via Bulach, Koblenz and Baden. This was hauled, as my Zurich informants had predicted by an Ae 3/6^I, No. 10664, with three coaches, a 'D' brake van and a 'Z' bogie postal coach. The scenery on this journey did not match the impressive qualities of yesterday's run through the Glarus Alps, but it was pleasant enough, especially on the Winterthur - Bulach section. At the latter place, light engine Ae 4/7 no. 11026 was observed, a sister loco passed on a freight and Ae 3/6^I was observed coupled to three coaches. After an enjoyable run past the "Weiach-Keis" quarry, where Ae 6/6 no. 11520 was waiting with a hopper train, we arrived at the interesting junction of Koblenz. Two Ae 4/7's were seen, no. 11008 in the sidings and 11019 on the passenger train to Stein - Sackingen, on the Zurich - Basel main line. Not an Re 4/4^I in sight! At Dottingen the next station in the Turgi direction, I thought that this situation had changed, but no; the light engine we crossed turned out to be an Re 6/6, no. 11659, and at Siggenthal we crossed a further Ae 4/7, no. 10923, hauling two ancient vans. The preserved Ae 3/6^I no. 10601 was passed at Baden, and on arrival at Wettingen no. 10644 uncoupled. The P.T.T. coach being removed from the train and shunted by tractor Te^{III} no. 121 - the prototype for the Hag model.

Later the same day I experienced further vintage haulage when Ae 4/7 no. 10936 powered the 17.16 Zurich - Zug via Affoltern am Albis. This crowded rush hour local consisted of no fewer than ten coaches (no brake van) which 10936 handled without difficulty, passing wooded hillsides and small dormitory towns, which characterise this part rural, part suburban line. At Steinhausen, we crossed Ae 4/7 no. 11001 on a parcels working, but the crossing loop could not cope with a ten-coach train, whose guard brandished a red flag to indicate to 11001's driver that his loop exit would be obstructed until our departure. At Zug, no. 10936 shunted its train into a siding but detached one second class coach, with which it departed for Cham at 18.33. Why this ultra-short passenger train runs is a mystery to me. There appears to be no balancing return working and another train runs to Cham, a mere nine minutes later, as part of the regular - interval service to Luzern. After watching two more Ae 4/7's no. 11000 on a three-coach local from Zurich Alstetten and no. 10994 on a Zurich - Luzern parcels working, I returned to Zurich on the main (but partly single-track) line via Thalwil, behind a Re 6/6 which in contrast to 10936's ten coach train, was hauling a mere five bogies. Clearly a case of 'wear out the old' uns first! Later that evening at Zurich Ae 4/7 no. 10931 was observed powering the seven bogie 21.20 train to Winterthur via Wallisellen.

The afternoon of the following day again found me at Winterthur via where I was hoping for a run behind an Re 4/4. Eventually no. 10027 appeared and coupled to the Wettingen train. This entailed a second visit to the Winterthur - Eglisau - Baden route, though I did not intend to travel the whole line again, preferring to alight at Koblenz and take the Stein - Sackingen train. 10027 provided a smooth,

fast run between stations, fully justifying the class's nickname of 'Badewanne', a well known make of sewing machine ! En route to Koblenz we crossed Ae 4/7 no. 10912 on a local freight and Re 4/41 no. 10030 on a six-coach + D local passenger. At Bulach we passed Ae 3/6^l no. 10653 on passenger stock.

On arriving at Koblenz, I was cheered by the sight of three Ae 4/7's - two multiple control fitted Bern locos on a freight and the third a light engine. Alas, the Stein - Sackingen train I had intended to take had at it's head an infernal Re 4/4^{ll}. Curses ! As if to rub it in, a balancing arrival from Stein had an Ae 4/7, no. 10934. I decided to wait until 18.00 hours, to take my chance with the next local to Stein. As it ran Mondays to Fridays only, there seemed a reasonable chance that it might have interesting power. In the meantime, I watched a little red D.B. railbus depart on the connecting service to Waldshut.

My wait for the 18.00 hours train proved worthwhile, as Ae 3/6^l no. 10656 clattered round the curve, dragging three coaches. There was no 'D' brake van, but the Koblenz station tractor attached a 'Z' postal van. 10656 paused at each intermediate station on the Stein route to collect mail. The line borders the Rhine for much of its length, and the wide river, the forest-covered hillsides provided an almost idyllic setting for the elderly locomotive. At Stein Sackingen, my connecting train for Basel had yes, an Re 4/4^{ll}. Still you can't have everything, and 10656 did pursue my train to Basel, as if anxious to remind its modern sister that older motive power still has a part to play on the Swiss Federal Railways.

SWISS TIMETABLES By Victor Isaacs

A pleasant and interesting feature of Swiss Railways is the excellence of the Swiss Official Timetable published by the SBB. In a conveniently sized book, it provides details of not only their own trains, but of private lines and all of the many buses, lake and river boats, mountain railways and even lists of trams and buses in every town. The publication is very attractively produced. This author judges it to be the best public timetable of any railway administration in the world. Despite the excellence of the Official Timetable, however, many private publishing companies produce their own timetables in Switzerland. On a recent visit, the author noted no less than fifteen of these on sale at prices from SwF 4 to SwF 7.80, compared to SwF 8.50 for the Official Timetable. The private titles are Fribo, Mini-Fribo, Rex, Fretz, Rapide, Blitz, Ostschweiz, Der Gelbe, Neur Ideal-Fahrplan, Korbers Fahrplan, Zenith, Lalette, L'Impartial and Eclair. Many are regional timetables, with their own area in detail (often by reproductions from the Official Timetable) and summary tables for the rest of the country. Perhaps the most useful Timetable for a visiting rail enthusiast (Other than the Official Timetable) would be the Fribo. This consists entirely of the Official Timetable pages reduced to a more convenient size for carrying, and without any of the Official Timetables elaborate colour cover, explanatory pages in English or international train services. It has a simplified map. The price is SwF 7.80 compared to the Official Timetable's 8.50. The Mini-Fribo is similar, but consists only of rail services. It costs SwF 5.50 and easily fits into a pocket or handbag.

It is interesting to be in Switzerland when the new Timetables are published at the beginning of the summer and winter seasons. They are featured not only at ticket offices and station bookstalls, but prominently in bookshops. This, and the very large number of Timetables published are indicative of the interest the Swiss show in their public transport and the substantial use they make of it.