

# The Signal

| Newsletter of the  
Friends of Romsey Signal Box

| No 71 - November 2023



## Discover the new Centre!



*Children on our Open Day (top) and members of Romsey Probus on a group visit (above)  
enjoy the contents of the new building*



# From the Editor....

*Peter Chatfield, Newsletter Editor/Co-Chairman*

It's great to report that the Discovery Centre has had its first public opening. It has been a long journey to get to this point but under Malcolm's project management and a big push from many volunteers – several with invaluable specialist skills – we now have this important addition to the signal box museum up and running. We are planning a grand 'formal' opening in the latter part of next year to coincide with completion (fingers crossed!) of the major works to the signal box. Dick and Malcolm report on these developments below.

I'm thrilled to report yet another record-breaking year for our visitor numbers! – both for open days and the total annual number. Now think that, with the Discovery Centre, that is a further attraction for visitors....

Although the forthcoming works on the signal box may impact on visitors, it's unlikely (hopefully) that access to the box will be restricted for a long period; however, as with any major building works, we will accommodate the need to be flexible re possible delays etc. As Dick notes, we will ensure that any access restrictions are prominently advertised on our website, so that the public know what to expect in advance of their visits.

Once again, we thank Dave Trewern for his brilliant work for the Buffer Stop Café. Anyone willing to come forward to take on the management and stock control for the café – please let us know!

I'm delighted that we have a supplement to this newsletter and February's: Dave has written a series of articles about Switzerland and Swiss transport. I'm tempted to say that, now he's winding down from the café, Dave's clearly got too much time on his hands - but I fear that Dave's got a leftover cake ready for my face....!! No, seriously, I hope you'll agree that the supplement is a great read, plus there's parts 2 and 3 to look forward to.... After all that actively, surely Dave's entitled to a well-earned rest and more time to do other things (and he'll still be around at RSB, albeit no longer operating the Buffer Stop).

We also have updates on open days, the SB wiring/electrics, the signage project, and membership.

Sadly, we mark the passing of Rod Hoyle, a well-known figure in Romsey and district and volunteer for many years at RSB. He contributed much to the display boards and signage – including hand painting the lever frame plates in prototypical 'Southern' style – and to gardening and other practical work. Rod was a Fine Art student and photographer; his 'eye' captured the last years of steam on the Southern to great effect – his book *The Atmospheric Southern* (Noodle Books, 2007) does exactly what the title says; it is a wonderful legacy of his work and passion, and if you've not seen it, it's highly recommended....

Wishing you all a Happy Christmas and New Year  
Peter



## Update and News from the Chairmen

*Dick Hewett and Peter Chatfield write:*

The various reports to follow describe the progress on various fronts since the last edition. However, we must highlight the “soft launch” of the Discovery Centre on 5<sup>th</sup> November. This development has been exciting to watch over the past few months, and the culmination has resulted in an impressive, if incomplete, largely interactive facility for visitors to enjoy (this is just “Phase 1”). The team which has put it together are highly amused by Dick’s reaction whenever he is observing the model railway: a grin which spreads across his face as the diesel and DMU start up and chug their way round the circuit, following each other but never catching up.

Otherwise, we make slow progress on major developments such as the building works, re-wiring, signage, and many other smaller initiatives, reported elsewhere in this edition. The committee meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> November had an agenda with 18 items – and we still didn’t cover all the matters of AOB within the three and a half hours of quite intense deliberation. There really is a lot going on, and understanding all the related issues and implications keep us on our toes!



*Peter and Dick monitor Rod’s work as he attends to the crossing gates with his marigolds (2006)*



Finally, we must pay our respects to Rod Hoyle, whose evocative and unique display boards have graced the site since he produced them in 1995. Rod's daughter visited on 5<sup>th</sup> November to advise that her father had passed away on 21<sup>st</sup> October. During the 2000s Rod was a regular volunteer on the site, assisting with the garden and various odd jobs around the site. He was well known throughout Romsey for his inimitable style of sign writing, which will live on and be an appropriate reminder of his talents for many years to come. Dick attended Rod's funeral on 17<sup>th</sup> November on behalf of the Friends.

