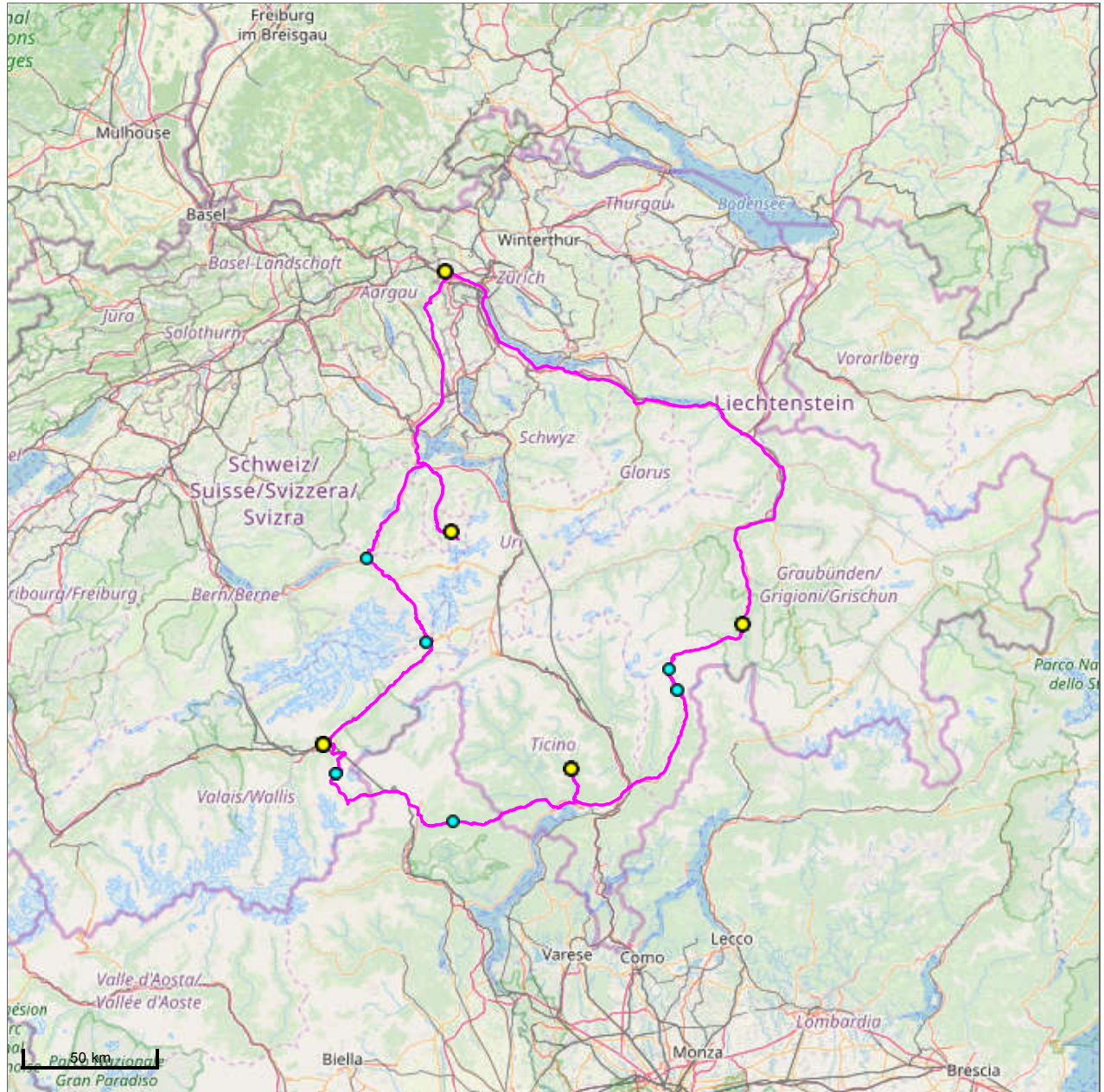
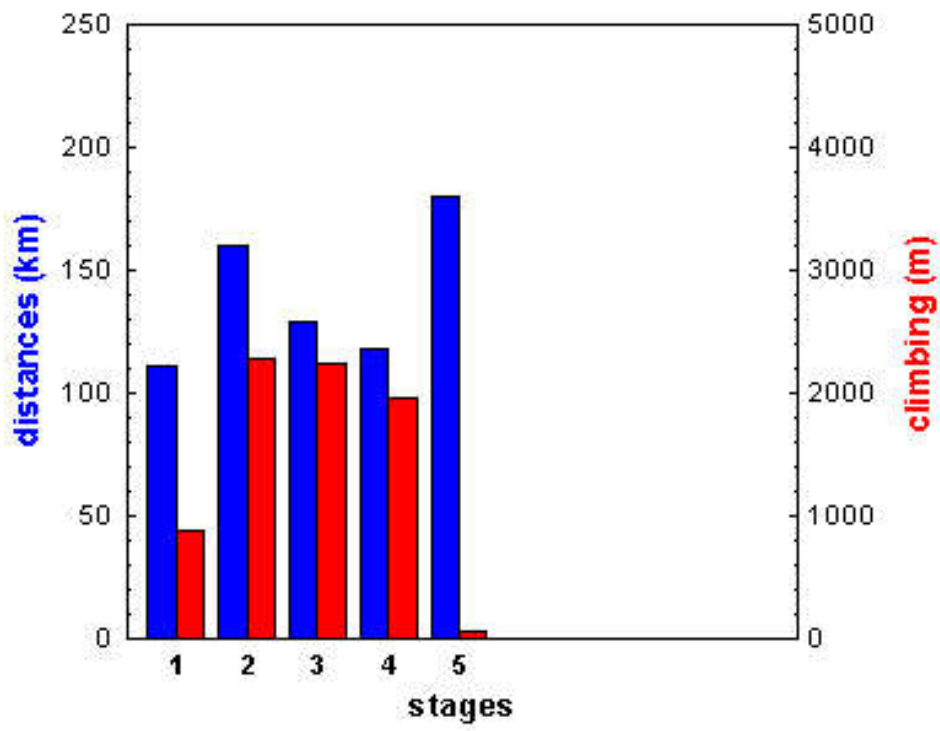


