

## Eagles West Oberland Haute Route 2025 Tour 40 (Jane Baker 5/4/ 2025)

Dates : 23-28 March 2025

Participants :

Jane Baker, Philipa Seal, Sam Handley, Karrie McLaughlin, Ian Conway, Henry Beakbane

Mountain Guide: Terry Ralphs

Meeting Venue: Hotel La Tour d'Aï Leysin Switzerland

Pre tour briefing on the evening of the Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> March at the Hotel La Tour d'Aï; and the start of sorting out kit – harnesses, avalanche safety gear and boot crampons. Skis ready to go with crampons packed.

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> March. Ski tour based above the Leysin ski resort climbing Les Truex and the Tour de Famelon (2143m). Ski technique revision – always beneficial - this included a tricky transition from skis to boot crampons and a short climb to the summit. This proved very useful on the following tour. We also did an avalanche rescue session. Good weather but the snow was warm spring snow with a very soupy descent, testing both skies and skiers.

Monday 24<sup>th</sup> March. We taxi'd to Les Diablerets and Glacier 3000 and then a lift to the Scex Rouge with the start of the tour and the first of many stunning views. Descending the Glacier de Zanfleuron to the col de Sanetsch, gave us perfect fresh tracks on a thin cover of glistening powder in good cold weather. We then skinned and onto our first lengthy boot pack with crampons up the arete de l'Arpille. This was followed by steep kick turns on steep icy pitches to finish at the summit (3035m). The clouds came in and we skied down with limited visibility to the welcome sight of the Gelten hut.

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March. Preparing for a long day and leaving the Geltenhuetten with clear skies to climb the Wildhorn (3250m) via the Col du Brotse. This was a long climb involving some technical icy skinning. We made the summit cross on the Wildhorn in poor visibility. Fortunately, soon after the start of our descent the cloud cleared, and this gave us an excellent descent down Glacier de Wildhorn in powder to the Wildhorn hut at 2302m. This was a less luxurious hut with amazing food and snowmelt for washing. Noone cared after a 1400m climb day!

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March. The day started well with some clear skies but soon after we climbed above the Schnidejoch the clouds came in and enveloped us in a dense fog for the rest of the day making navigation difficult. We skirted the summit of the Schnidehorn as the summit was windblown and icy, although only missed the final 10 vertical metre. Demanding navigation took us to the Rawyl pass. The final ascent to the Wildstrubel hut went well and actually the thick fog kept us cool on the ascent. Our technical skills here were challenged along with navigational skills with boot packing up icy slopes and climbing up pitches of deep snow carrying skis.

Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> March. The thick fog had cleared overnight, and we awoke to a beautiful day in which we traversed the Wildstrubel and Mittelgipfel to the Lämmeren hut. We climbed the shoulder on the Wysshore to give us an amazing descent with first tracks to the Glacier de la Plaine Morte. We took a wide line on the climbers right to ascend to the south rib of the Wildstrubel which we booted up with crampons.

The traverse to the Mittelgipfel gave us a perfect fall line descent with fresh powder to the luxurious Lämmeren hut.

Some of the most incredible skiing was experienced in those previous few days.

Friday 28<sup>th</sup> March. The descent of the classic Uschenetal to Kandersteg. We left early to climb to the fore summit of the Roter Totz. The descent started with nice powder but quickly became crusty, so we used the more south facing slopes to find solid spring snow. The lower slopes around Walliswang were icy and had a serious entry and exit traverse lines although the slope actually skied well with firm snow.

We managed to ski to 1620m and from there we boot packed 3km through beautiful forest to the lift at Sunnbuel. We were really earning our seat on the bus. We took the shuttle bus to Kandersteg and the train back to Leysin via Brig for a well earned shower, kit sort and meal!

Incredibly lucky with the good weather apart from one day. Snow assessment and risk assessment and navigational skills lead to superb long pitches of fresh powder, technical skills tested and over all a thoroughly successful trip.