

Switzerland, June 2007

In a break from the normal, the Exiled Brummie collected me at about 19:15 on the 6th June, we loaded Metal Mickey (and his kitchen sink) in at Worksop, then made a leisurely drive down the M1, listening to the England football commentary, to the 'Travel Inn' at Luton. Here we met with Toby (the tram engine) and spent the night in the relative luxury of the hotel, rising at 04:00 for the final drive to the airport.

We got to the airport as the check-in opened and we were first through, allowing plenty of time to take breakfast before being called to the gate for Easyjet flight 2151 to Geneva. Boeing 737-700, registration number G-EZJJ, for those who are interested, did the honours on a very full, but totally uneventful flight. The controlled crash that count as landings these days was bang on time, we experienced no problems at passport control (although there was no entry stamp available for Metal Mickey) and Europcar had us away in under 20mins. Clara von co-pilot was powered up and soon had us heading on the road to Lausanne. As we approached the city SBB locos 11240+11241 became the first numbers in our books, viewed from the A1 as we searched out the main station. There is a small depot here and after working out the parking arrangements we obtained permission to visit. Surprisingly we were supplied with safety glasses for the visit, but then allowed to wander around unaccompanied. Each depot in Switzerland, at least those we can find, seems to have a historic loco or two inside and Lausanne is no exception with 10264 and 10976 both being found in the 8 numbers available in the depot (we have had better starts!). We followed this with a 30mins stint on the nearby Hbf where 11231 passed with freight and a 20 further numbers were available. Once we got too hot we moved on to Payerne, where, despite only 4 numbers being stabled here we caused an international incident trying to photograph them. The local railway police (French, oh surprise, surprise) had a full scale wobbler at us, sadly we don't understand French too good and had no clue what was going on, the obvious man in charge (inspector clueless) totally wasted 10mins by trying to get us to understand French spoken at 100mph, before throwing his hands in the air and phoning a colleague. After a brief conversation he asked to see our pictures, and then waved us away. We still have no idea what he was going on about.

Fribourg Station came next; here we found our first examples of the many private operators which work on the Swiss railways with examples of both Bern – Lötschberg - Simplon (BLS) and Transports Publics Fribourgeois (TPF) traction rubbing shoulders with SBB's own. Once we were sure we had everything we headed off to Bern, the Gütterbahnhof (freight yard) had 5 locos in residence, including BLS 188 then an ask produced a positive response at the depot and this produced just 6 further numbers. A drive of almost an hour found us on Spiez Station and a stay of nearly 2 hours produced 44 numbers and heavy rain. Freight was plentiful, old BLS 'brownies' 181+170 powered through with an oil working, SBB's 11368+620069 (ex 11669) headed a container and Mreal (MR) 436114+436115 (ex SBB class Re 4/4 electrics) came to a halt with a intermodal service. Spiez also produced the strangely numbered 460000 on a long distance passenger service. We had to leave in order to get to our hotel, which overlooked Interlaken West station. After a quick de-louse we visited the nearby preservation site before heading to a eating house. Here we enjoyed (at least two of us did) Garlic Snails followed by large pork steaks. A couple (bluff) of glasses of the local brew rounded the night off and I was asleep before Metal Mickey had unpacked.

A1 approaching Lausanne (10:20) 11240/241 **Lausanne Hbf Depot (11:05)** 10264 10976
11118/138 11303 16367 540006 Tm 512 **Lausanne Hbf (11:25 – 11:55)** 11121/166/172 11231
16382/397/406 18511 460003/004/021/037/056 484015 500109 560080/110/114/114/118 SNCF TGV
114 **Payerne (12:55)** 11130 11465/490 843072 **Fribourg Station (13:45)** 234074 460027/035
560076 841024/026 843078 Tm 9505/95 BLS 193 nina 17/31 TPF 567173/182 Tm 85 **Bern GBf
(15:00)** 18413/414 232002 234058 BLS 188 **Bern Depot (15:20)** 460061 525005 BLS nina
02/25/27/28 **Spiez Station (16:20 – 18:00)** 11273 11368 235079/081
460000/019/025/051/068/100/117 484016 620069 (11669) 841003 Te 12 DB 401083/588 Private
Owner 185564/567/577 BLS 168/70/75/81/85/91 185525/527/535/576 245022 420502/503/506
465001/009/018/019 485020 565732 TM 97 MR 436112/114/115 **Interlaken West (18:30)**