Bicycle tour 1993, 16 - 21 August

Patrick Schleppi

stage	distance (km)	climbing (m)
Oetwil a.d.L. - Luzern - Engelberg	101	970
Engelberg - Brünig - Grimsel - Brig	160	2350
Brig - Simplon - Centovalli - Lavertezzo	129	2310
Lavertezzo - San Bernardino - Andeer	117	1990
Andeer - Sargans - Oetwil a.d.L.	180	320
total	687	7940





At the Simplon Pass, with the chain from Aletschorn to Finsteraarhorn in the background

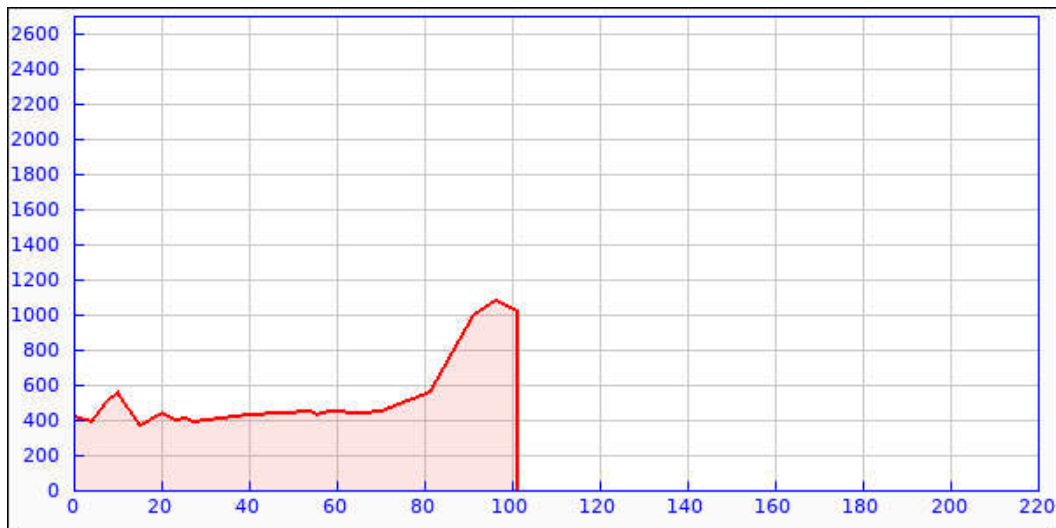
Stage 1 (16 August 1993): Oetwil a.d.L. - Luzern - Engelberg

The first stage of the Tour 1993 had to be an easy one. I had been invited by Karl, a colleague of mine to stop at his family's house in Engelberg. I was very glad to accept since i had never been there before and was keen to see this alpine region. It was Sunday and the weather was good. I had first to ride to Lucerne. I reached the city around noon and crossed it without stopping. Then i was riding more or less along the Lake of Four Cantons (some call it, in English, Lake of Lucerne) when i crossed the pack of Grand Prix Wilhelm Tell. This race, named after the Swiss national hero William Tell, is an important event of the amateur's calendar. It runs over several stages.