*Clive Millward, Rod and Peter with the usual mugs of tea during a hard day's labouring (2009)*



## Open Days and Events

*Dick Hewett writes:*

Our regular programme of Open Days will finish for this year on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December, just a few days after the issue of this edition of The Signal. I'm pleased to confirm that we have once again broken our visitor number records, with 1106 visitors on Open Days since last January (previous



record was 1033 in 2022), albeit we have had more Open Days so the average number of visitors each day has been lower than in the past couple of years. Our total visitor numbers, including group and private visits is currently standing at 1274 (previous record 1200 in 2022), with two group visits and one Open Day still to go.

Our initiative to open on Thursdays during the summer holidays was successful and will be repeated in 2024, but we won't be opening on Bank Holiday Mondays as we did this year. In 2023 we had the Romsey Festival which meant two extra Open Days, but this won't be held again until 2026.

*Neil ensures the edges are neat for the next Open Day*



We shall probably also only open for one of the Heritage Open Days (HODS), as the dates do not coincide with our regular Open Days in 2024. Numbers of visitors for HODS this year was less than half the previous year, we suspect because we were the only location open for HODS in Romsey whilst we were competing against dozens of events in nearby Winchester and Southampton.

A review of the full operation days has concluded that we haven't particularly attracted enthusiasts or specialists any more than on other Open Days, and on occasion visitor numbers have been disappointing. However, these days have been a great opportunity for volunteers to partake in the full operation of the box, something which can continue regardless of the presence of visitors. We shall therefore continue with these on certain of the Open Days (dates yet to be determined – we will update the website appropriately). Our big challenge will be to improve the engagement with visitors so we can maximise their interest and, where possible, involvement, without compromising the professional image we wish to impart.

The net outcome is that instead of the 38 Open Days in 2023, we shall open for 31 in 2024. Even then, as explained later, we will not be able to guarantee full access to the signal box or the availability of the facilities to operate or demonstrate the signal box whilst building works, and possible re-wiring, is being undertaken during the year.

As a result, our 2024 leaflet will carry the following caveat:

“WARNING! During 2024 we will be undertaking major works on the signal box structure which may restrict access and operations on some Open Days. Please check the website for updates before travelling.”

We shall also have a clear banner to the same effect across the top of the website, and will ensure that any restrictions are clearly shown against relevant dates as soon as we become aware of them. The one thing we don't want if at all possible is having someone making a special journey from a long distance away, only for them to find us unable to give them the full experience.

## *Buffer Stop café – revised arrangements*

*Dick Hewett writes:*

In The Signal no 70 we announced the decision by Dave Trewern to retire from managing the Buffer Stop Café after 8 years. Dave's last day on duty, and the last time for supplying his delicious cake, for Open Days will be on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December. Once again, we must thank him for the great job he has undertaken developing this very successful facility at the museum.

We appealed for some volunteers to come forward to cover some of Dave's duties. We are delighted that Colin Varney has stepped forward to undertake the deep cleaning which is required every three months.

However, we are still looking for someone to take over the overall management and, in particular, the stocking of the café. This is a task which should appeal to anyone who is



comfortable shopping in a supermarket, albeit purchase from discount outlets such as Costco is also a possibility. If you are interested, or you know of someone who might be interested, please get in touch soonest! We need to have arrangements in place by the latter part of January when we commence our programme of Open Days in 2024.

## Signal Box Structure and Wiring Update

*Dick Hewett writes:*

After going through a tender process twice, we received two tenders for the structural and building work on the signal box itself. We are on the point of accepting one of these tenders, with the hope that the work will be undertaken between March and May 2024.



Meanwhile we are in negotiations with a commercial contractor with a view to them potentially taking responsibility for the wiring in the signal box. This would include correction of existing faults, re-wiring to ensure everything is safe and legal, and ensuring the finished work was easily maintainable, whilst being functional. We hope Chris Hack, back on the scene after almost 30 years away from the project, will be liaising with the contractor to establish how their proposals match our needs. One of the challenges will be balancing the need to meet modern standards with the aim of retaining a suitable level of authenticity. Any major work will await the completion of the building work, i.e. summer 2024.

