

SWISS EXPRESS on line

‘How many SRS Members does it take to stop a train?’

Boyd Misstear’s personal reflection on a late summer visit to Switzerland

And well we may ask this question! But those on the SRS Autumn 2011 field visit by members of the Society know only too well, do we not? For those unable to participate, I will explain a little later.....but first.....

Members will recall an announcement many months back in the Swiss Express by Roger Ellis offering to organize a follow-up event to the very successful study tour he masterminded to Erstfeld, Canton Uri in 2009. Hardly surprising there was an enthusiastic response and over 20 members, some with their partners, took up the challenge to meet at the end of the English August Bank Holiday weekend. This time the series of visits was centred in and around Interlaken & Spiez in order to take in some of the delights of the Bernese Oberland. Unlike last time when all participants were accommodated at one hotel (The Frohsinn in Erstfeld), this time everyone was spread out. Apart from giving Roger added eyestrain (new glasses Roger?) reading local transport timetables so we could all meet at allotted locations by converging public transport and providing much amusement when folk suddenly appeared and then vanished, all went off well. But that’s not to say we ‘his flock’ didn’t provide Shepherd Roger a totally quiet time! One participant described Roger’s task as being akin to herding cats.

Festivities commenced in the lounge of the Hotel de la Paix, close to Interlaken West BLS station on Tuesday evening August 30th where a number of friendships and acquaintances were renewed. Apart from our members living in Switzerland who qualified for the shortest distance travelled to attend, ‘yours truly’ seemed to win the highest points for furthest travelled having escaped from New York and Connecticut before Hurricane Irene paid an unwelcome visit to the East Coast of the United States and then, while New York City announced they had “dodged the bullet”, parts of New Jersey and New England got hit hard. So it wasn’t an appropriate time to send home a Swiss post card saying ‘*having a wonderful time*’ when word of preparations and heading to the basement were reported prior to all contact being lost for some two days, one daughter evacuated and power/water/phone/internet not restored for 8 days due to the devastation. But at least all in our family were safe and sound, although somewhat shaken. Sadly, others were not so fortunate.

Wednesday saw us up bright and breezy and raring to go, although some found it harder than others to open eyelids prior to morning ‘shots’ of the excellent Swiss formulated drug called coffee.

We were off over to Interlaken Ost for a change onto the Zentralbahn to Brienz and to meet member Bryan Stone on the platform. He had arranged for us to visit the steam shed of the Brienzer Rothorn Bahn (BRB – opened in 1891 as a tourist line), get covered in Polish soot, run over by a fast moving transfer table and generally have every opportunity to salivate at hissing monsters being prepared for their days outing up the Riggensbach rack to Rothorn – all this before nine thirty! With a single coach almost dedicated to our party ahead of small coal fired H2/3 No 2 built by SLM in 1891 (workshop 689) for a cost of CHF42,000 we soon got into the swing of the soft rhythmic motion that could put the most hardened railway enthusiast to sleep if it wasn’t for the breath taking views - and Swiss jet fighters practicing above and below us in the Aare valley - on a beautiful sunny day! Along the route there is a series of wood carvings and colourful character paintings that tell the Ghost Story on children’s specials. As we slowly proceeded up the 1 in 4 gradient in block convoy, following a larger oil fired steam locomotive unit able to push two coaches and followed by a diesel powered set, a welcome intermediate stop at Planalp had been scheduled. A hot sausage courtesy of the engine crew straight from a side tank and hunk of Riggensbach rack shaped fresh bread washed down by a non-alcoholic fermented Swiss alpine apple juice helped us catch our breath and gave time for a more studied view over the landscape spread below. This helped to prepare our comrades for the rigours of vertigo to come and awe inspiring sights from locations which we were shortly to realize must defy all current UK/US health and safety ‘experts’ thinking! After the stop it was up and up past the old winding cart track that an occasional 4-wheel drive vehicle was seen to be truly testing its might and on to the top and ‘saunter’ (by Swiss standards!) to the very Rothorn Kulm peaks at 2,254 metres and wondering how on earth the Swiss manage to have perfectly clean gravity defying flushing loos next to the summit. Go figure! Pipes were nowhere to be seen! If this has whet your appetite and you haven’t experienced

the BRB, www.brienz-rothorn-bahn.ch will provide more information, including the full technical specification of locomotive H2/3 No2.

