

School Trip 1968 Switzerland Recollections

I was very fortunate that my mother, despite being a single mum following the death of my father a year earlier indulged me by ensuring that I went on three Summer holidays with the school of which the trip to Switzerland was the second. All the trips opened my eyes to wonders which broadened my horizons and imagination, but the Swiss trip filled me also with warm memories albeit dulled by the passage of years.

An article was written in the December 1968 Visor apparently by a consortium of older boys and it captures matters of fact which I neglected to keep myself except my recollections relate more to moments and experiences in a way which I would have struggled to have articulated then. Fortunately, also I took a decent camera (for the time) and looking through these in recent times fills more gaps. A picture paints a thousand words they say, and I hope these may speak to you.

Thanks to the Visor article I can recall the trip on the chair lift up to (presumably?) Frahnalpstock. We had been warned by Lenny Malcolm not to make a noise as we were carried up but instead enjoy the serenity of the moment which we did, and I have to agree it was blissful. I remember the mirror maze in Lucerne. What stands out in my mind as well in Lucerne was the trip to the Glacier Park and its demonstration of the power of packed ice melting ice-water evidenced by the scouring out of a bowl in the rock by a captive rounded stone. Clearly the same attritional principle that saw bored schoolboys use pennies to grind out circular cupped indentations in the soft sandstone wall of the premises in Whetstone Lane.



The school trip to Switzerland came at the end of my second year at the Institute and was the only one where we assembled for a Group photo. Colour photography was pretty novel in 1968 and I took slides so that I could project/enlarge it onto a screen to better see and explain the amazing things I witnessed. Now of course we can zoom in effortlessly on our computers. Faces I recognise (all friendly masters away from the discipline of school) include Mr Malcolm (of course), Mr Pierce and Mr Hughes. Not sure who the other was? As for my contemporaries, Derek Jones, Lenny Davies, Derek Roberts, Mike Worthy and William Gleeson. It was nice for some of the teacher's families to come along and those lads used to younger siblings looked after their youngsters.

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Although we had glorious weather in the valleys the mountain tops were always misty when we visited sadly but I've been back since and they would have been amazing. Derek Roberts on the right, next to him a lad called David Liston and next to him a lad called Ollie ??



Brunnen was the town on Lucerne above which we stayed in a village called Morschach. Everything was so modern clean and unusual to my eye.

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The waiters at the hotel were really good fun. I think one of them was called Edouard.



I was blown away by this pedestrian bridge at Lucerne with biblical scenes painted in the apex of the roof. I returned there last year, and it was still remarkable, but life experience and one's physical size at that age cloud that assessment. I was more amazed to learn this time around that it was built to allow wealthy worshippers to get to the church in the background!

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Lake Lucerne is still as lovely as it always was. Blue water and steep green hills rising from its surface always do it for me.



Our hotel in Morschach. I don't remember its name and its probably apartments now? I remember that there was another school from the south of England staying there at the same time. Some of my contemporaries showed us how it was possible to lean out of their window and direct a stream of water along the inside of a hotel coat-hanger down and through the open window of the bedroom below where some of them were staying. The benefits of a Grammar School education...or the perfect crime?

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You could in your spare time walk down to Brunnen and either walk back up or catch the cog railway. Apparently, it closed down shortly after our visit never to reopen, which is a shame but nothing to do with us I believe?!



Above the village of Morschach and a short walk away you really felt that you were in the Mountains. I've checked the same view today on Google and its nearly the same. I'm sure that there is now just a little less snow these days? Global warming? I love snow topped mountains.

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No doubt where this is...its Rigi Kulm. Disappointed as usual to find it obscured by mist and no snow but there you are. I still have the pennant of my visit there. On my most recent visit to Switzerland we elected to go for the nearby and higher Mt Titlis (I can see why they didn't take us there!) which had everything that Rigi didn't and which took my breath away...literally! My lungs not being what they used to be and at an altitude of 10,000 ft. I was glad to be away from the thin air when back in the valley.



Beautiful Lucerne will always hold a special place in my heart.

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The Mersey Ferry boats take some beating but our trips on the Lake seemed idyllic, like the notion we have of long, sunny summers of our youth. A less attractive side on reflection was the pursuit of an attractive blond and well endowed (for her age) young lady of about the same age as a group of my contemporaries around the ship, including close contact (shall I say) before disembarking. Obviously in these enlightened times it is highly reprehensible behaviour, but in those days, it seemed a bit of innocent fun...and the young lady didn't seem to mind much either!



They say that smells and sounds can transport you in an instant to a place in your memory. I love the cow bells and its is great to hear them still in use in modern day Switzerland.

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I never really knew why we went here but apparently it used to hold what was considered to be the founding document of the Swiss Constitution (Museum of the Swiss Charters of Confederation to give it its full, 'snappy' title). Apparently, the honour has since gone elsewhere now more documents have been uncovered but it gave us the opportunity of a trip across the lake, to see Tellskapelle (William Tell's chapel) and have a nice walk,



Another cog railway but where to? I should have kept a notebook but you don't think.... unless you want to be a journalist when you grow up?

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Here is the cog railway waiting at Brunnen to take passengers up to Morschach. It does look a bit ropey to be fair, but it's a shame to lose things like that. Two of my classmates taking the hike up instead.