One inevitable consequence of all this work will be the potential for access to the signal box, and thus demonstrations, being impaired on some Open Days. We shall aim to minimise this impact but will make contingency plans to ensure that suitable alternative means of demonstrating and entertaining visitors will be in place on those occasions.

*Back to early 1992, and an enthusiastic team install the first signal post. (This was later changed to hold the distant signal, facing in the other direction). A young Chris Hack watches Ian Maxwell working on the box, whilst Andy Webb and Richard Read stand at the bottom of the ladder, with Richard Sanderson climbing to the top. It's good to have Chris back with us again.*



## Discovery Centre

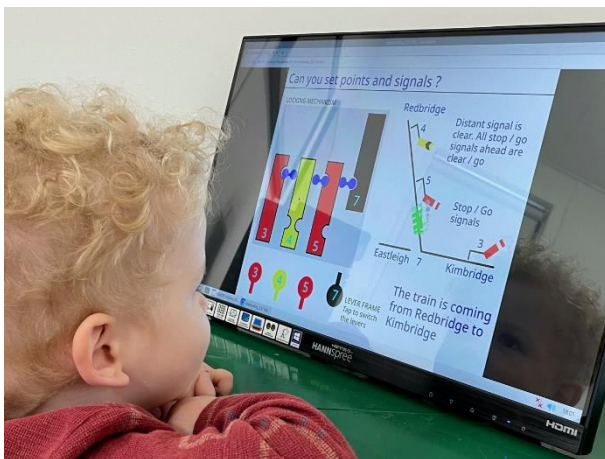


*Preparations for the soft opening of the new building included the transfer of our interactive shunt signal exhibit from the Cowley Bridge Building to its new home in the Discovery Centre. Neil, Adrian and Malcolm take the strain, whilst Derek manhandles the trolley*

*Malcolm Moore writes:*

After months of hard work, our Discovery Centre informally opened its doors to visitors early November. We were blessed with two sunny days and a diverse range of visitors, setting the perfect stage to try out our exhibits. On the open day we had 36 visitors - ladies, gentlemen, boys and girls of all ages, and the next day a small group of retired people.

Our track circuit display and model railway captured everyone's imagination. Some visitors sat and watched our 'Mini History of Railway Signalling' video while younger visitors dabbled with the interactive computer displays.



*Two young visitors get engrossed with the interlocking challenge on 5 November*

The Discovery Centre team is committed to continuous improvement, and this informal opening provided valuable feedback. Our volunteers will now focus on enhancing the model railway, introducing more interactive hands-on exhibits, and expanding signage.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to all volunteers and friends who contributed their ideas, time, and skills to this successful opening. Their dedication and passion are the driving force behind this unique learning experience.



*5 November Open Day, and even adult visitors tried the touch screen challenges, whilst our track circuit display was tested, and Andy enjoys showing a young visitor our Class 33 (appropriately 33008 "Eastleigh") on it's way round the model railway circuit.*

*Since then we have purchased our second motive power: appropriately a Class 205 Hampshire DMU. This will chase the Class 33 round the circuit, controlled automatically by the signalling*



*Some volunteers seem to enjoy their work more than others... whilst Derek is always smiling; Graeme looks concerned that his painting might not be up to standard (it was)...*

As the Discovery Centre embarks on its journey, we extend an invitation to anyone interested in getting involved, particularly people with modelling expertise. Together, we can continue to create a captivating and educational experience for visitors of all ages. It's a great team and there's always plenty of banter and tea!

## Signage Update

*Dick Hewett writes:*

Progress continues with the new display boards to replace those supplied by Rod Hoyle nearly 30 years ago. Sadly, it is not practical to retain Rod's unique boards, which he produced by painting the wording in reverse on the back of the sheets to avoid damage: incredible workmanship, but impossible to repair or update, and now looking rather sad in some places.

As explained in the Chairman's report, Rod recently passed away, and his daughter Iona visited on 5<sup>th</sup> November with the news. The timing was in some ways a fortunate coincidence, as Iona has expressed a wish to have Rod's boards and several other artifacts which he provided to us, which saves us the difficult decision about their future storage or display.

