

Zeitschrift: Swiss express : the Swiss Railways Society journal
Band: 4 (1994-1996)
Heft: 12

Artikel: In search of steam - Graubünden 1996
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-855110>

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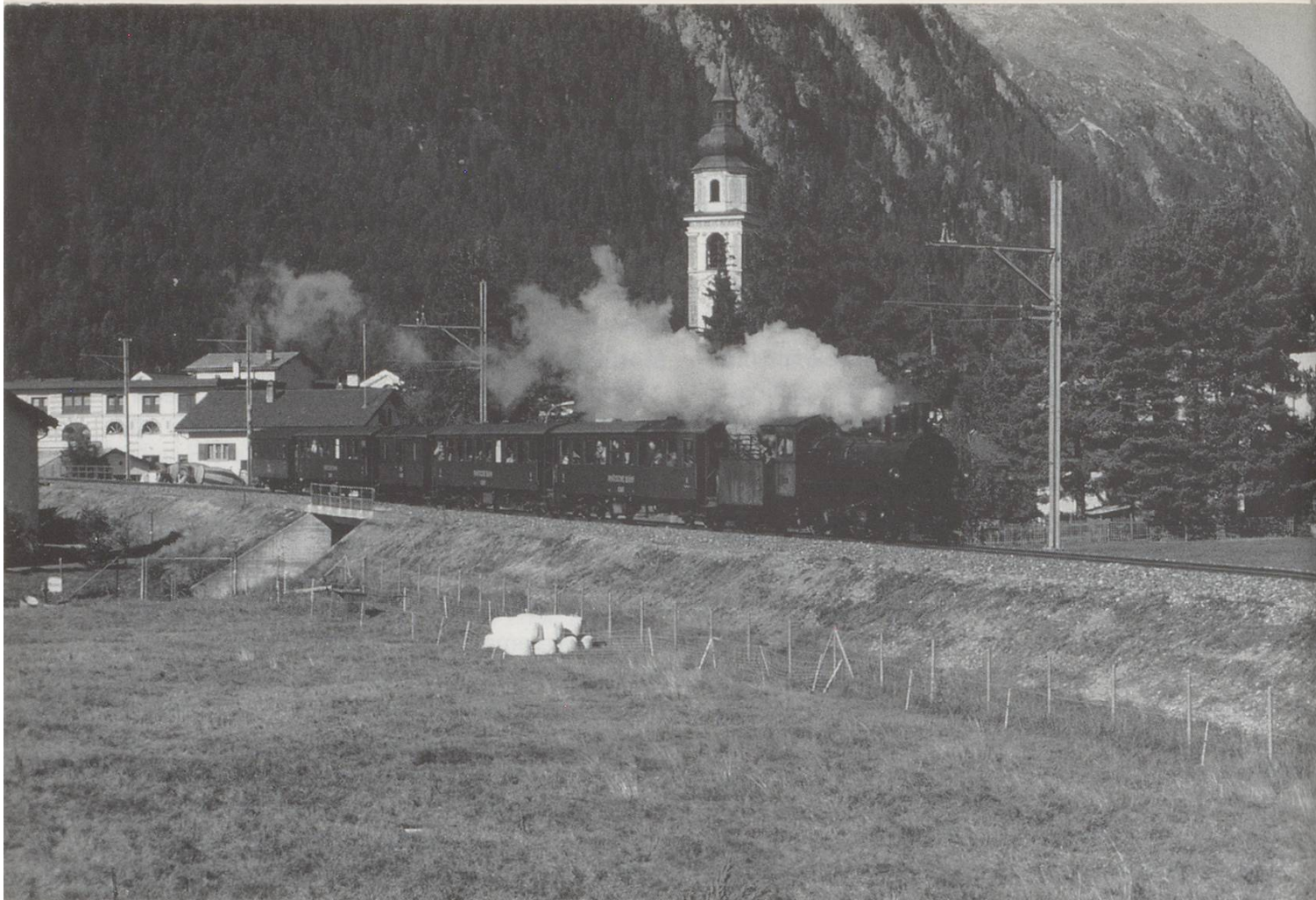
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In Search of Steam - Graubünden 1996 by Glenn Allen

I was given the opportunity to choose my holiday this year, either two weeks frying my brains out on a Spanish beach or a self-catering holiday in Davos. No contest, as it turned out, Spain had two weeks of rain.

