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Mailbag

Notes from Bergün

The Museum at Bergün now contains a working model of the section of the Albula line from Bergün to Preda. This year it was in operation on Thursday afternoons from 16:30 to 18:30, entrance to the Museum being Sfr.4.50. Details of opening times are published in the *Museen Graubündens*, published by the Vereinigung Museen Graubündens.

In previous years I have travelled from Bergün to Bever via Samedan without any questions being asked. This summer, however, there were several trains from the North stopping at Bever. These included trains starting at Chur, Thusis and Preda. For those wishing to walk in the Val Bever without paying extra a careful inspection of the full Fahrplan is now necessary

John Edge
Burnley

RhB Freight Working

As an RhB modeller I found the President's articles in *Swiss Express* on drawbar loading fascinating and of immense value to the modeller who seeks authenticity. The roster of RhB goods wagons was also of great interest and useful to the modeller wishing to get the right balance of rolling stock; eg who would have imagined a railway with more cement silo wagons than high sided open wagons!

May I, through the journal, ask our President whether, in the interests of authentic modelling, he can furnish a similar roster of coaching stock vehicles? If so, can it also be indicated if there are any route restrictions for particular vehicles.

John Payne
Bedford

It is, in my opinion, misleading to take the proportion of various types of stock on as complex a railway as the RhB as any indication of the correct balance to be struck on a model based on a specific section of the system. To take an obvious point, the shorter coaches for the Bernina section are not normally seen on the Davos or Engadin lines. Indeed, the coaching stock selection for the Davos-Filisur section is currently very restricted indeed. The matter if

further complicated by the fact that few of us have the space to handle full length RhB trains in HOm. A better approach is the traditional one, study actual trains wherever possible and fall back on photos as a backup when this is not possible.

There are other considerations. The RhB has the four "Pullman" saloons, available from Berno. A strict proportional allocation would mean that, at the most, only one saloon was needed, yet most will agree that the more common arrangement for these coaches is for all four to be rostered behind a Baby Krok as a special.

CJF

1994 Kursbuch

May I take issue with the author of Notepad, September 19494, for I can offer no cheers for the new Kursbuch. Not only have the tables been rotated on the page, but the format has changed for the worse and is now inconsistent, with through trains shown with a solid continuous line on some tables (600) and not on others (850). I see little advantage in the station index being ruled off and the general information is now sparse. Members should be encouraged to obtain a copy of *Einfach bahnfaren* which is free and contains all the information we have been accustomed to finding in the old Kursbuch including pricing information, though not for mountain railways. Finally the paper and production quality of the copy I have is also poor.

So why the change? Just for its own sake, I shall have the former one please.

Chris Elliot
Reading

My reaction to the new style official timetable is unfavourable. Useful information has been removed; the computer generated tables are awkward to read and it is not helped by the binding which traps part of the portrait style format in the fold. The map is indistinct and confusing. Go back to the drawing board (or the old style)

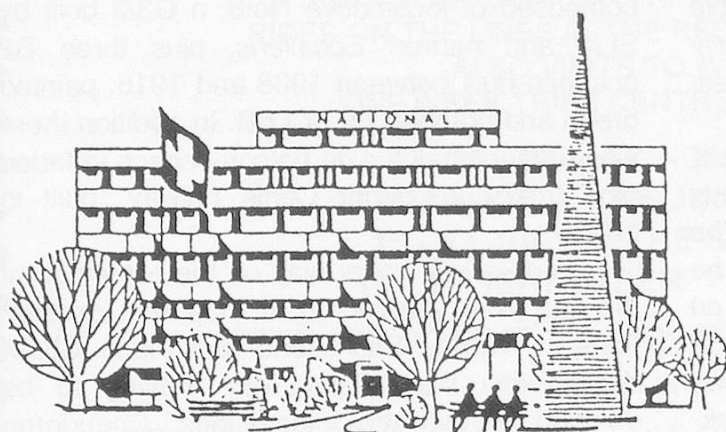
Alan Pike
Hemel Hempstead

Anyone using the station index for reference purposes, as I have to when trying to decipher some member's writing, will appreciate the value of clearly defined station entries.

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After a day's trial I found the vertical format more convenient and as a result the 1994 Kursbuch is the most dog-eared in my collection. I suspect the inconsistencies arose through the problems inherent in getting timetables onto computers, which isn't quite as straightforward as many people believe. I imagine the more serious glitches will be ironed out in 1995. My main objection is that the separate information booklets are not available in English and are not necessarily automatically offered to purchasers of the main timetables. Again, I trust this will be dealt with in time.

If any further changes are contemplated, could not the lake boats and mountain railways be issued as a separate volume, reducing the weight of the railway section? It would also be helpful were the postbus tables to be split on the lines of the current map. At present, the all-up weight of the two internal sections becomes the proverbial last straw when packing the shoulder bag for a day's exploration.

CJF

Lausanne-Echallens-Bercher steam

I would like to expand on your entry in Notepad in the September *Swiss Express* concerning the LEB. Steam services this year have operated on two Sundays in June, July and September and all Sundays in August. See the note in the Kursbuch.

Do not do as some of us did some years ago and stand at Chauderon Station in Lausanne, expecting to see a steam locomotive. Indeed, I do not think the citizens of Lausanne would welcome a smoke-belching machine going along their tidy streets!

One must catch the 11:14 electric service, operated by a Be4/8, from Chauderon to Cheseaux, arriving at 11:30 and change here for the steam special, departing Cheseaux at 11:45. The train makes an extended stopover at Echallens, where there is a museum of "Wheat and Bread", and finally arrives at Bercher at 12:40. While passengers and crew take refreshments at the hotel outside the station, the locomotive is watered from a garden hose attached to a stopcock in the Gent's toilet.

