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# MORE TRAVELS IN TICINO
## Jim Paterson

*View of Indemini.*

Last August we returned to Locarno to continue our exploration of the excursion possibilities by public transport, especially using the local buses. One Wednesday we planned a circular tour, and caught the 09.45 InterRegio for Basel and alighted at the first stop, Cadenazzo, where a connection down the east side of Lago Maggiore to Luino was due at 10.06. The island Platforms 2 and 3 was crowded, but the FLIRT unit on Platform 2 showed "Treno Chiuso" (train closed). The InterRegio departed along the single line towards Bellinzona and the next movement was the arrival at Platform 1, opposite of a Pendelzug powered at the rear by a Re4/4II. Someone shouted that this was the Luino train and there was a rush down the subway, but another shout advised to stay where we were. Meantime the FLIRT departed to Bellinzona and the

Platform 2 indicator showed the next train as an "Extrazug" (*wrong language!*) to Luino. It duly arrived, a Class 560 powered Pendelzug, and departed on time - all of this took place in under 10 minutes. It was not until we were under way that we realised that we were running non-stop to Luino, over the border in Italy, and that the Re4/4II train was following and making the stops.

The reason for the crowd became apparent after arrival in Luino – it was market day – and a very large and very popular market at that. We had allowed ourselves two hours to look around Luino and catch the bus onwards, but such were the attractions of the market that with 5 minutes to departure, we had not found the stop. Luckily, there was only one yellow Swiss PostAuto in town, and after a swift pursuit, we caught it with seconds to spare. This was the

TOP: *The post bus on which we travelled from Luino to Ponte Tresa.*
MIDDLE: *Neoplan postbus on which we arrived at Indemini.*
BOTTOM: *The new postbus based at Indemini, a 22 seat Iveco with body by Cacciamali, including space for a wheelchair in the rear overhang.*
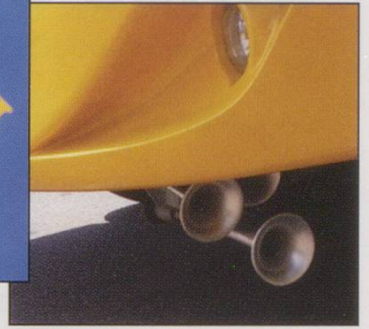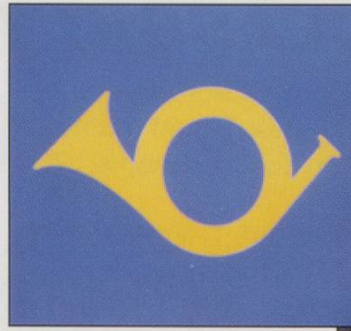
2-hourly service to Ponte Tresa on Lake Lugano, and the bus was busy and stiflingly hot for the 30 minute journey. It crossed the border at about the half way point, and then ran alongside the river, which forms the border, to our destination. With the temperature over 30°C, we found a shady spot to have lunch, before having a quick look round the Swiss part of the village. We soon moved on to Lugano using the FLP described by Jason Sargeson in *Swiss Express* 99, and the journey thence back to Locarno involved two class 524 units, service S10 being on the Gotthard main line, changing at Giubiasco to service S20.

The next morning we were back at Cadenazzo to again catch the 10.06. This time only a few passengers were about, with the Re4/4II powered set again turned out for service S30 towards Luino. Our destination was Indemini so we alighted from the train at the second stop, Magadino-Vira, which serves the two villages of its title. As always, bus and train timetables are co-ordinated and our bus, a 40-seat Neoplan, was the third to come along after a wait of about 10 minutes. We continued along the main lakeside road for some distance before turning left and starting to climb. The mountainside overlooking the lake is fairly built up and we snaked back and forth for around 30 minutes, never straying far from our reference point of Locarno on the opposite bank. Then we left the lake behind as we turned into a side valley, always continuing to climb, and we must have passed the sign of the post-horn, as

the driver was now using his three-note horn to warn other road users that he had priority at the many blind corners. Eventually, having climbed almost 1200m, we reached the tree line, and almost immediately the top of the pass at Alpe di Neggia (1395m), where a number of passengers left the bus. Then we began to descend again to the quaint village of Indemini (979m), which we had seen on a video in our hotel. The old houses are clustered together on the mountainside, many of them sporting the ubiquitous satellite dish. The village is only yards from the Italian border and we crossed on foot at a deserted crossing point. The bus for the return journey was a modern 22 seat Iveco based at Indemini, and we stayed on board to the terminus at Magadino, from where we returned to Cadenazzo by the lakeside bus service.





TOP: *"Postal vehicles have priority" sign. "Post Horns" on the Iveco.*
MIDDLE: *Setra postbus at Cadenazzo, on the lakeside service from Dirinella to San Antonino.*
BOTTOM: *Heritage railway furniture at Magadino-Vira, with Locarno in the background.*

Unfortunately our plans for a third trip across the border to Intra on the west side of Lago Maggiore were thwarted. The local timetable, the "Orario Ticino", directed me to the website of the Italian bus company the VCO which seemed to promise that some journeys on the Italian Brissago – Intra service were extended into Switzerland to Locarno, and return. But we waited in vain at the stop, so this excursion will have to wait until we return to Ticino another year.