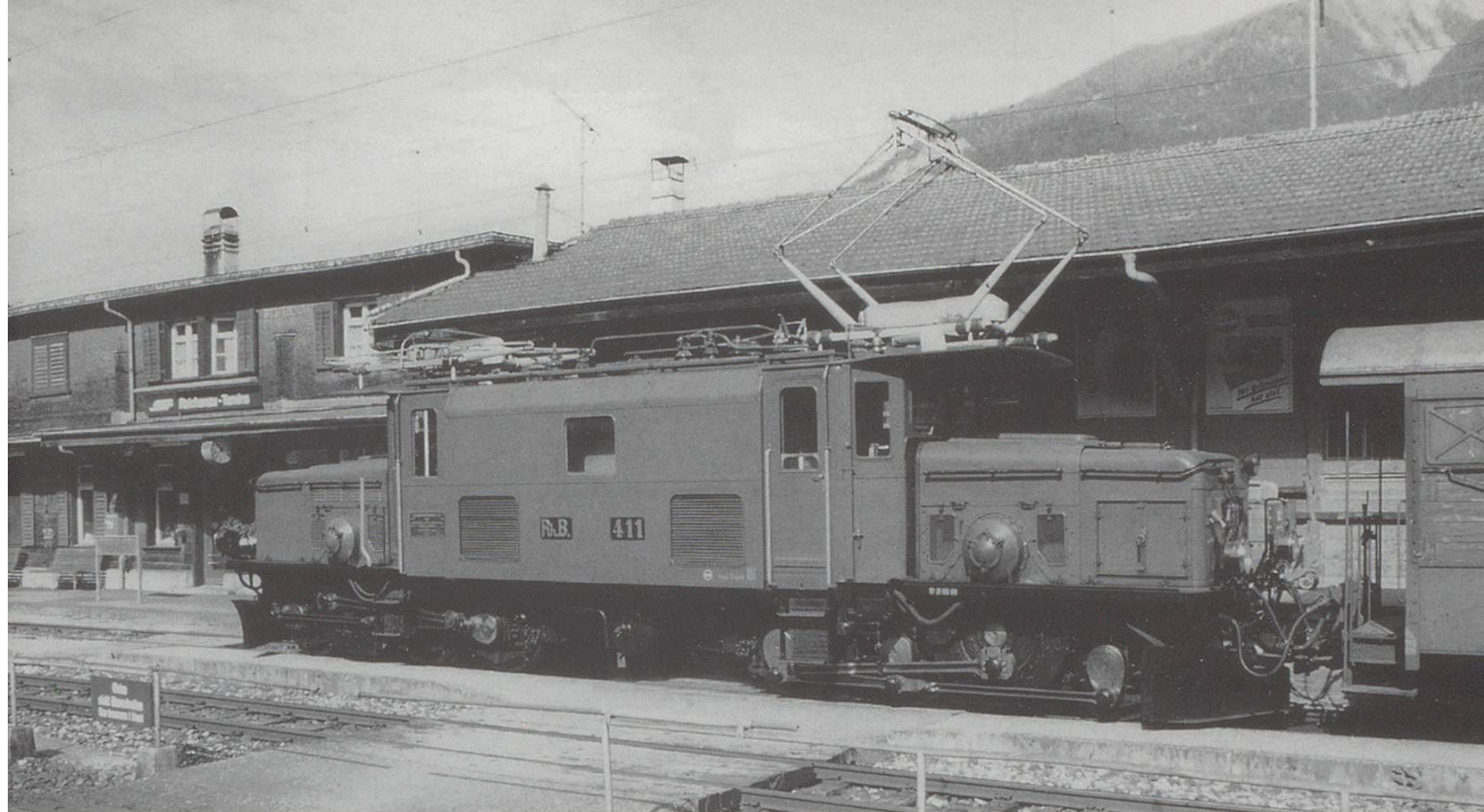
We set out on Sunday 1st September 1996 at 4 a.m. in the morning for a 7 a.m. flight from Heathrow. How we suffer for our enjoyment! For the anoraks amongst you it was a Boeing 737-400 I think, with a plastic tasting breakfast thrown in. The departure was fun, taxi out of the boarding area, sharp left onto the runway and vroom... no messing about. The trip to Zürich was uneventful, even arriving 20 minutes early allowing us to connect with the 10:10 Zürich Hbf to Landquart.