The return working leaves Bercher at 15:30 for Echallens, where one changes back to electric traction. The six new Be4/8 sets are

very comfortable for a short metre gauge feeder running mainly though open, gently undulating agricultural scenery. Don't expect any mountains.

As for value for money, the LEB only charges single fares on a Sunday for the return journey and there is no extra charge for the steam trip.

When I took the trip, the steam special was composed of locomotive No.8, a G3/3 built by SLM and named *Echallens*, plus three B2 coaches built between 1908 and 1916, painted green and branded LE or LEB. In addition there was a very small 2-axle balcony coach in faded pink (rose), ex Mont Cenis railway, built in 1873.

Work is well under way on the extension of the line from Chauderon to Flon with excavations in Avenue Echallens and Place Chauderon, with the railway track having to be diverted around the excavations. Chauderon station is the only one on the line which looks as if it has had no maintenance for years, the rest of the system shows considerable improvements in both the stock and lineside structures.

For those interested in tramways, there are still some traces of the former Lausanne system outside Chauderon station, including a crossover.

Lastly, for travel in Lausanne, a SFr.6 ticket lasts 24 hours and covers not only the buses and trolley buses but the Lausanne-Ouchy Metro and the TSOL, now officially known as the Metro Ouest. Single tickets are SFr.2 per journey, so the day pass is excellent value.

Angus Scouler
Southampton.

The general opinion is that they hope that Chauderon will not fall down until the extension is open, at which point a good hard nudge with a bulldozer will quickly convert it into a heap of firewood. At present, it does look as if the main structure is largely held together by the name-board and poster boards. It is certain that the extension to Flon will greatly increase the traffic on this route.

CJF

The Fürigen Bahn

With reference to your editorial note in the September issue of *Swiss Express* I thought I would just let you know that there is still a

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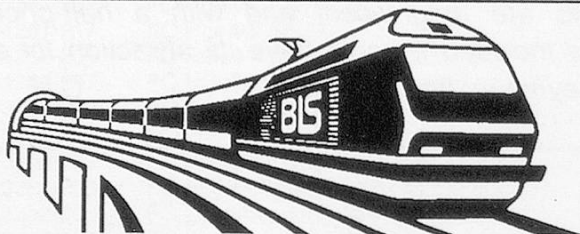
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restaurant at the foot of the FÜRIGEN Bahn, although this is now a very modern building. I came across it on a visit to the FÜRIGEN Bahn this July. I walked across from the lakeside from the landing stage at Stansstad and as I approached there were dozens of people sitting on the grass verge on the lakeside, sunbathing and picnicking, while among the trees there was a very full car park. This is obviously a very popular spot.

I enjoyed the trip up to FÜRIGEN, where I went into the very luxurious hotel and enjoyed a small salad whilst sitting on the terrace, taking great pleasure from the wonderful view whilst the waiters scurried about busily serving a large party. I presume they were having a break during some conference there, for the car park at the hotel was very full. The people at my hotel in Luzern told me that it is a very popular hotel for conferences and for local weddings.

Whilst there I picked up a brochure of the hotel which I enclose. I have also cut out a portion of a leaflet on Stansstad which I obtained two years ago, in which there is a picture of the restaurant by the lake. I see this is marked *Al Porto/Smeralda*, and in the brochure of the hotel you will see that it mentions Restaurant Al Porto and Dancing Club Smeralda, so I deduce this lakeside

restaurant is still owned by the Hotel FÜRIGEN.

It was a lovely day out during my stay in Luzern. I was interested to see the 1933 photographs in the *September Swiss Express* and I only wish the views from the funicular were as good now as they must have been then, before the trees became so overgrown.

Josephine Crane
Altrincham

The FÜRIGEN hotel currently appears in the *Swiss Collection* holiday brochure. The inclusive package includes unlimited travel on the FÜRIGEN Bahn and the text states that the Hotel owns the Lido and two restaurants on the lakeside.

Steve Horobin
Haverhill.

Steve included a photocopy of the relevant page. This states that the FÜRIGEN Bahn operates a 20 minute service up to 22:00 and that the lower station is 700m from the Stansstad landing stage. There is an occasional postbus service from the Hotel. The prices quoted are not unreasonable for this type of hotel, but the distance from the station might make it less attractive to members. The views are magnificent and with a half-price pass included it could have its attraction for a honeymoon, first or second.

CJF

Member's advertisements

Sale LGB Crocodile, "early" brown, unboxed, good condition £285 ono. 0344 25090 19:00-20:00

Wanted HO models of BLS locomotives, class Ce4/4 particularly wanted. Peter Bowen, 21 Chapel Croft, Chelford, Cheshire SK11 9SU

For sale as a single lot or individually, three genuine Swiss railway posters. 1) RhB - 70s style - Bernina, mint condition. 2) BLS - early 80s style - Ae8/8 with passenger train crossing Kander viaduct - slightly distressed at top but not torn. 3) SBB - late 80s style - Brünigbahn - He4/4^{II} with passenger train in snow - one bottom corner creased but not torn. Can be supplied in a suitable tube. Offers to G. Della-Gana 081-204 4589.

SBB (and some DB) stock for sale. For list phone 0737 354868

SBB N Gauge. Large collection of locos, rolling stock etc. For list phone 0768 64112

Wanted Two two aspect (2720) and one three aspect (2721) hauptsignals by BW urgently needed to complete RhB HOm layout. Could offer four aspect hauptsignal (2722) in exchange. Dave Howsam 061 748 7850

A good friend retires

Rico Signore of the London office of the SNTD retired on 30 September 1994. He has been a good friend to the Society since its inception and many members have good reason to be grateful for his efforts on their behalf. A knowledgeable and witty speaker, he has addressed members at several meetings and functions. We wish him a long and enjoyable second career in active retirement.