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Fare Exchange!

Peter Arnold



Deh4/4 No.23 'Randa' approaches the avalanche shelter alongside the Oberalpsee at the head of the 11.28 Andermatt to Disentis/Mustér. Photos: Peter Arnold



Deh4/411 No.93 'Oberwald'.



HGe4/411 No.107 'Grimsel' comes down off the rack into Andermatt station at the head of the 15.22 arrival from Disentis/Mustér.



Unidentified HGe4/411 heads Glacier Express 903 alongside the Oberalpsee.

My wife and I were staying in Andermatt this summer and, having already travelled over the Gotthard, Nufenen and Furka Passes, decided that we would also like to revisit the Grimsel and Susten Passes. This further journey would allow us an hour for a lunchtime beer in Meiringen! The obvious way to achieve this was to take the 08.30 bus from Andermatt, which would have meant crossing the Furka Pass a second time. However, I realised that we could start out just over an hour later by taking a train from Andermatt, which would then connect with the same bus at Oberwald.

So on Sunday 21st August we arrived at Andermatt station around 09.00 allowing me plenty of time to try and purchase our tickets for the round trip. Fortunately the MGB booking office clerk spoke good English and she soon understood what we wished to do. After checking her computer system she advised that the cheapest way was to issue us each with one ticket for Andermatt to Meiringen via Oberwald and Grimsel Pass, with another one for the return from Meiringen via Susten Pass to Andermatt for which I paid by credit card. Some ten minutes later as we were waiting on the platform, we were surprised to see the dear lady approaching us with some tickets in her hand. She was very apologetic and explained that she had found a cheaper fare for our round trip; she took back our tickets and gave us new ones together with a cash refund of CHF12.80! Soon after this the 09.24 arrival in Platform 4 from Göschenen appeared and, as this was due to go forward as our 09.37 departure, we boarded and settled into our seats. Perhaps five minutes later and who should appear? Yes, you've guessed it, the same dear lady – but, this time, even more apologetic!

She had realised that the replacement tickets did not cover the farthest section of our bus journey – i.e. from Innertkirchen into Meiringen and back. So, once again, she took back our tickets and gave us new ones but this time I had to give her CHF8.00 cash! Of course, with us being in one of the modern low entry carriages, other passengers were only too aware of her efforts and were having a good laugh, whilst we were trying to thank her for the excellent customer service.

Surely, it could only happen in Switzerland. 