As we were not supposed to be able to get into the apartment until 4p.m. we decided to sit at Landquart for an hour to watch what was going on and save sitting around Davos. Having got to the RhB platform and taken the details of the stock on the 11:32 Landquart to Davos Platz we waited for something to happen. In rolled 353 with salonwagens and the preserved brakevan D4052 from Davos, a good start to the holiday.

We caught the 12:38 to Davos and managed to leave our luggage in the left luggage facility and wandered around the station in the rain waiting for 4 p.m. to get into our accommodation. So the time comes and to the apartment, the Allod Park, we go.... The reception was shut, it is on Sundays. However, there was an envelope with our name on it and a message to pop down the following morning to register - trusting people these Swiss! Disaster struck in the room; no kettle! I work for the railway, I am fuelled by tea! Much boiling of saucepans.

The Monday dawned misty, having checked in.."no problem, pay taxes when you leave" he said... we visited one of the supermarkets to stock up with food, translating as best as possible the cooking instructions so we wouldn't buy anything we couldn't cook...Who bought the chips and no oil, not to mention no chip pan!

Down to the serious bit. We caught the 10:25 to Filisur, went on to Samedan, back to Bergün to pick up graphic timetables and locomotive diagrams (SFr9 in total) for use later on in the holiday, back to Filisur for 2 hours and returning to



*Previous page: Rhb 108 with a special train refer to story.
Above: RhB kroc 411 at Reichenau-Tamins.*

Davos for dinner. The only things of note are that all the normal services from Chur to St. Moritz and back are in the hands of the Ge 4/4^{III} locos and only the summer extras and relief trains see other traction such as Ge 4/4^{II}. Freight trains bring some variance. Ge 6/6^{II} and the stone train from Samedan to Davos rates two Ge 4/4^{II}. On Monday they were 630 and 617.

Two other items of note were Z13091 & Z13092, refurbished PTT vehicles with a roller shutter door instead of the two previous sliding doors. The last two digits, their previous running numbers, are underlined on the sides of the vehicles, and secondly X9064 at Bergün. This van is labelled up as a staff mess van and has been moved from behind the goods shed to alongside the big building in front of the station.

Tuesday 3rd September 1996

Today's trip was to be to Disentis by way of Reichenau, with a lay-over in Reichenau to see if anything was around, we arrived there just before 10 a.m. At half past up rolled 411 on a freight train, No. 5835 from Landquart, this always was a croc turn. In all the excitement I nearly forgot the train formation.

Fun over, we headed for Disentis, getting there just after 12 o'clock. Staying for two hours we took a circular walk by way of the bridge over the valley on the outskirts of town. Trains out this way are mostly in the hands of 611 to 633 with the occasional Ge 6/6^{II}. The tunnel works are very much under way, with about 20 feet of the new