After such an energetic morning, most participants were in need of a rest and liquid libation and after our return down the mountain took the BLS steamer from Brienz back to Interlaken Ost in the afternoon sunshine for a quick change and freshen up after all that excitement. Then we were off to a Swiss Surprise meal very graciously hosted by the Thun Eisenbahn Amateur (TEA) club where this Connecticut Colonial was to meet with a wonderful American lady from Presque Isle in Maine (which is even more remote than almost anywhere to be found in Helvetia) who had prepared a splendid repast for all the SRS members who pitched-up in her kitchen at the clubhouse. What a small world! Jürg Reimann, Thomas Köppel and everyone made us so welcome. Suitably recharged, we entered an Aladdin's cave of scratch built O Gauge models based on an imaginary part of the BLS North and South ramps. Founded in 1957, and located (courtesy of the BLS) in the side attic off the main station building, the TEA operate analogue with electro mechanical switching; dispatchers initiate movements; signal box controllers route trains; whilst there is a separate bank of drivers each with their respective 'charge'. Armed with reduced sized driving wheels to feed rheostats, and observing signal conditions with the aid of strategically located mirrors and cameras, drivers drive according to line and signal conditions and thus full operating sessions are conducted. A wonderful experience, with club members clearly having immense fun, and for all of the SRS group to enjoy, and an excuse to grovel around on 'all-fours' to gain access to interesting control features located under the massive baseboards. Before I forget, the TEA also has a 75 metre long set of O gauge exhibition modules – these chaps are organized! www.tea-thun.ch

After the warmth and hearty welcome, and the train ride back to our Spiez/Interlaken bases, there was nothing for it but for some dehydrated individuals to drop into the bar at the Hotel de La Paix to celebrate all returning safely to mother earth, reflect on TEA's generous hospitality and achievements and build up sufficient Swiss courage for what Roger and company had in store for the following day.

Thursday morning arrived somewhat sooner than anticipated and was beautifully bright and sunny which required some to dash off for sunglasses! We headed into Bern and were hosted by Martin Cordes Archives Director of SBB Historic at their ground floor headquarters in an SBB annex to the Hbf. Martin kindly gave a very informative overview talk and PowerPoint presentation about SBB Historic, their structure, responsibilities and glimpse into their collections and archives and answered many questions. The Swiss Federal Railways, or SBB/CFF/FFS, was founded over 100 years ago in 1902 following nationalization of a number of independent railway companies. The SBB Historic remit is to preserve for current and future generations aspects of Swiss Federal Railways since their coming into existence. Historic have three divisions: Collections, Archives and Library. Since SBB Historic itself was founded some 10 years ago, they have continued to expand and now have under their responsibility some 56 locomotives, 100+ carriages and wagons - including some hand-powered track inspection carts! Anyone looking for exercise I wonder? The collection is supported by 14 teams of volunteers across Helvetia. SBB Historic look after more than one hundred thousand SLM technical documents saved from destruction in recent years and have timetables dating back to 1864, including those of Post Coach timetables predating the railways. The collection of papers, drawing and other items is gradually being catalogued and copies made available to interested individuals for a charge (which can be expensive and run to a few hundred Swiss Francs for a copy of a full size wall poster!). Martin mentioned that while their collection includes nickelodeons previously found in station waiting rooms to provide musical entertainment to passengers awaiting their respective trains, they do not have signals or uniforms since they are not a museum and these items can be found in the Verkehrshaus in Luzern. A personal observation here, I found this distinction and demarcation to be somewhat fuzzy, but maybe better minds can elaborate? Is a static exhibit considered a museum entry and moving one an historic preservation?

Many interesting questions and observations ensued and one highlighted the fact Historic only has a mandate to look after SBB heritage, it does not have this remit for other Swiss railways and no common policy exists amongst the BLS and other operators. What do the BLS/RhB/MGB and so forth have in mind when it comes to retaining items and records of historical importance and interest? Indeed, should a business concern be reasonably expected to take on such task and expense? Lots of views are likely to be forthcoming on this one and where the Verkehrshaus and other museums fit. A very big thank you must go to Bryan Stone, Swiss resident and our magazine's Swiss News editor, for arranging this informative visit at short notice, and for Martin stepping into the breach, when a planned visit to Regionalverkehr Bern at Worb (www.rbs.ch) had to be called off due to our potential host's illness.