After leaving the lake at Stansstad i passed Stans and headed for the valley leading to Engelberg. The road started to climb seriously after Grafenort. It was a nice climb, mostly in the forest. I was passed by a whole bunch of buses loaded with Japanese tourists. It is a very common thing to go to Engelberg and from there to the Titlis when you are visiting the region of Lucerne.

I reached Engelberg in the middle of the afternoon and met my colleague. After some drinks we made a short tour of the town, well known for its monastery and impressively surrounded by mountains between 2500 and more than 3000 m high.

	distance (km)	altitude (m)	climbing (m)
Oetwil a.d.L.	0	420	
Dietikon	4	390	
Bergdietikon	7	500	110
Widen	10	560	60
Bremgarten	15	370	
Oberfeld (Rottenschwil)	20	440	70
Aristau	23	400	
Unterrüti	25	410	10
Meerenschwand	27	390	
Dietwil	40	430	40
Schlossberg (Luzern)	54	450	20
Luzern	55	430	
Allmend (Luzern)	58	450	20
Stansstad	66	440	
Stans	70	450	10
Grafenort	81	560	110
Engelberg	91	1000	440
Herrenrütiboden	96	1080	80
Oberberg (Engelberg)	101	1020	
total	101		970



Stage 2 (18 August 1993): Engelberg - Brünig - Grimsel - Brig

A "rest" day was inserted between the first and the second stage. Together with my colleague Karl we climbed (by foot, not by bike!) the nearby mountain Huetstock. It was a very nice day and we had a superb sight from the summit (2676 m). We got a bit thirsty, but a lot of water (excellent local spring), and then a big portion of pasta were refueled in prevision of the next day.

Two passes were on this stage. The first one, the **Brünig**, leads from Central Switzerland into the Bernese Oberland. It climbs just over 1000 meter and is not very steep.

The second pass was the **Grimsel**. This one was more a challenge since it climbs well over 2000 m into the Canton of Wallis/Valais. But the pasta of the previous evening were well transformed into potential energy by the efficient combination man+bike. I reached the summit in the beginning of the afternoon.

After the steep descent towards Oberwald, i rode down the valley of Goms, along the upper course of the Rhone river. I had some (dry!) head wind and it was not a very easy ride. I finally reached Brig where i found an hotel for the night. For the evening meal i ordered... a big portion of pasta, obviously. It is however not easy to have employees of restaurants to understand how much kilojoules a cyclist needs to ride. The "big" portion was in fact just a medium one. I had to order a good dessert to supplement it.

	distance (km)	altitude (m)	climbing (m)
Oberberg (Engelberg)	0	1020	
Engelberg	2	1000	
Grafenort	11	560	
Stans	23	450	
Alpnach	34	460	10
Kägiswil	36	490	30
Sarnen	40	470	
Giswil	49	480	10
Kaiserstuhl	53	690	210
Lungern	57	710	20
Brünigpass	63	1010	300
Meiringen	71	590	
Chräjenburg	74	710	120
Innertkirchen	77	620	
Guttannen	86	1060	440
Räterichsboden	97	1770	710
Grimselpass	105	2170	400
Gletsch	111	1760	
Oberwald	117	1370	
Ulrichen	122	1350	
Münster	127	1390	40
Matte (Münster)	128	1330	
Gräiche (Reckingen)	129	1350	20
Fürgangen	140	1190	
Wirbelti (Fiesch)	143	1020	
Deiszbach (Lax)	145	1060	40
Brig	160	680	
total	160		2350