Meanwhile work will continue on the other signage around the site, and it is hoped we can supply all the source materials to Thurston Signs for production early in the New Year.



# Membership Matters, Nature Notes

*Neil Kearns, Membership Secretary, writes:*

Apart from one or two new members joining, not much has happened on the membership front. We currently have 94 members, which is a very healthy total. Everyone we would expect to have renewed this year has now done so – many thanks to you all. Membership subs will become due from 1 April 2024.

The last of the box plants have been removed and the border outside the café has been planted with heather and bulbs. I know heathers can stand wet conditions up mountains, but it will be an experiment to see how they survive in wet clay soil. The dahlias and Michaelmas daisies have continued flowering until the end of October. By the time you read this, the dahlia tubers will have been lifted by Alan for frost free storage over winter.



*Michaelmas daisy (Pinterest)*



The last few swallows were seen flying south in late September. I'm not certain whether the blackcaps in the railway brambles were migrating or were resident birds. There haven't been any migrants like fieldfares or redwings seen in Romsey by early November although some redwings have been seen near Southampton Common.

*Redwing (Pinterest)*

## Website Blog

Since the last *The Signal*, there have been updates on the Heritage Open Days Weekend (September), visits to the signal box by groups (October), and the 'soft' opening of the Discovery Centre (November) – see the blog for full details and pictures....

## Health & Safety

A few reminders to everyone when you come on the site as a volunteer:

- Please sign in. This is in case of an emergency evacuation. And please also sign out!
- The policies and procedures are all on display in the Mess Hut. We work on the assumption that all volunteers have read these, and will adhere to them. Please do so!
- Please work safely, including the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) where appropriate. Not only is this for your own protection, it also sets a good example to everyone else on the site, particularly our younger members who are less experienced in such matters.
- And before purchasing any materials, make sure we haven't already got them on the site!



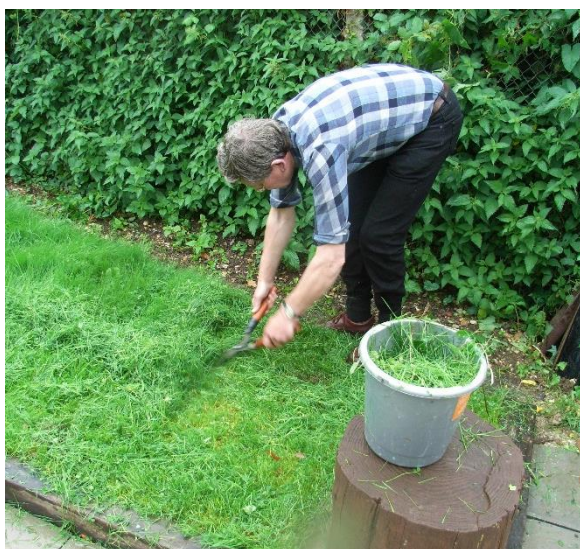
## *In memorium, Rod Hoyle (1943 - 2023)*

Several more images of Rod on the site.



*Above: Rod with Joan Bennett and Clive Millward*

*Left: Rod in earnest discussion with Mike Curtis, who as Deputy Mayor for Romsey called a meeting to enlist new volunteers in September 2002, a turning point in the history of the signal box's preservation*



*Above: Rod on gardening duty. No mower available, just hand shears!*

*Right: Finally, one of Rod's unique signs. This one welcomed visitors to the site prior to 2014, when access was through the gate by the signal box.*



# Open Days and Dates for your December 2023 - 2024

Please see our website for up-to-date information.