460049/116 DB401072/572 BLS 169 **Interlaken West Preservation Site (19:00)** Tem 298
Sudostbahn (SOB) 21

Day two started, as is usual, with a welcome breakfast followed by a painless checkout, SBB 460085 and DB ICE 401090+401590 passed while we were loading our bags into the car, we then did the short drive to Interlaken Ost and realised we had stayed in the poor end of town! The station car park was empty and free at this time, but our parking coincided with the arrival of the yearly freight service hauled by green liveried 11484. We did almost an hour on the station here, sadly we were not allowed to visit the steam shed, and this produced examples of, SBB, BLS, Bernese Oberland Railways (BOB) & Die Zentralbahn (ZB) traction in a total of 22 numbers. We obtained our first photos of both BOB and ZB traction, then waited by the river bridge for the 'Today's Railways' cover shot of an approaching inter-city service before heading up the hill to Kandersteg. This is the first (or last if you travel the other way) station on the Spiez side of the Lötschberg tunnel and the home of a small BLS depot, which was totally empty and locked up today. We made an un-scheduled attempt to board the car ferry service through the tunnel, causing the Exiled Brummie to reverse the entire toll lane, before finally finding the station car park, as we did a torrential rain storm started, which continued for the first 40mins of our 1 hour stay. Freight services were plentiful, but not overwhelming, the highlight being SBB locs 11689+11291+11677+11287 with 11271 banking, powering a intermodal service towards Brig. However the BLS powered 'car ferry' trains, powered by the Re 4/4 class 425 'brownies' were the main action for our cameras with 5 arriving / departing during our stay.

Our next step was to catch the train through the tunnel to Brig; we had to move the car into the 'long stay' area, which, ironically, meant that we had to go through the toll booth for the car ferry because the other road was dug up! SBB 460000 (no it was not a typo earlier) arrived with our train and hauled us effortlessly to Brig. Passing Goppenstein we noted 6 numbers and DB's 185145+ an unidentified further class member passed us at Lalden before we arrived at Brig, bang on time at 11:40. It was far too hot to walk to the depot, so we walked to the bar, I mean sandwich shop, checked out the narrow gauge station, where examples of Matterhorn Gotthard Bahn (MGB) were noted, then perched on the end of platform 4 for 1½ hours. One or two freights passed including BLS 'brownies' 162+173 heading into the tunnel, it got hotter, Toby's ice cream melted before he could eat it and a fair amount of shunting took place before we employed 460017 to return to Kandersteg.

Re united with the car we made a brief call at Richenbach, 4 numbers, before arriving back at Speiz, where, after calling at the station, we made for the BLS depot. The depot foreman seemed somewhat surprised to see us, but allowed a full visit and provided an English speaking guide. A total of 30 numbers found their way into our books including articulated locos 205 and 273. A further hour in the car found us at Meiringen, the narrow gauge depot here contained 7 numbers with ZB 110001 being the main attraction, Metal Mickey acquired a further 'Today's Railways' cover photo and we took time out for a coffee break. One of the most breathtaking drives I have ever done followed as we went 'cross country' to Erstfeld, cross country in this case being up, then down a mountain. We stopped at the top and had a photo taken with the snow piled high above our heads, the road is only open in summer, I wonder why? After checking into our 'basic' hotel we headed to the nearby station, where freight passed regularly during our 1½ hour stay. Many classic Swiss 10/10 combinations passed, most stopping for crew changes, dispolok ES64F4097 (198997) was stabled at the end of the station and many 'banking' locos came off the nearby depot. When hunger got the better of us we returned to our hotel for the day's menu, in this case asparagus soup followed by 'ribeye' steak then ice cream, basic but nice. We walked it off by doing a further 45mins on the platform then taking a beer in one of the other hotels nearby before heading to bed.

