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Postmark Corner

by John Cordingley

Brian Hemming's articles on the Private Railways of Switzerland are always of great interest to me. Over a period of years I have accumulated quite a collection of handstamp markings from stations on a variety of lines across Switzerland - SBB CFF as well as smaller lines. On looking through this accumulation I came across a couple of pages of items from the Forchbahn (*Swiss Express* 5/8 p20). Picking an item that would easily scan, the illustration shows a cancellation from Zollikerberg. This is on an envelope cutout complete with a commemorative Swiss stamp - another of my interests. Most of the printing on the cancellation is self explanatory but all railways are centrally code numbered; the Forchbahn being 046. Stations usually have sequential numbers - Esslingen 3060... Zollikerberg 3067 Zurich Rehalp 3069. These



were the numbers allocated in 1968 the time of the cancellation but like most things there have been renumberings over a period of time.

It seems to me that other members might like having souvenirs of their stations visits by getting a self addressed and correctly stamped postcard cancelled by station staff. They will probably be able to accept the card and forward it to the local post office. Here it might get a post office postmark as well.

PRIVATE RAILWAYS IN SWITZERLAND - 17

by Brian Hemming

An expanding standard gauge railway, a standard gauge line now largely devoted to freight traffic and what some people might describe as a toy railway make up the contribution to what is the penultimate group of articles in this series.

The Mittel-Thurgau Bahn (MThB) has in recent years looked across the Swiss/German border for the development of its traffic and has formed a close relationship with Deutsche Bundesbahn (DB). The existing passenger service in Switzerland from Wil to Konstanz has been extended into Germany through Singen to Engen and in fact the MThB now operate all local services on this route. In addition the branch line service from Radolfzell to Stockach has been revived by the MThB. As part of the close relationship with the DB that company now uses its own locomotives fitted with Swiss profile pantographs to work oil trains through to Attigshausen on the MThB. In the last year the MThB has taken over the operation of the SBB "Seelinie" from Romanshorn to Schaffhausen.

In complete contrast to the MThB, the Sursee Triengen Bahn (ST) operates freight services connecting industrial facilities at Büren and Sursee with the SBB Olten to Luzern line at Sursee. Two small diesel locomotives are used

for this traffic, but the company also has two steam locomotives and a small selection of coaching stock which are used for excursions and charter trains. This line is well worth exploring either on foot or with partial use of the Postbus service which operates from the forecourt of Sursee station and passes close to the rail terminus at Triengen on its way to Schöffland.

The ride to the Emosson dam using the Trains Touristiques d'Emosson (TTE) (formerly SATEB) is a travel experience which should not be missed by any member of the family. Starting from a station close to that of the C.F Martigny-Châtelard (MC) at Le Châtelard the journey starts with a funicular ride which is spectacular. This is the steepest funicular in the world having a maximum gradient of 870‰. One arrives at the top station, Château d'Eau with a sense of wonderment. A small train, usually hauled by a battery locomotive, is joined for a short journey to the foot of a modern funicular which climbs to a viewpoint looking down onto the massive Emosson dam as well as providing a breathtaking view across to Mont Blanc. The system only operates during the summer period, but a visit to this system is a must despite the fact that it is not covered by Swiss Pass free travel arrangements.