CENTENARY OF SWISS TRAVEL

Travel a hundred years ago—this Swiss Federal Railways train of the 1860's is still operational and will be used for the re-enactment this summer of the first conducted tour of Switzerland.

EXACTLY one hundred years ago this month, a party of daring English travellers crossed the Alps on the first-ever conducted tour of Switzerland.

Their trip was organised by a certain Mr. Thomas Cook, whose name was to become famous among travellers all over the world. But Mr. Cook only led his party personally on the first leg of their journey; once they were among the mountains he handed over the maps and tickets and left them to continue.

Travelling among the Alps a century ago was nothing like as highly organised as it is today. Yet the intrepid English tourists—seven women and six men—had the time of their lives. By carriage and lake steamer, train and mule (and a lot of the way on foot, too) they enjoyed every minute of it.

Now the whole trip is being re-enacted as a party of modern tourists, wearing the voluminous clothes of their great-grandparents, find out what holidaymaking was like in the mid-nineteenth century.

For the occasion, some long-forgotten forms of transport are being brought out of the museums and put to use again. Most of them will, naturally, be horse-driven—including stage-coaches, a charabanc and a bus.

One novelty will be a sailing barge of unique design, the last of a long line which will be coming out of retirement to take the party for a sail on Lake Geneva, Europe's largest stretch of water. Another boat the travellers will board is one which, since it was ordered out of service a few years ago, has been sailing in a very solid sea—of concrete. Yet it is the most historic craft in Switzerland—the oldest of all Swiss lake steamers. Built in London 116 years ago, she was taken on

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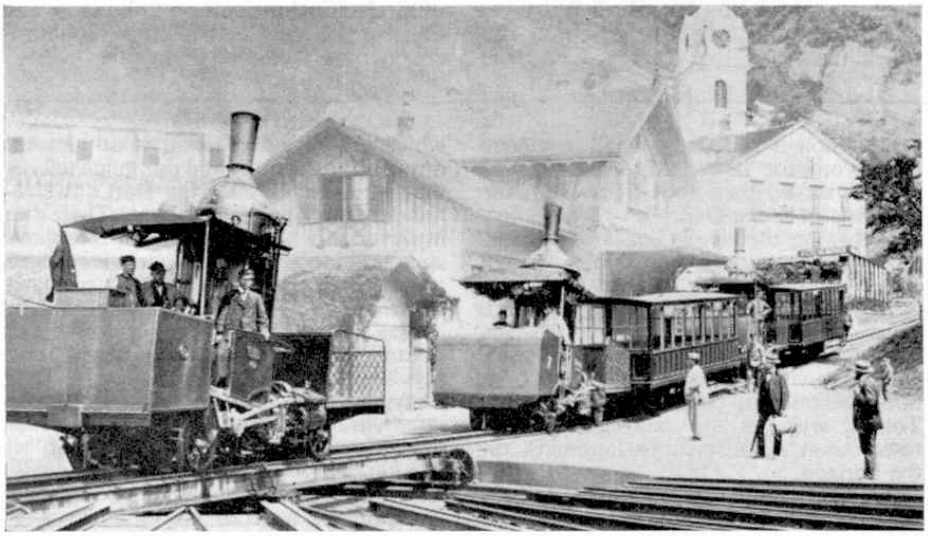
a very involved journey across half of Europe, by ferry-boat, river-steamer, train and horse-driven truck, to make her maiden voyage over Lake Lucerne in 1848. Carrying 200 passengers at a time and cruising at twelve knots, she was destined to travel a distance equal to 30 voyages round the world. The ship is now spending her last days, sunk in concrete, as a restaurant for visitors to the Swiss Institute of Transport.

Although electricity has superseded steam on all the Swiss railways, two coal-burning locomotives are being put into working order again for this month's centenary celebrations. One is a Swiss Federal Railways loco. of 100 years ago; another a 50-years-old locomotive—hauling two Pullman cars of the same period—of the trans-Alpine Berne–Loetschberg–Simplon Railway, which is itself celebrating its half-century this year.

Europe's first mountain railway, the line climbing from Lake Lucerne to the summit of the Rigi, was only a dream in 1863. That was the year in which a Swiss engineer called Niklaus Riggenbach took out a patent for his rack-and-pinion system, but it was some years before his dream railway became a reality.

All the same, the Rigi railway is included in the current tour. The party will spend the night at the mountain-top hotel, to be wakened by an alphorn at four o' clock next morning to watch the sunrise—just as their predecessors did 100 years ago, after valiantly climbing the mountain on foot!

Perhaps one of the most unusual means of transport the modern travellers will be using is one which, even today, is still operated in the same way as it was when first brought into use 80 years ago. The Montreux Funicular is a quaint anachronism in a country where every form of travel, from humble chairlift to gravity-defying aerial cableway, is run by electricity. Its motive power is ordinary tap water. The funicular consists of two coaches travelling in opposite directions. Water is pumped into the carriage waiting at the upper terminal; when the brakes are released, the (*Continued on page 317*)

Europe's first mountain railway which climbs to the top of the Rigi. Opened in 1871 it is another historic line which will have a part in this month's celebrations. Both the photographs on this page are by courtesy of the Swiss National Tourist Office and Swiss Federal Railways.