Interlaken West (08:00) 460085 DB 401090/590 **Interlaken Ost (08:10 – 09:00)** 11484 460116
465729 BLS 190 BOB 253/61 306/08/11/12 401/02/03/12/13/21/22/24/25 501 ZB 101965 130001
Kandersteg (10:00 – 11:07) 11271/287/291 11677/689 460000/019 484016 BLS
164/66/67/70/81/86/92 402 942 465004/010/011 485002/006 **Goppenstein (11:20)** 843081
BLS164/66 225056 235091 **Lalden (11:38)** DB 185145 **Brig Station (11:40 – 13:18)**
11200/202/292/326/347/350/355/367 11605/616/621 16368/446 18508 460004/017/025/045/057/094
484015/017 560008 BLS 162/73/86 235092 566236 MGB 22 24 54 2042 4926 **Kandersteg (15:53)**
BLS 164/67/83 **Richenbach (14:16)** 460017 484013 843502/503 **Speiz Station (14:35)** Te96 SBB
Historic 14305 BLS 225056 235083 **Speiz BLS Depot (14:45)** BLS 161/73/78/79/91/94 205 273
185527/536/577 235023/094/100 465003/005/007/010/016 485001/002/011

485013/018/020 Te17 Tm4 95 Steam 1 **Meringen (15:55)** ZB 101961/963 104001 110001 Te203
Tm172 597 **Erstfeld (18:00 – 19:30)** 11156/57/162/173/183/196/203/232/252/258/279/297/309/330
11402/417/510 11608/626/631/632/648/651/666/681 16396 18437 460020/029/034/044/080
523002/004 DB 185113 dispolok ES64F4097 **Erstfeld (21:45 – 22:30)**
11114/148/162/203/267/275/285/293/319 11801 482007 620017 (11617) 620061 (11661) DB
185124

In a 'basic' hotel, you only expect a 'basic' breakfast; to that end we were not disappointed. We then walked across the road and did 1 hour 40mins on the station, things were very slow with only 17 numbers passing in this time. Italian IC unit 470008 looked nice and 11634+11261, the classic Swiss combination, passed with a freight. We returned for the car then headed to the depot, plinthed electric 14270 guards the depot entrance, and it's a bit tatty but was well worth the photo. The depot engineer asked us to wait 10mins while he could provide an English speaking guide, which we were happy to do, the guide duly arrived and proceeded to show us the entire depot which contained 42 numbers. Included in these was preserved Ae 6/6 electric 11402, which looked fantastic and no fewer than 5 DB class 185 electrics. Once we had said thanks, we loaded in for the long drive to Chur. Calling at Andermatt we found just two numbers, both belonging to the Matterhorn – Gotthard – Bahn (MGB) 23 and 94 (named Fiesch) before starting a long, uphill, drive, passing the long abandoned Toblerone mines, to Disentis / Munstër where there is a small depot belonging to the MGB and this company uses this station to take charge of trains from the Rhätische Bahn (RhB), so locomotives from both companies were there when we called. We eventually arrived at Chur at 14:00, it was oven hot, and we visited the little RhB operated depot here and stayed for a little over an hour noting 24 numbers in all. The glassier express arrived during our stay, powered by white liveried RhB loco 649, the observation car carriages looking like mobile greenhouses, providing work for our cameras.

On the road again we found RhB 93 and 625 at Untervaz before visiting the depot at Sargans. Unfortunately this depot is now closed, all the rail access into the roundhouse has been blocked (or lifted) and only engineers locos now stable here, there were 5 today. Heading back to Erstfeld we noted 'preserved' 610492 at the Gottard Restplatz, then had time for an hour on Erstfeld station where DB 185144+185128, SBB 11356+11243+11352 and classic combo 11280+11609 all passed with freight workings. Dinner was taken in the hotel, on the menu tonight was fish soup followed by pork in herb butter, and it was delicious! A final 50mins, in the dark and the rain, on the station found freight still passing with 11315+11676, 11681+11309 and DB 185146+185140 all providing interest. Eventually we got the call for a final beer and during this event bumped into fellow ICRS member, Nigel Emery, which made the final beer a very long one!