Stage 3 (19 August 1993): Brig - Simplon - Centovalli - Lavertezzo

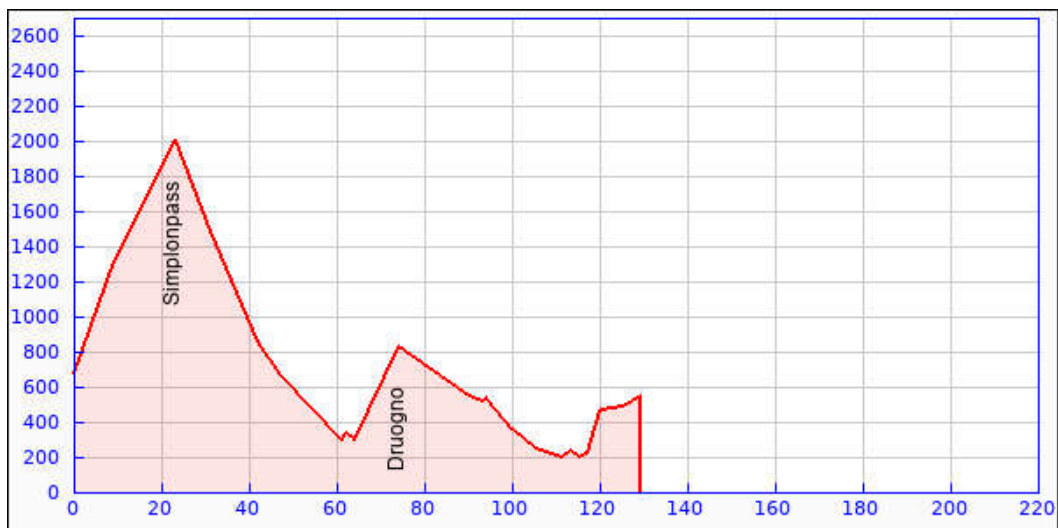
I spent the night at a hotel near the Saltina river. Nobody had any idea that, only one month later, this river would come out its bed and bring many thousands of cubic meters of debris into the town of Brig, destroying so much on its way...

The stage began right away with a big pass: the **Simplon**. For the first part of it, i rode on the old road: steeper but much quieter. Then it joined the main road, which is less steep. The traffic was not too bad. I had a short stop at the top, just to drink something and have a glance at the mountains around. The first part of the descent (in Switzerland) was good, but there were many places where the road needed to be repaired (or was being repaired) on the Italian part. Road works are often marked by forests of more or less useful signals, especially in Italy. But bikes are almost always forgotten by road construction engineers and, without willing it, i happened to ride directly into a long tunnel and then on a highway to Domodossola!

I was finally able to exit the highway and took to the left towards the Vigezzo valley. The small road first climbs towards **Druogno**. When i arrived there, it was about noon and there was very much traffic in this touristic town. I continued towards the Swiss border, where the valley changes its name to Centovalli, referring to the hundred lateral valleys of this very tormented landscape.

After Intragna and its high church tower, i was riding down to Locarno. Since i was much earlier than expected, i thought of calling my former boss (and director of my thesis) who owns a vacation house at Lavertezzo. Since he was there with his wife, i decided to visit them. It was really hot as i climbed into the Verzasca valley. At Lavertezzo, after a drink, we had a nice walk along the Verzasca river (and over it on the famous stone bridge). Then we went to a little grotto to have a supper and it was already time to ride to the local motel and to take a room there.

	distance (km)	altitude (m)	climbing (m)
Brig	0	680	
Schallberg	9	1320	640
Simplonpass	23	2010	690
Simplon Dorf	31	1490	
Gondo	42	860	
Iselle	47	670	
Ponte di Crèvola	61	300	
Pontetto	62	340	40
Masera	64	300	
Druogno	74	830	530
Camedo Dogana	90	550	
Diga di Palagnedra	93	520	
Gaggetto (Intragna)	94	540	20
Intragna	100	360	
Ponte Brolla	105	250	
Locarno	111	200	
Minusio	113	240	40
Renero	115	200	
Gordola	117	230	30
Selvatica	120	470	240
S. Bartolomeo	125	490	20
Lavertezzo	129	550	60
total	129		2310