Following suitable refreshments in the centre of Bern and a short, smooth, up-and-down ride on the 900mm gauge funicular Drahteseilbahn Marzili -DMB (<http://www.marzilibahn.ch/>) which was hastily completed and opened for service on 19th July 1885 to coincide with the opening of the [Eidgenössisches Schützenfest](#), the Swiss marksmen's festival, in Bern, it was time to take up a visit to Bern Mobil kindly put together by SRS Webmaster Neil Wheelwright.

Alighting from the No 3 tram, we were met at the depot by two English-speaking guides and split up into two parties. These were taken around all aspects of Bern Mobil operations and maintenance facilities. Bern Mobil is responsible for running the public transport trams, buses and trolley buses in its namesake city. Of the roughly 750 employees, 400 are concerned with operations and support spread across three depots, and 350 are drivers. As there are three forms of transport, one might expect they have three classes of driver, and while they do, the classification differs across skills and experience ranging from those dedicated to certain types of vehicles to those experienced and able to drive all types.

There are some 40 metre-gauge trams of varying vintage running off 600V dc and 120 buses. These range across the remit from diesels, with particle filter exhaust systems to limit emissions into the atmosphere, Bio-gas fuelled vehicles and electric-powered trolleybuses. The diesels are gradually being phased out, with even some very modern vehicles now slated for sale, in favour of bio-gas powered vehicles. The City generates the bio-gas at its own sewage farms, something *Swiss Express* reported on some years ago. The depot trip highlighted some interesting aspects your writer had not thought about! When gas powered buses are being refuelled, drivers must open doors, etc in case a vehicle accidentally fills with fumes causing a hazard condition. The trolleybuses are fitted with auxiliary diesel motors to enable them to move when required under their own power for short distances, for instance, when proceeding through the vehicle washing plant at the end of every outing into their computer allocated parking bay ready for their next turn of duty, or out of traffic way on the streets when wires are not available.

Following the tour around the vehicles, the 'running sheds' and the repair facilities the groups were introduced to the ultra-modern Control Centre where we learnt how Bern Mobil track all their vehicles, and manage their operations, using the same system in use in London and provided by Trapeze Intelligent Transport System (www.trapezeits.com). Asked about CCTV monitoring of junctions, tram stops, etc it was interesting to learn that there are no CCTV cameras in operation on the streets of Bern whereas in London there are cameras at every set of traffic signals in the city and at most public transport stops in the central zone. Then it was back onto the No 3 and down to the end of the route and into the Tram Museum where we were met by Martin Strobel, its President, and Erik Jordanis, their expert on all aspects tram-wise! The Tram Museum, or Tramverein Bern – TVB, (www.trittbrett.ch), has some 200 members and their collection of vehicles and artefacts are housed in a 1941-built former depot building owned by Bern Mobil. The museum opened 4 years ago after 7,000 hours of work by members. The collection also includes a number of buses which are owned by the club, while the trams remain the property of Bern Mobil and only Bern Mobil drivers can drive them around Bern in allocation slots prearranged by the Museum and Bern Mobil.

Needless to say following a fast train ride back-to-base a recovery libation was necessary for many after all the intelligence consumed during this very educational day. So Gillian and Charlotte back at the Hotel de la Paix found a few hardy souls recovering and reenergizing their brain cells wondering if Friday would be so instructive. Well, yes and yes! How is this possible? One might well ask - but it was!

Friday saw participating members split into two parties, one to walk part of the famous South Ramp path, the other heading to the Bern Lötschberg Simplon Railway (BLS) Operations Centre at Spiez for a most instructive description of train operations over and through the Lötschberg transalpine Summit and Base tunnels. Security in Switzerland is normally very relaxed but here photography is restricted something members were pleased to honour. This visit was arranged through the good offices of local SRS member Andreas Hasler and about 20 members/partners met on Platform 1 at Spiez for a visit to the signalling panel. We were met by one of the senior signal Managers and before going through to the "box" itself were shown diagrammatic plan of the BLS and the area the panel control together with a map of the new base tunnel and the signalling problems caused by the single line section. After which we were ushered into the panel itself and stood by various screens watching the signallers control trains over the whole BLS network.

The highlight of the visit to many was the system for identifying problems which had for example caused loads to work loose on freight trains heading for the base tunnel and become "out of the loading gauge". These might be for example loose ropes on trucks, too high radio antenna on vehicles, or loads that had shifted while in transit.