Our **advertised programme of open days** is as follows:

Month	Normal Opening	Extras
December	Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> – <i>please note our leaflet incorrectly shows this as 4<sup>th</sup></i>	
January	Saturday 20 <sup>th</sup>	
February	Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup> ; Saturday 17 <sup>th</sup>	
March	Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> ; Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday 2 <sup>nd</sup> (Romsey Model Railway Exhibition)
April	Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup> ; Saturday 20 <sup>th</sup>	
May	Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> ; Saturday 18 <sup>th</sup>	
June	Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup> ; Saturday 15 <sup>th</sup>	
July	Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup> ; Saturday 20 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup>
August	Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup> ; Saturday 17 <sup>th</sup> (including AGM)	Thursdays 1 <sup>st</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> , 15 <sup>th</sup> , 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 29 <sup>th</sup>
September	Sunday 1 <sup>st</sup> ; Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup>	Saturday 14 <sup>th</sup> (Heritage Open Days)
October	Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup> ; Saturday 19 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday 24 <sup>th</sup>
November	Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> ; Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup>	
December	Sunday 1 <sup>st</sup>	

Contributions of articles and photographs for the next edition are welcome, please forward them to the Newsletter Editor at: [info@romseysignalbox.org.uk](mailto:info@romseysignalbox.org.uk)

(Please note that copyright may apply to some photographs if sourced via the internet. If you submit photos taken by someone other than yourself, please kindly check with them if they wish their name to be credited to the photo.)

*Photos in this issue from Dick Hewett and Malcolm Moore, unless otherwise credited*



# My Love Affair with Switzerland and its Transport

Part 1 by Dave Trewern

## BACKGROUND...

It all began for me in 2002. My wife had been to Switzerland once before with her sister way back in 1976, before we were married in 1977. She was convinced that I would like it and vowed to get me there one day. Well, newly married, struggling to pay the mortgage and having our son meant that it never entered my head.

2002 arrived and money was not quite so tight. We had long since paid off the mortgage and our son was 21 and much more self-sufficient. A holiday in Switzerland for our silver wedding became a hot topic and planning started. We decided an organised tour would be a good start to give us a taster of what was available for any future visits. As an aside, we would not normally take an organised tour, as we like to do things ourselves. It did turn out to be a good decision on this occasion, however. We booked a 10 day tour, flying from Heathrow to Zurich in September. This consisted of stays in Lucerne, Wengen, Zermatt and Davos. Well, what an introduction it turned out to be! We met another couple at Zurich airport who were on the same tour. We are still friends with them to this day. We were put on a double decker train at the airport station to Lucerne. Incidentally, we even had use of the “Fly Luggage” system (which is no longer an option). This meant that after checking in our suitcases at Heathrow we next saw them in our hotel rooms. What luxury! No lugging about large suitcases! We just collected our cases back at Heathrow. Brilliant service! I should have known then that this was going to be a fantastic holiday.

*Zurich Airport Station. Clean isn't it?*



After checking in at our hotel, Mary and I headed out to buy a take-away coffee and sticky bun and get our bearings. I remember us sitting on a bench consuming our “naughties” overlooking the river. I really couldn't believe we were actually there after all those years, and I was so excited. I have to say that Swiss Travel (who sadly no longer exist) organised a brilliant tour. We did many of the usual tourist things, but none were compulsory. We were so lucky in having a really nice group and our guide was absolutely perfect. I was hooked on Switzerland from the day we arrived!

## **LANGUAGE AND FOOD WORRIES...**

Prior to going my two concerns were the language and the food (I love my food!). I needn't have worried on either front. Most people speak English – the normal response when asked if they speak English is “of course”. As for the food, we were presented with superb meals in our hotels, and snacks when out and about were really tempting. We must have put on a few pounds, I think! Talking of the language: Mary and I picked up some fruit from the Lucerne market and joined the short queue to pay. The lady serving was one of only a few we met who didn't speak English. We tried to pay her but she kept asking us something. Eventually a lady behind us said “She is asking if you would like a bag”. Ah! “Danke”, we said, and slid away quietly after accepting the bag and paying.