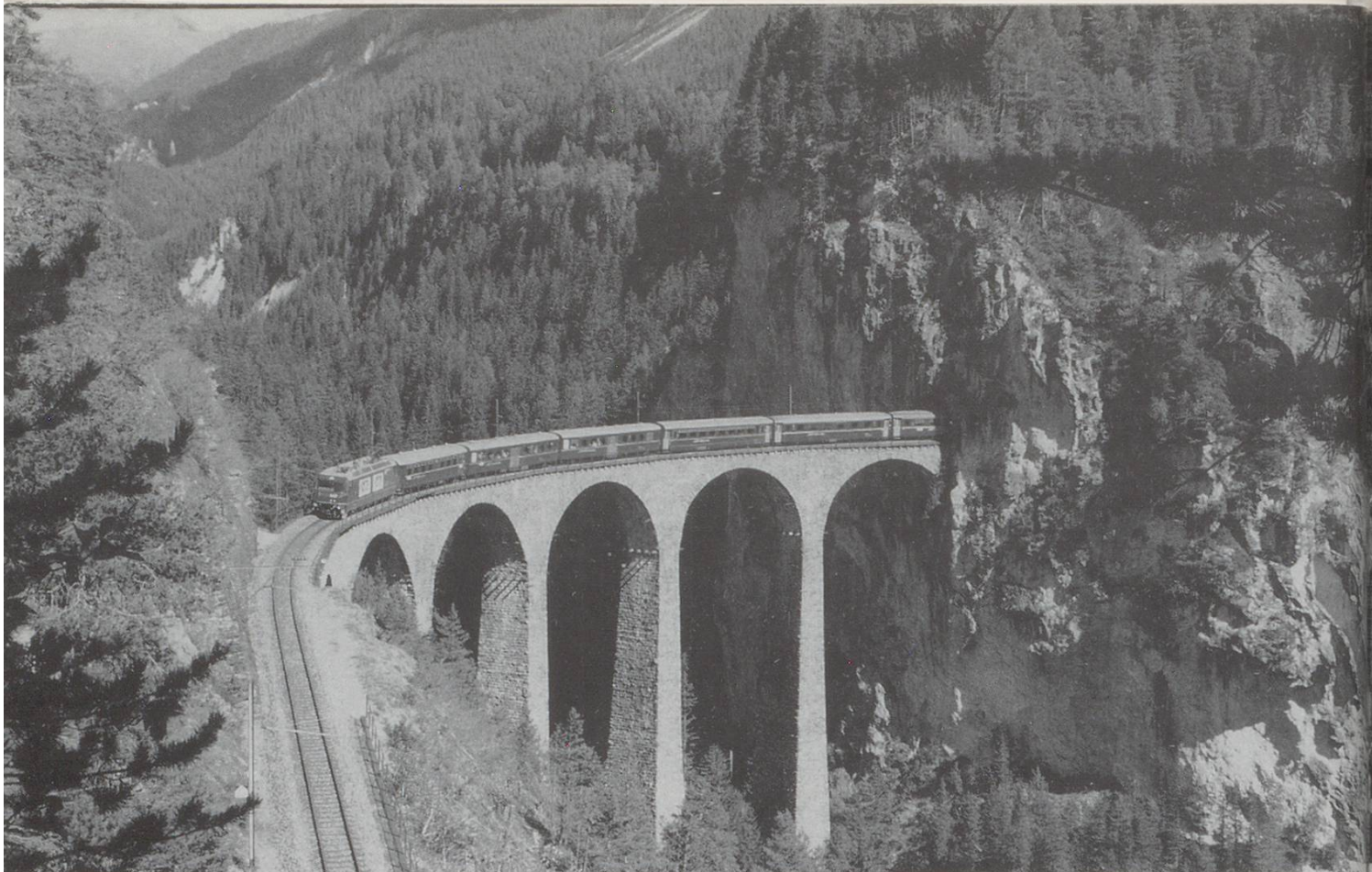
tunnel mouth exposed showing how the concrete was poured.

Wednesday 4th September 1996

Yet another nice day. Best weather we've ever had. We set out for Scuol Tarasp. I am building a model using the track plan from Scuol and spent a couple of happy hours wandering around the fields above the station getting the details of the catenary layout for use on the model. We returned via St. Moritz as Debbie wanted another picture of the lake. The highlight of the day was 'spotting' WR3812 in Gourmino livery.