The system was able to identify the individual freight wagon and provide a computer generated image of the actual problem. This of course enabled the train to be stopped at an appropriate location for the matter to be dealt with. It was mentioned that freight wagons coming from a country to the South of Switzerland were the most frequent offenders. This delightful country also caused many of the freight trains to vary from their allotted path arriving at the Swiss border a little late or a little early. It was said that meetings are held between the BLS and their Italian (whoops, gave it away) counterparts to try and ensure that these problems are kept to a minimum. It is a concern with the single line section of the base tunnel and the tight timings of trains.

After the visit to the panel we proceeded to Spiez Depot for our escorted tour given by an ex BLS employee who now undertakes these tasks on behalf his former employer. It was a delight to see him meet old friends who he had known throughout his working life. The tour was comprehensive and took us everywhere including the paint shop, wheel set dropping lift, and ending up in the work shop seeing both the mechanical and electrical side of the tasks that are undertaken. It was lucky that preserved Ae 6/8 locomotive No. 204 was in the workshop so that party members had a great opportunity for some close up pictures. We, of course, were able to see and get into the cabs of an Re 4/4 and 465.

Meantime, while those were having the heads filled with facts and figures on the intricacies of real railway operation, six members (called the 'hardy-bunch') under the expert leadership of 'Sherpa J' - as John Jesson was to become known as our shoe leather was gradually left along the South Ramp path - set off to walk between Hohtenn (a request stop of the 'Lötschberger' operations) and Ausserberg. The weather was again warm and sunny and we took in the delights of walking along trails and paths, some of them originally dating back to the 1300's. In places this wonderful walk is more suitable for sure footed mountain goats! We traversed through access tunnels built during the construction of the Bern Lötschberg Simplon Railway which commenced building in 1906 and opened as a single track in 1913. While some tunnels were built with the foresight of later doubling the whole line, this doubling was not officially inaugurated until 8th May 1992 after twelve years of concentrated work.

The Lötschberg was electrified from the very start gaining experience by electrifying Spiez to Frütigen in 1908 using 15kV AC/15 cycles before eventually opening the line through to Brig. In parallel, a commission was studying the best electrical choice and eventually both the BLS and later the SBB, having studied the experiences of the BLS and other railway companies in Europe, determined the most suitable electrification system to be 15kV AC/16 2/3rd cycles. This was chosen as the 'standard' for standard gauge electrification in Switzerland. This electrification process is being covered in Paul Russenberger's excellent series of articles called "The Electric Railway" in *Swiss Express*.

That evening it was back to Interlaken, with both groups meeting for an onward trip over the Berner Oberland Bahn – BOB (http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berner_Oberland-Bahn) from Interlaken Ost to Zweilütschinen. Founded in 1969, Andreas Häsler (now off duty) and members of Modelleisenbahnfreunde Eiger Zweilütschinen (MEFEZ – www.mefez.ch) met and entertained us to a fascinating operating session of their railway followed by a bratwurst bar-b-q and drinks. They have a super club house in a building owned by the BOB, and now operationally redundant, adjacent to the railway's modern Zweilütschinen Depot. The MEFEZ layout is HO Scale (1:87) analogue DC 2-rail and runs with train allocations from hidden storage under the control of a member 'hidden' in the middle beneath the centre of the outer walk-around layout. Scale length trains are operated with the aid of MpC-BSW software by GAHLER+RINGSTMEIER. (<http://www.mpc-modellbahnsteuerung.de/>). The MEFEZ evidently make a point of taking trips to see prototypical tram and railway operations in Europe, a recent example being a visit to Dresden in May this year.

The weather continued to behave and on Saturday another action packed series of activities had been organised to delight us including perhaps the highlight for many! To get us underway, Andreas met us again for a gentle short walk from Blausee Mitzholz (reached by the No 230 bus operated by AFABus from Frütigen) to Kandergrund. While the Blausee station is no longer used, the station building and area surrounding are in generally good repair. The familiar station building only dates from 1948. The previous structure was destroyed in a massive explosion in 1947 on the night of the 19/20th December when 7,000 tonnes of explosives housed in the adjacent army tunnels under the "Fluh" ignited and killed 9 local residents including the station master and his family. The cause of the explosion was never discovered for certain as destruction was so complete and widespread. Our stroll with expert guidance took us back to Kandergrund Altels and past the local church with its graveyard maintained in immaculate condition. One aspect of burial in Switzerland compared to the British Isles had previously escaped my understanding: Swiss only 'rent' grave space for a limited period, typically 20 years after which time remains are dug up, head stones crushed and plots recycled!