I can only remember one more occasion when the language was an issue in all the times we have been since. We were at Blausee near Kandersteg. It was raining and we decided to have some lunch in the lovely restaurant overlooking the beautiful lake. We scanned through the menu with our phrase book, slowly deciphering the choices. There was one word we just could not understand. The restaurant was quiet and the young waitress was really kind. There were lots of pointing to the menu, passing to and fro of our phrase book, and laughter. Eventually it turned out to be garlic. We had a really tasty fish soup in the end and thanked our lovely waitress. By the time we got to Zermatt John, Phyllis, Mary and I were all the best of friends. We liked the same things and had the same sense of humour. The four-star hotel we were supposed to be in was closed for renovations and so instead they put us all up in a five-star hotel. We were holiday makers and this was all a bit too posh for us. One night at dinner the pianist was playing in the restaurant whilst we all had our meals. He made a mistake at one point. John and I looked at each other and said “He's playing all the right notes but not necessarily in the right order”. Well, we just fell about and couldn't stop laughing, trying hard to keep it within our little group. How we weren't kicked out I do not know!

We ended up having a most wonderful holiday and have since revisited many of the places seen then. I have many more stories, but this is really supposed to be about transport and Swiss scenery.

## **SWISS TRANSPORT AND SCENERY....**

We have now been to Switzerland no less than nine times and it still excites us. This is why...

The scenery is stunning and often breathtaking. There are many beautiful mountains, valleys, cities and picturesque villages with typical Swiss chalets. Some of the mountains are easily accessible by rack railway, funicular or cable car, and some have permanent snow on the top. A cafe/restaurant will always be found at the summit – well, we are in Switzerland!

The Swiss people are very friendly and helpful. Whilst in Lucerne we wanted to see Mount Pilatus, have a ride on one of the lake paddle steamers and see the sights. We went to the tourist information office and explained what we would like to do, thinking “this is going to be difficult”. We were given one ticket each that covered everything. This included the paddle steamer along the lake, the world's steepest cog railway to the top of Pilatus, cable car and gondolas down the other side and the trolley bus back to Lucerne. This was a great introduction to Swiss efficiency. Everything runs on time to the second and the different types of transport are all integrated. Getting from one place to another, even if it involves more than one type of transport, is no problem.

Switzerland has many types of transport. Over the years we have used all of the following... Trains (standard and narrow gauge, both adhesion and rack assisted, electric and steam), Funiculars, Cable cars, Gondolas (you know, the small cabin cable car things on a continuous loop), Chair lifts, Post buses, Trolley buses, Trams, Lake steamers and motor vessels. I've probably forgotten one or two.

At this point I have to say that I am no expert on Swiss transport and so please bear this in mind.

The Swiss have several different gauges of railways, the most common ones being standard gauge and one metre gauge. At some stations there are both. Just two that spring to mind are Brig and Chur. Chur has the standard gauge main line and the Metre gauge line that runs to Arosa. This line starts its journey by running along the road outside the station (yes, the road), running straight over the roundabouts and on into the countryside. Only the Swiss would carry this out so efficiently, eh? The vast majority of Swiss railways are unfenced. Unlike here you are expected to have some common sense and take some responsibility for your own safety. Wow! That's a novel idea! Most railways are electric and have been since the start. With all the hydro-electric generation they have it was surely the obvious choice. I think just about all use pantograph (overhead) lines of various voltages of both AC and DC. There are also some really interesting heritage steam railways.

Our favourite place in Switzerland is, without doubt, Wengen in the Bernese Oberland. It is a car free village perched on a plateau half way up a mountain. It is only accessible by rack railway or by foot (I'll take the railway please). There is a large car park in Lauterbrunnen (the nearest place) right by the station. On every visit to Switzerland we have stayed in Wengen for at least a few nights. If you ever watch Ski Sunday, the Lauberhorn run finishes in Wengen. It is right next to the famous Eiger, Monch and Jungfrau mountains. From the main street in Wengen there are fantastic views of them. The early morning vistas with the sun rising are just out of this world.

*This photo shows the view from the main street in Wengen*



If you like the night life, drinking and partying, then Wengen is not for you. One of our favourite places there are a couple of benches in front of a church. From there is a wonderful view of the mountains, the Lauterbrunnen valley below, and you can see the trains going in and out of Wengen station. It's a great way to walk off some of the lovely food from dinner and take in the fresh, clean evening air. It's another world! All the stresses of everyday life just fade into the background.

*This photo is the view from the benches in Wengen*



Now, stop rabbiting Dave and get on with the transport things...

