Design Benno K. Zehnder, Gelfingen

The painter Benno K. Zehnder was born in Wettingen AG in 1941 where he also grew up. After finishing grammar school in Immensee SZ, he attended Lucerne School of Art. He spent the years between 1964 and 1970 in London, initially attending courses on painting and art history at Goldsmiths College, after which he created exhibitions for the Swiss Centre, the Design Centre, the Royal Academy and the City of Worcester among others. From 1970 to 1973, he was a lecturer and head of the Master of Arts course in Film Animation at the City of Birmingham Polytechnic. After this time, he headed the Department for Visual Communication at the former Bath Academy of Art in Corsham/Wiltshire up to 1982. From 1982 to 1997, he was Director of Lucerne College of Design after which he became a Professor at Lucerne University of Art and Design. In addition to his painting and drawing work, Benno K. Zehnder is heavily involved with colour concepts and mural painting for schools, hospitals and churches among others.

Characteristics

Effigy
«Pilatus Railway»

Artist
Benno K. Zehnder, Gelfingen

Technical data
Alloy: Silver 0.835
Weight 20 g
Diameter 33 mm

Legal face value
20 Swiss francs

Date of issue
26th May 2011

Mintage
Standard coinage, uncirculated:
max. 50 000 coins
Proof coin in presentation case:
max. 7000 coins

Pilatus Railway
Mountain Railway series

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra
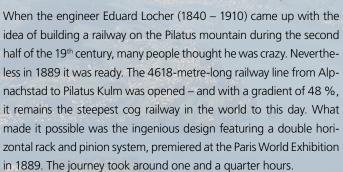
Swiss Confederation

Swissmint

Commemorative coin series: Mountain Railways

This year sees the issue of the fourth coin in the mountain railways series in the form of the Pilatus Railway. The series focuses on railway lines whose importance is attributable both to the pioneering spirit of their builders and to their tourist interest. Earlier subjects in the series were the Vitznau-Rigi Railway (2008), Brienz-Rothorn Railway (2009) and Bernina Railway (2010).

Official commemorative coins

Each year, the Federal Mint Swissmint issues a small number of commemorative coins featuring carefully selected subjects. The coins in bimetal, silver and gold bear an official nominal value and are available in various minting qualities. The net proceeds from the sale of the coins are used to promote cultural projects throughout Switzerland.

Pilatus Railway

PILATUS LUZERN

When the engineer Eduard Locher (1840 – 1910) came up with the idea of building a railway on the Pilatus mountain during the second half of the 19th century, many people thought he was crazy. Nevertheless in 1889 it was ready. The 4618-metre-long railway line from Alpnachstad to Pilatus Kulm was opened – and with a gradient of 48 %, it remains the steepest cog railway in the world to this day. What made it possible was the ingenious design featuring a double horizontal rack and pinion system, premiered at the Paris World Exhibition in 1889. The journey took around one and a quarter hours.

The line was operated by eleven steam-powered railcars up until 1937. The possibility of switching over to electric power had been considered as long ago as 1905, but the project had to be abandoned on account of cost. The official start of electric operation with the new railcars took place on 15th May 1937. This enabled the annual number of passengers to be nearly doubled to 100 000. Nowadays nearly 300 000 guests a year are carried on the cog railway from Alpnachstad to Pilatus Kulm in 30 – 40 minutes. Among the attractions awaiting visitors at the summit are the Hotel Pilatus-Kulm, a listed historic monument dating from 1890, now reopened in fresh splendour following recent renovation and the newly built Panorama Gallery (altitude 2132 metres) with an incomparable view of Central Switzerland, Lake Lucerne and the mountains of the Alps.