Safely back from our gentle stroll by now it was Saturday afternoon and it found us introduced to two expert and very pleasant guides in Frütigen – Cornelia Grossen and Christian Senn of the BLS Intervention Centre. This is responsible for tunnel incident response. As when we had visited Bern Mobil we were split into two parties and taken on a detailed and again very informative look into the preparations and constant readiness of the rescue team and their impressive equipment. First we received an explanation of the base tunnel complex with the aid of a 1:300 scale model of the tunnels, their layout and purpose (a subject very much in its own right but suffice here to summarize as partly equipped bores with additional service tunnels for facilities and air – more specifically, 2/3rd single track, 1/3rd double track and 7Km of un-bored rock! The latter would ‘only’ have cost CHF70Million to complete while all contractors were on site (everything is relative!), but now it is estimated to cost more than CHF700Million at today’s prices and not likely to be tackled before 2030.

Below the large training and briefing room housing the very long table of the tunnel model, resides the rescue train and there we met some of the staff on duty. The rescue train, painted in bright BLS Green, Blue and Silver markings made a striking pose in its shed within the centre at the north end of the Base Tunnel. To impart some of the magnitude, the train comprises four units in two self contained parts to fight fire and rescue trapped people either out through the nearest service tunnel or back out along the tracks within the 34km length. The train is 60 metres long, weighs 272 tonnes, can travel at 100km per hour, carries 52,000 litres of water, 1,600 litres of fire suppressant mousse, plus 100 litres of special mousse, so they can spray the most appropriate combination to fight whatever type of fire encountered. As the diesel-electric powered units can split into two parts, one to tackle the incident and the other to extract personnel, it carries two motor units and drivers (one either end), an incident commander in the leading cab and a team of rescue personnel. And the readiness response time from call-out to rolling out their ‘shed’ is just 3 minutes! To achieve this level of readiness, the driver for the train is on duty for 24 hrs at a time, eating & sleeping on the premises. Most impressive! For a detailed look at preparations and some historical fire fighting train compositions and preparedness of both the SBB and BLS, see Schweizer Eisenbahn-Revue March 2005 published by Minirex AG (www.minirex.ch). The train also featured in *Swiss Express* at the time of the opening of the base tunnel.

Prevention of problems is the maxim that BLS focus upon and so elaborate safety systems are in place to detect problems before they enter the tunnel and become acute. The most common source of problems found elsewhere in other long railway tunnels has been with freight loads caused by lorries and their loads catching fire rather than the railway wagons, coaches and infrastructure. To prevent a ‘sick train’ from entering the base tunnel, a series of very carefully positioned and highly sensitive sensors are located on the approaches to the tunnels. Any deviation from a tight specification automatically directs the affected train off to a siding to be inspected before being released and usually then sent over the old summit route if appropriate.

Having been lead around their response base, introduced to personnel and seeing the inside of the train units, we were asked to don BLS blue safety helmets, high visibility vests and were then loaded into two pristine clean white VW minibus vehicles driven by Cornelia and Chris. We travelled first to the small memorial plaque honouring the five workers who sadly lost their lives in the construction of the base tunnel complex to pay our collective respects. We then drove up to large steel protective gates and after suitable head count of “souls on board”, so everyone would be constantly accounted for, we were allowed to proceed and driven into a large air lock where the doors closed behind us. Once pressure was adjusted to that of the inside of the tunnel which is kept a little above normal atmospheric at that entry level, the doors at the inside end were opened remotely, tunnel lights turned on and in we drove into a diameter space the size that would easily accommodate a London double-decker bus! Reflective road signs shone in our headlights showing allowable speeds up to 60Kmph. After a number of kilometres of circuitous tunnel we reached a point 1,600 metres beneath the surface, parked in an allotted parking space and shown into one of 12 massive control room caverns again protected by doors. Contained within we found large truck size stainless steel containers housing communications, control and back-up resources mounted on raised flooring to simplify utility connections. After straining back our necks to take in the size of these cathedral sized caverns and equipment, we then proceeded on foot through tunnel openings the size suitable for the largest double deck passenger trains to a reinforced observation window to watch trains hurtle past on the base tunnel running lines at speeds of over 100kph. The noise and suction effect were quite something to experience. Had it not been for the protection, one would have been sucked into the vacuum caused by the train. I didn’t hear of anyone in our party not being impressed by what BLS have and continue to achieve at the Lötschberg base tunnel! Indeed, stage struck silence was the order of the day!