Thursday 5th September 1996

All was not to be travelling on trains. We had intended on making some walks as well, and, although today was not the best of weather, the television in the apartment had a channel showing the view from the CCTV at the top of the Weissfluhjoch and today's view was nothing but mist. Undaunted we still set off. The top was much as expected, restaurant and lots of mist. To cheer us up there were a couple of blasts of ice over the top of the mountain. We set off, wrong path! Came back, started again. Every now and again the mist would clear. Definitely a good place for views, when you can see anything, not a good place without proper shoes and warm clothing. Now, all we had to do was basically walk the length



Above: A Ge4/4^{III} crossing the Landwasser viaduct.

of Davos, takes about one and a half hours? More like three! We walked all the way to Schatzalp and got the funicular down to Davos. Debbie went back to recover. I went off to Burgün to do some more 'spotting'.

Friday 6th September 1996

As I was using a Regional Pass we lumped the cable car trips together. The Weisshorn was our destination and the weather was back to being sunny. If you want views this is the place to go. A 360 degree panorama is yours when you get there. I took 12 whole photographs without a train in sight - may have to hang my anorak up in shame. A quick aside here, the term 'anorak' is actually going into the dictionary as 'one who is obsessed with something'.

The works upgrading the railway line are much in evidence with most trains conveying materials up and down the line and a lot of new catenary.

Saturday 7th September 1996

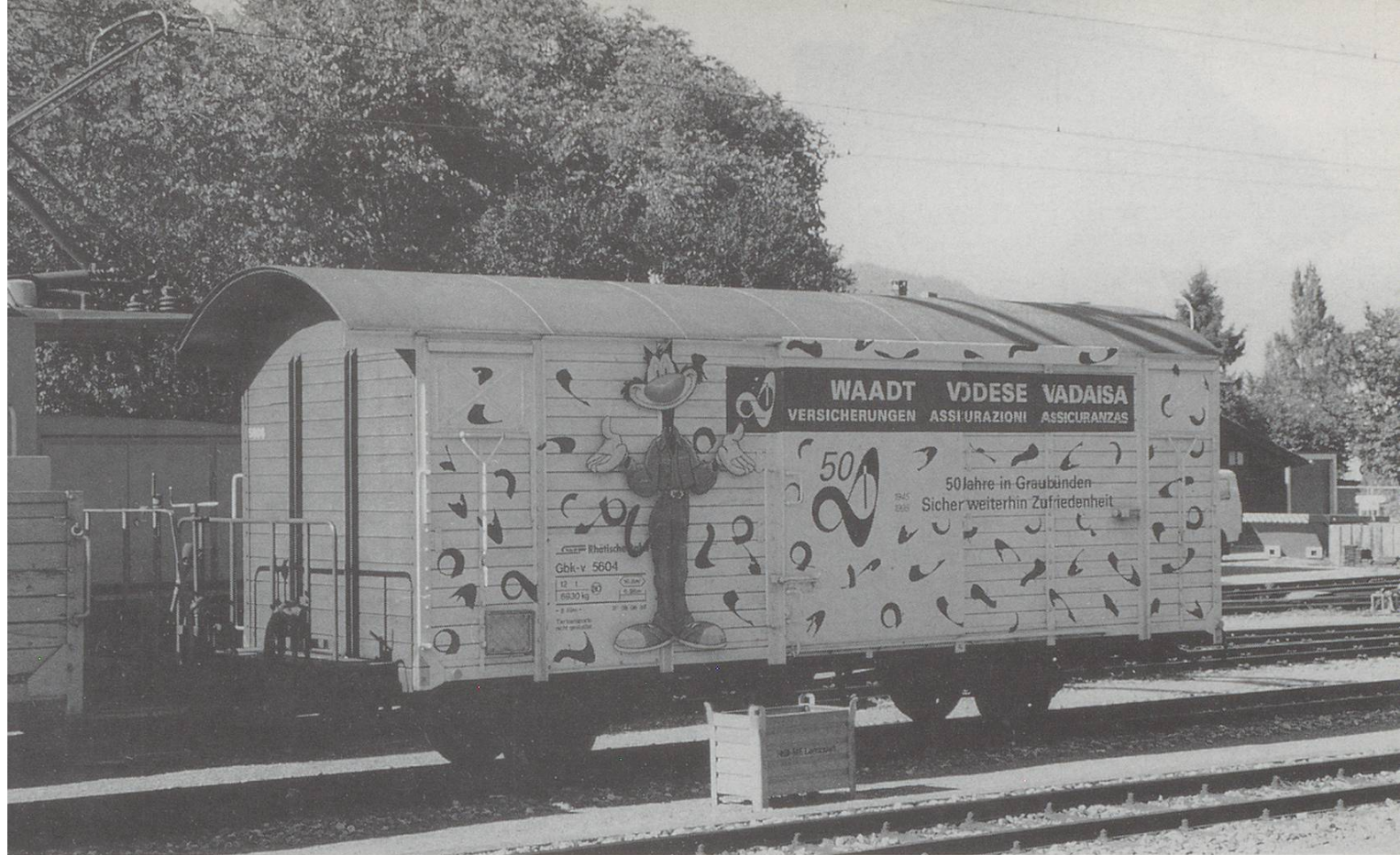
I knew things were going too well! We set out for Bernina Diavollezza in order to walk back to Pontresina. Ten minutes into the trip my left leg gave up the ghost, possible split cartilage, great fun, nice and painful. Still managed the trip, even to the extent of kicking a tennis ball that we found down the path whilst it was sunny. Now and again there were occasional flurries of snow and

