

**In the January issue of Floating Power Daniel Eberli advertised his series of courses. I hummed and haa'd about going for some days until she who must be obeyed said, "Go on, you never do anything!" So, having spent several thousand pounds on getting my Normale into shape (all it needs now is a re-spray) I opted to attend Daniel's beginners' course for Tractionists in late March in Benken, Switzerland.**

Getting to Benken (there are two Benkens in northern Switzerland: choose the right one!) is actually quite easy. I chose to fly and found the rail/tube/Docklands Light Railway to London City Airport seamless. I chose London City only because it was the cheapest flight at the time of booking. The joy of London City is that a passenger is through security etc in about five minutes. Travelling in Switzerland is as easy. Pre book your train tickets and you don't have to speak to anyone, let alone thumb through the phrase book. Zurich railway station is underneath the airport.

Benken is a small village, about 800 souls, about 5 miles south of the German border. It is about 2 kilometres from the nearest station (Marthalen). Everything is on time and your train ticket covers your bus fare as well. Daniel and Agi live about 100 metres away from the bus stop in a comfortable old house whose wine press has been converted into a garage workshop.

The course lasts two days. There were only three students this year, not enough, as part of the fun is swapping 'Problèmes Traction'. Our experience was varied from Rob, who has had a Normale for about ten years, probably rebuilt it twice, to myself, who has done a top overhaul on a Riley 1.5 as recently as 1965 but have since forgotten even what I had remembered, to David, who loved the sight of a Légère, which ran well enough when he bought it, it has never run since and for whom the words 'four stroke cycle' meant nothing on joining and little more on leaving. Lesson one: this is advertised as a beginners' course for Citroen owners. It is not. It is a revision course for petrol heads who have recently acquired a Traction, or for those who want to refine their already wide knowledge. Anyone who owns a car but takes it to a garage to have an oil change is not going to get much out of this particular course.

The first day is wholly theory. It is held in a local pub, where the food and the coffee is really good. The day starts at about 9 a.m. and finishes at about 7p.m., after which one needs a drink. Daniel caters for this by taking guests a couple of hundred metres to a local vintner, whose wine and cheese are both delicious but be prepared to spend at least £20 (Swiss francs 30) for the evening. A note of caution. Switzerland is not cheap. We

discussed the thought of lengthening the course to three days but decided nobody would come as it would cost too much.

The second day is spent in Daniel's well equipped workshop. There is always a Traction to work on, your own if you drive there, but a local customer's if not. Here the theory of day one slots nicely into the practical. Before attending this course I thought that I would never attempt to deal with the front brakes on my Normale. Now it all seems comparatively simple. Also the written word in Daniel's workshop manual comes to life with a day's hands-on experience.

Do I recommend the course? Without hesitation! We can never stop learning about our automotive mistresses (actually mine with a VRN of CSV, 'Charles sans vitesse', is a male). Daniel Eberli is the only person I know who has identified the need and has the knowledge, the expertise and the enthusiasm to carry it off. Both he and Agi are kind, jolly and hospitable. And I had a run in his 1929 C4 taxi. So eat your hearts out you lot and put your names down for the 2015 course!

