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FROM: TONY BAGWELL – TAUNTON

Kingsbury Do

At the European Get Together on 15th & 16th July in Kingsbury Episcopi, the members of the Swiss Railway Society who attended, along with those from the French & German railway societies and the regulars at the Wyndham Arms raised the magnificent sum of £115 for “CLIC Sargent”, the children’s cancer charity. On behalf of the children and their families that this will help, thanks to all for another generous donation.

FROM: STEWART MARSHALL – GRAVESEND

Plane vs. Train

Re. your editorial ‘Plane vs. Train’, much as it grieves me to have to say it, I have to agree with you that the plane beats the train every time.

As a long time railwayman, with over 48 years service and only 14 months to retirement (which I am looking forward to), I can travel for next to nothing on free passes. However I prefer to fly for quickness.

I well remember the first trip that my wife and I did back in 1966 to Jenbach in Austria. We travelled via Victoria, Folkestone, and Calais: departing Calais around 2030 and arriving in Basel 0530 the next morning. Changing trains, onward to Jenbach, arriving 1330 that afternoon. To say that we were shattered is an understatement.

By contrast our first flight to Switzerland some twenty years ago was by good old Dan-Air from Gatwick to Bern. Within 15 minutes of landing we were on the coach heading for Interlaken and the Hotel Merkur right outside West railway station.

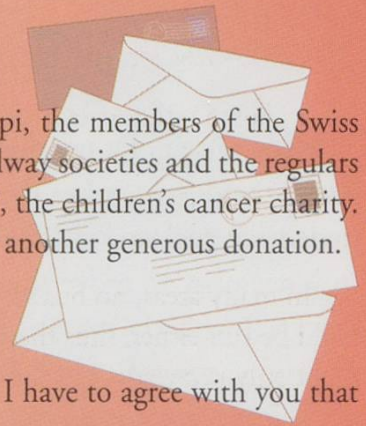
The last trip to Switzerland my wife and I flew from Gatwick to Zürich catching the train from Flughafen Bhf. to Interlaken. We were only on the platform for 5 minutes when a direct service ran in. Two and a half hours later we were at our destination and ten minutes later at our hotel, the National. The best part was handing in our luggage at Gatwick and not seeing it any more until it was put outside our room door two hours after we arrived.

The same coming home. We handed in our luggage at Interlaken Ost and did not see it again until Gatwick. We travelled back to Zürich via Luzern on the Brünig, spent three hours in Luzern and then took the double deck shuttle to Zürich. Stunning scenery, no doubt about it the Berner Oberland has got to be my favourite. Yes sir if you want to get to Switzerland and your destination in double quick time then plane it has to be.

FROM: STEVE BRATT – CREWE

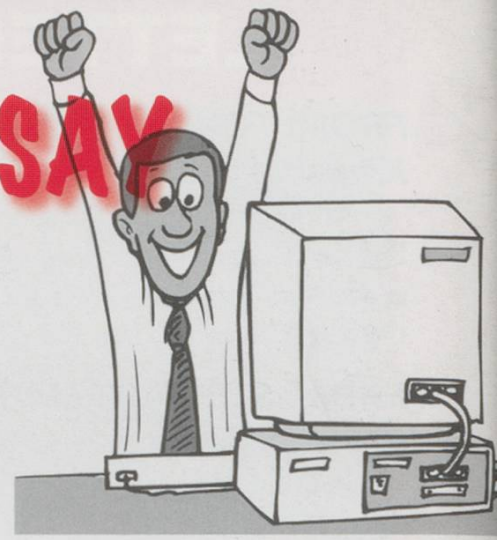
Plane vs. Train

I agree with you! Even when (as ex BR employee) I still had free travel all over Europe I gave up using it for the long haul part of my holiday journey as through overnight trains went into a slow decline with poorly trained staff and eventual cutbacks in routes. As alternatives Eurostar, Thalys and SNCF Grande Lignes seem hell bent on making rail travel as difficult and restrictive as old-fashioned airlines whilst newer airlines, especially easyJet, are trying to be as simple to use as old-fashioned railways! There is also the point that if you’re having a Swiss holiday do you want to spend 15% of it travelling through Britain and France? I’ve done the run on a TGV a few times, it’s like being in a plane and the view is not much better. I do like the daytime run from Köln to Basel but the overnight ferry from Harwich is no more and NS don’t seem to want to run regular services into Germany any more - by the time you’ve had the inconveniently timed HSS crossing, waited for a train to Germany and finally got to Switzerland you need a holiday! My personal favourite was the Oostende ferry and the overnight service to Chur or Brig, full breakfast on the return ferry being the final treat of the holiday - now there is no ferry and the trains, having been cut back to Brussel several years ago now only go beyond Bern, or carry coaches for Chur, one night a week. Using the easyJet Liverpool - Basel service in March I left home in Crewe at 09:00 and was in Spiez by 17:10, the handling at Basel airport and bus shuttle to SBB station being so efficient that I actually caught the train an hour before the one I had planned - and the flight only cost £31 return including tax. Whilst I realise that flying creates more pollution than going the whole way by train I would point out that I always walk to work and drive less than 5000



THE EDITOR HAS HIS SAY

Not much of a say this time. Having been away for most of August and September the magazine has had to take a back seat, hence my decision in June's issue. The committee will be meeting in November to move things on. There are a lot of logistic issues involved with the magazine which require decisions as well ensuring a smooth handover. I have made an offer to help this along being very keen to keep the quality and content of Swiss Express intact, but that's for the future.



THE FLOODS

The terrible floods in the USA have overshadowed those that happened in Europe during August. As you will have seen from this issue peculiar things have been happening to the transport system in Switzerland. Some are technical issues, albeit that they lead to the complete shutdown of the Standard Gauge network, some though are the result of the terrible power of nature. In both instances the Swiss transport system rose to the occasion magnificently. No need to ask what would have happened here in the UK. George Hoekstra's story shows the lengths that the BLS in particular went to help those stranded. No doubt there are other similar stories elsewhere, if you know one let us know. We should also give a moment's thought to those who have suffered as a result of these floods of biblical proportions.

THE WARLEY SHOW

We are having a big bash at Warley this year, even if you are not a modeller try and come along and support us. We can't promise much in the way of drunken debauchery etc. for those with that sort of bent. We can promise a warm welcome. Hope to see you there. Look for the information elsewhere in this issue.

THE KIDDERMINSTER SHOW – WOCHENENDE IM SEVERTAL

Hopefully this will reach you before the Kidderminster event in October. If it does please come along, if it doesn't I hope you enjoyed it!

Continued from previous page

FROM: STEVE BRATT – Plane vs. Train

miles a year - and there is the not so small issue of future problems with the TGV's power source, much of it being nuclear! Anyone thinking of trying easyJet routes to Switzerland (they serve Geneva, Zürich and Basel) should book at least 4 months in advance for the bargains, just like a "modern" railway, and ignore that awful ITV series which does them no justice at all!

MEMBERS ADVERTS

Bemo HOM models for sale, all new and boxed as supplied by Winco. RhB steam loco 108 (1290 118) £208.00; 3 RhB coaches (sae for list please); BOB coach AB212 (3277 712) £42.00. Postage extra at cost, please. Layout plans shelved to help fund granddaughter's music lessons. Contact: Michael Farr, 1 Trethurgy Gardens, Callington, Cornwall. PL17 7RG

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