Erstfeld (08:10 – 09:50) 11162/183/204/220/223/246/261/293/297/300 11634 460020/031/044/049
523012 Italian 470008 **Erstfeld Depot (10:20)** 11162/215/246/258/293/297/309/315/318/347/358
11402/477 11603/605/628/636/662/663/676/681 11801 14201/253/270 16396/404 482020/037
620055 (11655) Tm915 DB 185103/104/113/131/133 **Andermatt (11:31)** MGB 23 94 **Disentis /
Munstër (12:15)** MGB 2 5 25(withdrawn) 32 104 RhB 615/17 **Chur (14:00 – 15:10)**
11124/134/147/160/174 16427/428 460043/074 560033 561004 RhB 232/42 515/16
601/03/11/13/15/47/49 701/02 **Untervaz (15:35)** RhB 93 625 **Sargans Depot (16:00)** 232038
234064/084 Tm631/37 **Gottard Restplatz (17:40)** 610492 **Erstfeld Station (17:55 – 18:45)**
11211/215/243/246/280/288/293/352/356 11609/614 460029/067 482020/037 523012
620055(11655) DB 185128/144 Dispolok ES64F4095 **Erstfeld Station (21:00 – 21:50)**
11148/189/218/261/309/315/349 11676/681 421390(11390) 436115 460067 620047(11647) DB
185110/133/140/146 Italian 470058

We cracked the breakfast system on the second day, getting cereal and extra orange juice with our bread and jam this morning (not joking) before a painless checkout had us away at 07:45. Although this hotel is basic, it is in a perfect position for rail enthusiasts and I can see us visiting here again. Our first call today was Flüelen, it's by the hatchery for the wooden cuckoo eggs (for the clocks), and it contained just Tm845 and 234142. We moved on to Schwyz, only because we had noticed an old 'crocodile' loco as we passed yesterday, it took a bit of 'seat of the pants' navigation but we eventually located 10997 in a works yard by the running line. The photographer perched on a cable drum just by it got quite a surprise when we arrived, I can tell you. Arth – Goldau was our next call, it was much more interesting than I expected there was almost nothing in the station but the sidings by the signal box contained a nice gaggle of stabled locomotives. Examples of traction from the Rigi Bahn and

Schweizerische Südostbahn (SOB) were also in residence and we were glad that the ice cream shop was open. It was about an hour, the drive to Luzern, we called first at the goods yard, finding just 16358 and 843004 stabled up, before we moved on to the depot. Permission to visit was granted and a walk round produced 18 further numbers, including a dilapidated 11403 which we were assured was not withdrawn. We left the car parked in the depot car park and walked it to the station, it was blistering hot and scantily clad females were everywhere Toby and the exiled Brummie nearly did not make it, having a close call with a lady cyclist who was wearing nothing more than three fig leaves and we were all distracted by a nearly naked female who gave the expression 'a pair of 40's' a who new meaning. We stayed 30mins collecting examples of ZB narrow gauge traction as well as SBB & BLS standard gauge, it is a very interesting train watching location and would be worth more time if you have it, it is however, quite difficult to get decent photos here.