One noticeable absence from the railway tunnels is any sign of colour light signals. Due to the speed of the trains, no visible signals are deployed, rather the in-cab European Train Control System II (ETCS II) is

operational and only locomotives suitably equipped are allowed through the Base Tunnel. All other locomotives must take the summit route unless piloted with an ETCS II fitted locomotive.

One foot note on hydrogeology – the study of ground water and thus tunnel water! Believe it or not, but mountains are not solid fixed masses, rather they are ‘alive’ as geologists will confirm and rock formations, especially under great pressure, constantly move. As a result ground water penetrates down into the rock strata and seeps into most tunnels despite precautions. The Lötschberg is no exception. Ground water under all that rock pressure in the Lötschberg, which has taken months or years to seep down to the tunnel level, is warm and found at 22°C. There is evidentially a law in Switzerland that prevents anyone from increasing the temperature of a river by more than a maximum amount of 1°C so it was not possible for the tunnel owners to simply pipe the water out into a local river. An ingenious and financially sound by-product solution was found – build a tropical house and grow tropical plants and farm sturgeon fish which produce caviar faster in warm than in cold water! Then open this new hot house and farm as a contrasting tourist attraction in the cold alpine region! And this is what has happened! Water is pumped down to “The Tropic House” at Frütigen which is open to visitors daily except over Christmas (<http://www.tropenhaus-frutigen.ch/en.html>). A possible location one might not have considered visiting before when you are next in the Lötschberg area.

And if Saturday had not been eventful enough, we had two more events! We all met up again with Andreas (who has obviously got a strong constitution!) at Interlaken West, where we were delighted to be introduced to Andreas wife Hester who is expecting their first child, and his father Hans to take us to a community venue in the town to see a presentation Hans had prepared on the history of railways in the Interlaken area with a series of copies of old original photographs and post cards.....an archive worthy of mention to the Verkehrshaus! After this the day ended with an excellent traditional Swiss dinner at the local and friendly Stadthaus.

Sunday was our last ‘official’ day and we were off to Blonay - Chamby Museum Railway (www.blonay-chamby.ch). How to get there from Interlaken West? Well, multiple choices presented the intrepid team. One, through ‘the hole’ to Visp, then along the Rhone to Montreux and up the Montreux-Oberland Bernois – MOB (www.mob.ch) 900V DC powered, 1:13.5 metre gauge adhesion only gradient to Chamby was the route which Sherpa J and I did. Most chose to take the Golden Pass Express via a change of train at Zweisimmen then down to Chamby. Well, from the title of this article, can you guess what happened? Sherpa J and I arrived on time to be met by a very friendly team from the B-C led by president Jean Francois Andrist (JF) and specially laid-on museum transport for the short ride to their storage depot and museum. Our friends at the B-C had even specially printed special commemorative tickets! We waited for the southbound Golden Pass train to stop and off-load our friends. Along came the Ge 4/4 III powered Golden Pass Panoramic with no signs of stopping! Yes, everyone on the train failed to arrange the request stop (“clearly” indicated in the timetable) and had been ‘taken hostage’ by ‘The MOB’!! JF found this most amusing so realizing there would be an hour before our lost souls could be released and brought back up to Chamby, Sherpa J and I set off to enjoy that time viewing the exhibits. And at the allotted following time, JF arranged transport and we went to collect our lost partners who all looked very sheepish with all sorts of excuses and generally holding their proverbial ‘tails’ between their legs! Much Anglo / Gaul / Swiss hilarity ensued and bonhomie remained throughout the day! With new found friends there followed a most interesting time with expert tours, rides to and from Chamby and the Museum under electric, petrol and steam conveyance and even included a photographic excursion down and back to Blonay behind a vintage steam loco, which included a photographic run past over the arched viaduct.

Weary, but elated, members made their way back that evening to their respective hotels and guest houses to recover with the aid of a glass or two of local beverage of choice, and to reflect just what a tremendous time and set of experiences we had achieved in less than one week. All of this could not have been possible without the wonderful help and assistance by many kind folk both in the UK and Switzerland for which we truly extend our thanks – not least to our intrepid organizer Roger Ellis.

Well done Roger – can we do it again?