

Urner Haute Route Ski Traverse. Tour Number 52.

Monday, 14 April 2025

Dates: 6 April 2025 to 11 April 2025

Participants: Paddy Butler, Doug Hayter, Hannah Cooper, Katherine Haggie, Jon Coutts

Mountain Guide: Terry Ralphs

We meet at the Gasthaus Pizzeria zum Turm in Hospental on the evening of the Saturday 5th April and used this as a base for the first 2 nights.

We were very lucky to have a perfect forecast with clear skies and no precipitation forecast. However, this was tempered by not having any fresh snowfall for a few weeks and the mountain was not only very icy but had only 50% of the average snowfall. This gave us some difficult icy skinning and some very exposed sections which we would have to traverse.

Sunday 6th April. A day tour from Realp on the Stotzigen Firsten (2747m) in the hope that this ridge would give us a variety of aspects to find some nice skiing.

Monday 7th April. We returned to Realp to climb to the Albert Hiem hut. We decided to extend our day by further climbing to the Chli Bielenhorn (2941m). A rugged descent took us to the Albert Hiem hut after a short skin.

Tuesday 8th April. This was the longest and most serious day. We climbed the Lochberg and descended to the barrage on the Goshenenalpsee. The final traverse was extremely icy and a very serious proposition which was well managed by the team.

We then made the long approach up the Chelenalp to the beautiful and remote Chelenalp hut.

Wednesday 9th April. We left the hut wearing crampons and carrying our skis to point 2593m from which we donned our skis and climbed the Sustenhorn (3502m) via the Sustenlimi. The mist, flat light and irregular hard snowpack made the ski challenging but we did find a skier made piste to ease our passage. The steep exit off the Steingletscher glacier is getting steeper and made a committing and exposed ski. We had a comfortable night and shower at the hotel Steingletscher.

Thursday 10th April. A shorter day in which we traversed the Funffingerstock (2943m) to the Sustli Hut. The descent down the couloir from the Funffingerstock is steep at the start and we managed to find some spring snow to take us away from the windblown rutted snow. We stayed at the traditional Sustli hut.

Friday 11th April. Leaving the Sustli hut to traverse the Grassen to Engleberg is always a serious proposition sometimes due to the avalanche risk but this time due to the icy snow and exposed slopes. We decided not to climb the Grassen due to the icy windblown conditions on its summit slopes. A short 30-minute walk from the end of the snow lead us to the road.

We took a taxi from Engelberg for the return trip to Hospental.