Zug came next and 8 further numbers, then Rapperswil which produced more than we expected, including lunch! Finding Oberwinterthur Depot was easier than we expected but despite being massive it was almost empty. It is the main depot for the EMU's based in the area but we had gone to get the newly re-activated historic electric locomotives 416628, 11010 & 10950 all of which were there during our visit. We were disappointed by the haul here and ahead of time so we headed into the town centre and secured a visit to Winterthur depot. It never has much on it and today was no exception with just 13 numbers available, the plinthed Ee 2/2 (No 1) is still there and look out for Tem 263 which is doing it's best to become overgrown, otherwise only 11357 held any interest. Still ahead of time we did the yard at Winterthur Grütze finding 4 further tractors and we were planning to leave when I talked them into visiting the only other yard on our Winterthur map, at Tössfeld. What an 'ace' that proved to be with no fewer than 19 tractors being stabled there. An un-scheduled call at Hüntwangen – Wil (we were heading for Wil, but programmed the GPS wrong) found shunting locomotive 8783, before we got back on track with a visit to Schaffhausen. Being on the commuter run to Zurich we only expected to find EMU's here and that's just what we got. We were glad to reach St Gallen, our overnight stay tonight, but had to circle the hotel before we found the car park. This hotel was everything the last one was not, including expensive, it was far too good for us as the extensive French menu proved! The food was as good as the rooms and the last night 'blow out' as good as any I have experienced. The late night walk on to the station was just what we needed, with examples of SOB, Appenzellerbahnen (AB) and Trogenerbahn (TB) in among the SBB items, however I turned down the tram ride the others did in favour of a final beer and bed.

Flüelen (08:30) Tm845 234142 **Schwyz (09:00)** 10997 (plinthed) with 11225 460001 passing **Arth – Goldau (09:15)** 11267/279/368 11477 11632 232022 482000 485006 523001/004/006 540069/078 620012 (11612) 620069 (11669) Tm9529 Rigi Bahn 12 23 SOB 576053 **Luzern Goods Yard (10:15)** 16358 843004 **Luzern Depot (10:20)** 11140/141/199/257/370 11404/26 11637 16408/409/411 523007/009/012 560068 561171/173 Tm463 **Luzern Station (10:50 – 11:30)** 11152/237 11432 16358 460034/062/076/092 520004/007/010/014 523001/003/009 560041 561173 843053 Te198/99 BLS 511 (11105) RM 240 ZB 122 201 1992 101961/966 130006 **Zug (11:55)** 234202 450032/071/083/094 540010/012/038 **Rapperswil (12:55)** 9456 10664 11229 16390/430 232044 234012/111/209 450022/034/037/045/090 460037 514012/015 540039 560130 841015 Thurbo 701/20/64 **Oberwinterthur Depot (14:30)** 8770 10950 11010 16363 416628 450041 514018 540026 Tm268 **Winterthur Depot (14:55)** 1 351 1643 11357 18513 450086 460007/072 500042 514004 Tem263 Thurbo 682 768 **Winterthur Grütze Yard (15:20)** 232026 234105/112/114 with 460005 passing **Winterthur Tössfeld Yard (15:40)** 18830 450051/062 514414 841011/028 Tm9452 9501/09/13/14/26/27/51/64/65/70/73/76/78/81/83/87/90/94 with Thurbo 744/78 passing **Hüntwangen – Wil (16:40)** 8783 with Thurbo 734/38 passing **Schaffhausen (17:20)** 11232 11666 232006 510100/103 540024/048 641005 843093 Thurbo 761 DB 403506 426010 Italian 470057 **St Gallen Hbf (21:20 – 22:00)** 11134/146/320/339 11630 16388 500035/036 AB 14 SOB 566075 576052 TB 22 25 Thurbo 714/49/57/70/72

Our final day started, as all the others had, with breakfast, this one though was class! I can not recall a better spread in any hotel we have stayed in. The 'real men' had been on the platforms for an hour before coming in for breakfast, us 'lightweights' had chosen the extra hour of sleep. We left the car in the hotel car park and crossed the road to the platform where we stayed for an hour; we were joined by the 'real men' after about 20mins. St Gallen station has changed very little since we were last here, but the type of traction through it has. It is now, predominantly, DMU's, most of which are owned and operated by 'Thurbo'. In our time there we noted just 28 numbers. We returned to the hotel and made a painless checkout, navigated the beer delivery and found the nearby freight yard, it contained three