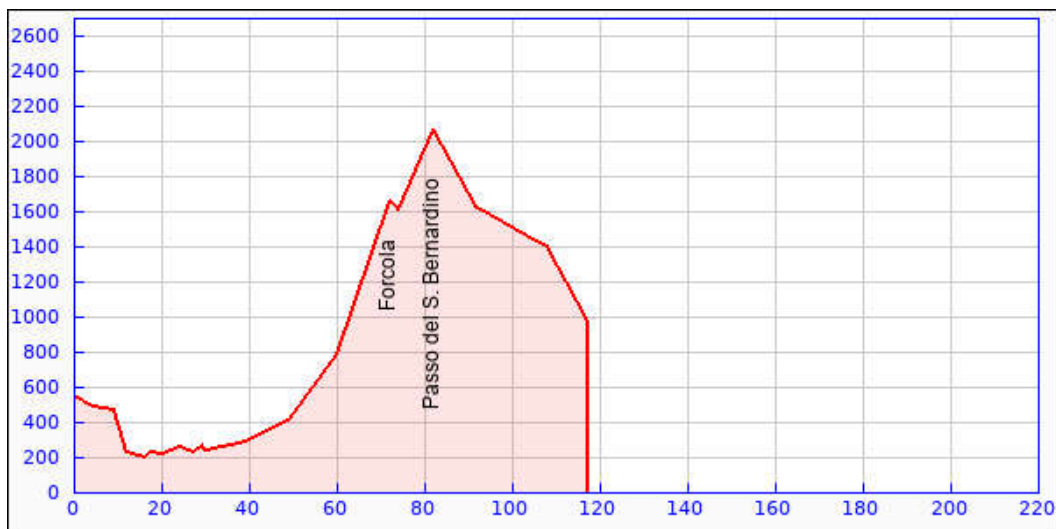


Stage 4 (20 August 1993): Lavertezzo - San Bernardino - Andeer

On this fourth day on the road, i first had to ride back down to the plain. After this first descent, i took towards the East, all on flat roads (or almost). Passing Bellinzona, i went towards the Valle Mesolcina. This valley, though Italian speaking and open towards the Ticino, belongs to the canton of Grisons. Since there is a highway all along the valley, there was not much traffic on the other road. It was hot and my bottles were soon empty, but i found no fountain on the way. Finally i stopped at a small farmhouse to beg for some water. The road began to climb seriously by Soazza. The landscape was also slowly changing from the dry valley towards the green alpine landscapes. Before reaching the town of San Bernardino there was a small pass, [Forcola](#), then a nice, almost flat stretch to recover somewhat. Then, as the motorway went into the tunnel, the road to the pass climbed again. There were only few motor vehicles along these hairpin curves. The landscape was marvellous and made me feel so good that it was like no effort to climb to the [San Bernardino Pass](#).

The descent from the pass was nice too. Only the valley of Rheinwald appeared a bit long, but then the road was steeper again, winding through the wild Rofla canyon. I stopped at Andeer and took the last hotel room that was available in this town.

	distance (km)	altitude (m)	climbing (m)
Lavertezzo	0	550	
S. Bartolomeo	4	490	
Selvatica	9	470	
Gordola	12	230	
Gerra (Piano)	16	200	
Cugnasco	17	230	30
Gudo	20	220	
Sementina	24	260	40
Carasso	27	230	
Molinazzo	29	270	40
Arbedo	30	240	
Roveredo	39	290	50
Lostallo	49	420	130
Mesocco	60	790	370
Forcola	72	1660	870
S. Bernardino	74	1610	
Passo del S. Bernardino	82	2070	460
Hinterrhein	92	1620	
Splügen	103	1460	
Sufnersee	108	1400	
Andeer	117	980	
total	117		1990



Stage 5 (21 August 1993): Andeer - Sargans - Oetwil a.d.L.

The last stage of this tour was long but all descending or flat. I knew already most of the way and was riding quite fast. I was eager to see how i should come along the Walensee. Some years before, i had to ride over the Kerenzerberg pass because the main road along the lake had been transformed to the westbound part of a new highway: no bikes allowed. Now, however, a bike path had been constructed. Even several tunnels had been made to allow bikers to ride through. In spite of some very steep passages and some gravel, this was a real progress.

As i was making a little pause at Niederurnen, a woman came out of her house to bring me a soft drink. I was first a bit surprised but appreciated very much this offer. The rest of the stage was flat and rather boring. Only the city of Zurich brought another surprise, but a bad one. I was riding along a bike path that i used to take two or three years before to ride to work. Now, however, the big drug market of Zurich had settled itself right on the path. I had to step down and was just able to come through the junkies and dealers. There were policemen around, but they were only looking at the scene. I was shocked to see this mess. The day before, i had felt like in heaven when riding over the San Bernardino. The drug scene of Zurich (now fortunately dissolved) was like hell. This huge contrast remained the most impressive memory of this tour 1993.

	distance (km)	altitude (m)	climbing (m)
Andeer	0	980	
Thusis	12	720	
Rothenbrunnen	16	620	
Bonaduz	27	660	40
Reichenau	29	590	
Tamins	30	630	40
Felsberg	36	570	
Chur	40	600	30
Masans	43	570	
Stelli (Chur)	44	590	20
Untervaz Station	49	540	
Zizers	51	560	20
Sargans	68	480	
Mühlehorn	95	420	
Mülital	96	460	40
Rüti (Bilten)	109	420	
Oberbilten	110	450	30
Allmeind (Bilten)	112	420	
Reichenburg	114	440	20
Buttikon	116	420	
Siebnen	121	450	30
Zürich	165	410	
Am Wasser (Zürich)	170	400	
Höngg (Zürich)	172	430	30
Geroldswil	179	400	
Oetwil a.d.L.	180	420	20
total	180		320

