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Rigi Ramblings

1962

by David Skales

Reading Peter Arnold's article in the Summer Swiss Express I was reminded of a very pleasant ramble a group of us took along the old track bed on a gorgeous Sunday in June 35 years earlier. The Rigi Scheidegg Bahn coach was then someone's home and was well maintained. The then occupier invited us in to have look round the inside which was immaculately furnished in spite of its size. I recollect that his prize possession was a massive lamp which may well have adorned some locomotive in days gone by. Amongst his possessions were a number of the Rigi Scheidegg hotel brochures and he kindly let me have copy. From the sepia print it gives the impression of being older than it is but mention is made in it of the electrified Arth Goidau - Rigi railway and this only took place in 1906/7 - thirty years before the electrification of the line from Vitznau. The brochure gives some wonderful views of the hotel itself and views from it but at the time it would have been difficult to obtain adequate copies.

However, computer technology has permitted improved prints of the pictures in the brochure to be obtained. One is now the background to our Windows screen and shows the old railway track winding round the mountainside. The hotel itself must have been a very impressive place with 140 rooms, central heating and as it says "promenades splendides et riches en vue". Travellers coming from Arth-Goldau were recommended to alight at Wölfertschen and take a 12 minute walk on the level to the station First

on the Scheidegg line - the whole journey taking 21 to 3 hours. Wölfertschen has now disappeared from the timetable has it gone or been renamed? Finally "Prix de pension: de frs.10 - frs.15" Those were the days! After this most enjoyable interlude on our ramble we had a typical Swiss barbecue on the slopes looking out over Lake Lucerne before walking down to Vitznau for the steamer back to Brunnen.