tractors, 232040 234009 & 234148 then headed out to Rorschach. The large station here was almost empty, the depot was empty and most of the numbers came from the holding sidings. The weather took a turn for the worse with the wind getting stronger and bringing with it some rain. Once we had got what we could, we took the coast road to Romanshorn, you could tell it was the coast road as we had one wheel in the sea and had to stop to remove an octopus from the windscreen (it was blown there by the wind). Romanshorn has a small depot and we were made most welcome here, it has been extended (by adding a tent would you believe) in order to commission some new DMU's but contained much more than just them. Inside was steam loco 18 508, SOB electric 446016, Mitterthurgobahn 416627 (which we think is preserved) and rotting Tm450, outside 11437 rubbed shoulders with DB 185096 & 185113, so all in all it was well worth the visit. Next came Wil, the one we tried to find yesterday, it was raining quite heavily when we got there. Wil is the home depot of the Frauenfeld-Wil-Bahn (FW) which owns and operates 17km of 1000mm gauge line, between Frauenfeld and Wil, (what a surprise) electrified at 1200V, the depot was locked up but 4 of there 7 units were stabled around it.

I took the wheel as we headed for Pratteln, the 'real men' passed out in the back sleeping for the entire two hours, we did battle with the parking meter then Metal Mickey and myself did four hours on the station, the 'real men' managed an hour then boarded a train (no doubt for a good snooze) into Basel. In the 4 hours we spent there 84 different pieces of traction passed, there were many more train movements but many locos were seen more than once. Pratteln is almost at the throat of Muttens Yard and all the freight in the area passes through here, 11403 proved it was not withdrawn, 185567+185564+185566 passed heading an oil train, DB 294138 surprised us heading a trip freight and BLS 'brownies' 188+189 (working out of Basel) and 184+164 (working into Basel) provided excellent photos. Eventually time caught up with us and we made our way through the roadworks to Mulhouse airport, depositing the car and checking in for our flight. Easyjet tried to fool us by pretending it was on time until 10mins from departure, but we knew better, our 21:50 flight eventually leaving at 23:30, it is not the fact it was late that winds you up, it's the fact that no one bothers to offer an explanation! Customer service is not Easyjet's strong point, it was the pilot who eventually explained, leaving the cockpit to tell us they had been caught up in a fire alert at Barcelona on an earlier flight and asking us to be nice to the cabin crew as it was not there fault. His 'higher' management should thank this pilot and learn from him, I know they will not but he stopped me from writing a nasty letter.

I performed a faultless drive home, despite the police closing the M1 at Leicester and we spent the time planning our next adventure, into Germany in July, where we will be joined by a European Branch virgin, so watch for the report. A big thanks goes to Pete for the planning and Warwick for the driving, ably assisted by myself. I must thank Toby too, for the endless supply of ice cream, funny remarks and snoring he supplied.

St Gallen Hbf (08:00 – 09:00) 11153/210 460003 500003/031 AB 11 114 295 SOB 566075 576050
TB 21 31 32 Turbo 702/15/16/22/23/33/36/40/41/46/47/49/56/71/73 **St Gallen Gbf (09:25)** 232040
234009/148 **Rorschach (10:00)** 11517 514022 526655/658 841031 Tm73 237 Turbo 711/56/75
Romanshorn Depot (10:35) 315/16 11437/454 16318/362/429 460115 526681/683 536612 841014
Tm450 797 steam 8474 18508 SOB 446016 Mitterthurgobahn 416627 Turbo 767 DB 185096/113
Wil (12:15) 232046 460072 841012 FW 11 13 15 16 114 Turbo 718/32/62 **Pratteln Station (14:00 – 18:00)** 11176/177/180/250/284

11285/291/295/309/325/330/335/336/349/385 11403/448/449/461/479
11617/648/664/676/681/688/689 18446 234059 460019/033/048/061/105/110 482007/035 484014
500032/037 521004/006/010/013/016

521017/018/020/021/022/025/026/027/028 560029/043/061/070 562001/002/004/005 620047(11647)
620058(11658) 620086(11686) 843070 BLS 165/84/88/89 185525/576 485008/017/018/019 DB
185125 294138 SNCF 37052 Unknown 185541/564/566/567/574