a bitter wind. The views were more than adequate compensation. This walk took nearly five hours, didn't me leg know it. Saturday is one day you will see different motive power on the line from Chur to St. Moritz, the relief trains, here 618 and 614 approach Samedan at about 16:30, tend to have a variation from the norm.

Sunday 8th September 1996

The whole reason for coming today. Off to Bever to photograph the 10:01 steam hauled excursion to Scuol. First the matter of walking down from Spinass to Bever, remember the bad leg? I did. Still another nice day. 108 was the star of the day. With time to kill we decided to walk down to Landwasser Viaduct, sun shining, no need to rush, leg playing up, still did it. Being a glutton for punishment I went in search of the location above the viaduct where you get all the calendar pictures from. I did it. For a fit person it is a stiff climb, why do I do it? Must be mad. Coming back down was even more exciting. We then thought what a good idea, we'll walk back to Wiesen, took the wrong path didn't we. Moral: get a map. Another walk for the brave, along the side of the valley on a very narrow path.

Monday 9th September 1996



Above: The latest van to get the Bemo treatment seen here, full size Gbk-v 5604.

Restful train spotting day today. Another sunny day, still very brisk in the wind. The spoil train that is serving the tunnel works at Klosters is interesting. 615 at one end of a rake of wagons, Gbk 5647 at the other. A window has been cut in one end and a shunter sits inside with a radio as the train sets back into the tunnel. What puzzles me is why the Cargo Domicil wagon in service use hasn't been used, and why hasn't this 5647 had its code changed to Xk? We carried on to Ilanz for a quick wander round the town and several photographs of the Swiss Grand Canyon.

Tuesday 10th September 1996

Our last proper day. My last chance to try and get a photograph of each of the main line engines. Out via Filisur, Tiefencastel to Thusis where we met a friendly cat and saw what could be the next two vans to be produced by Bemo running in a freight train above the town. The graphic timetable says the freight train stays in Thusis for 20 minutes. I hobbled back to the station to photograph them, got to the end of the platform, wizz wizz whoosh, the train went, we gave chase on the next passenger train and I caught up with one wagon at Chur, Gbk-v 5604. The cartoon cat is a cut-out fixed onto the wagon. That'll give Bemo something to think about. Of the other

wagon, no trace. All I saw was that it was white and covered in chickens, anybody else photograph it?

Wednesday 11th September 1996

It's all over! Time to come home. Went to pay the bill, the reception was shut again! I managed to find a chap in the restaurant to take my money, what a system! We still managed an hour on the bench at Landquart. Used the last of the roll of film. I took a total of around 520 pictures. My girlfriend about 430. Must get a camcorder, got to be cheaper. As for a picture of every locomotive? Didn't see 602, had the bonus of photographing 411 and 353, good weather and put on 3 pounds in weight, even with all the walking.

Next year there are tentative plans to go over in April to get pictures with a different weather backdrop. Snow - all being well !