Wengen is in a great location to look around the Bernese Oberland area. We normally buy a Bernese Oberland pass which gives you unlimited access to many trains, cable cars, boats etc, for a number of days. Most people arrive in the area via Interlaken. From there one takes a BOB (Bernese Oberland Bahn) train along to Lauterbrunnen and then the WAB (Wengernalpbahn) rack railway up to Wengen. On the climb there are fantastic views along the valley. From Wengen a very enjoyable round trip is to get the cable car from right in the middle of the village to the top of the Mannlichen ridge. From there it's a short walk to the gondolas that take you down into the valley on the other side. (On either side of the Mannlichen ridge you may spot a wild marmot or chamois if you are lucky). A train from there takes you up a short way into Grindelwald. When ready to leave, another train will take you to Terminal station where you can transfer to the new Eiger Express cable cars to Eigergletscher. At this point you are travelling right past the north face of the Eiger. At Eigergletscher station you can see the entrance to the railway tunnel to the top of the Jungfrau. The Jungfrau railway will take you the short distance to Kleine Scheidegg, where another change onto a Wengernalpbahn train will return you to Wengen. This gives the transport lover a great day out as it involves several different trains, two cable cars and a gondola, all with great views.

The Jungfrau railway is very interesting. It was opened in 1912 and runs for nearly six miles from Kleine Scheidegg through a tunnel inside the mountain right up to Jungfraujoch, which is still inside

the tunnel. It's amazing to sit on a train travelling *inside* the famous Eiger, Monch and Jungfrau mountains! From the station a short walk brings you out on top of the Jungfrau mountain, where the views are simply stunning in the permanent snow. Here there are places to eat, toilets, shops and various attractions. We are now nearly 12,000ft above sea level and the air is thinner with less oxygen. You are warned not to rush about and it's true, you can feel it. Apparently, because of regeneration when going downhill, every three trains down generate enough power for one train up.

Okay, own up! Who now has a Swiss map opened up?

The technical bits for the railways so far...

Swiss Federal Railways (SBB) mainline – Standard gauge 4ft 8.5in. 15kV AC 16.7Hz overhead. Adhesion.

BOB trains – Metre gauge. 1500V DC overhead. Partially rack assisted using the Riggerbach system.

*This photo shows a blue and yellow BOB train at Grindelwald station*



Wengernalpbahn trains – 800mm gauge. 1500V DC overhead. Rack assisted using the Strub/Von Roll system.

*This photo shows a Wengernalpbahn train at Wengen station*



Jungfraubahn trains – Metre gauge. 1,125v 3ph AC 50Hz. Rack assisted using the Strub system.

*This photo shows the train emerging from the tunnel into Eigergletscher station*



More memorable rail trips are...

The Gornergrat rack railway from Zermatt to the summit at 10,135ft. Metre gauge 725v 3ph AC 50Hz. Two overhead lines. Abt rack system.

The Bernina Express. We took this from Davos right down into Tirano in Italy (alright, it sounds grand but we are only just inside Italy). Metre gauge. 1000V DC overhead. This journey takes you over the famous Brusio spiral viaduct.

The Glacier Express. This travels 181 miles from Zermatt to St. Moritz. It is known as the slowest express train in the world and takes over eight hours to complete the journey - but what a journey! Metre gauge 11kV AC 16 & 2 thirds Hz. Nearly 15 miles of rack assistance.

A couple of steam trips worth doing are...

The Brienz Rothorn railway. 800mm rack railway using the Abt system. There are steam and diesel engines on this line. It climbs to 7362ft. It's a really interesting and scenic ride.

The other is the Furka mountain railway (Dampfbahn-Furka-Bergstrecke). This is a steam hauled railway that goes from Realp to Oberwald. It is metre gauge and partially rack assisted. An interesting fact is that in the autumn the Steffenbach bridge is dismantled due to the winter weather and avalanche risk.

Well, I could go on and on and post many more photos and tell many more tales of our exploits but I think I should probably stop now. Anyone still awake? I hope you enjoyed this.

(Dave Trewern continues with parts 2 and 3 in the next *The Signal*)