

Book reviews

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Drahtseilbahn Interlaken-Heimwehflüh

Author: Hansruedi Brawand.

Publisher: Prellbock-Verlag.

German: 112 pages. CHF25.

Order direct from www.prellbock.ch

There is a small railway on the edge of Interlaken, and many SRS members must have gone up it. My first visit was in 1951. It's the Heimwehflüh Funicular, opened in July 1906 and closed in 1940 during WW II. It's quite steep but not very long at 186m, and runs in summer only - with a gentlemanly pause for lunch. At the top you have a view, of course, of the whole of the Bödeli, that is the tongue of land on which Interlaken is built, and out towards the lakes. You can walk further up, and also have lunch in a restaurant which still looks like 1906. Since 2008 the funicular has been overhauled and now has one car and a counterweight. The attraction at the top is the historic model railway, which is an O-gauge layout with the BLS at heart but with many features of the Berner Oberland.

It might not be the stuff of great adventure but it is a real curiosity. The Swiss specialist publishers Prellbock Verlag (the name means buffer stop) in Krattigen, on Lake Thun,

specialize in little books about both minor and closed railways. They have just brought out a beautiful history of the Heimwehflühbahn, and at 112 pages for CHF25 and if you have German, it makes exciting reading. This comes at about one page for every 1.5m of railway but of course the history, the wrangling, financing, battles between hard headed Interlaken people, are just as convoluted as on many a bigger line. Members might try www.prellbock.ch to see all their books, written by people who know these little railways – and their people – intimately. They also publish 'Prellbock' a magazine available by subscription six times a year which has many an inside story.

BAS

The Night Ferry 1936 – 1980

Compiled by SRS member Christopher Elliott and many expert contributors.

Published by the International Railway Preservation Society.

ISBN 978-0-9570549-0-5.

Price information not available at this time.

Obtainable at the Nene Valley Railway.

nvrorg@nvr.org.uk

When this reviewer moved in winter 1968/69 to Basel, a new friend said, 'You'll be alright now, you can take the Night Ferry to London'. Indeed there was a big blue F-Class Wagon-Lits car, Basel – London, every night to Lille, where it was attached to the main train from Paris, for London via Dunkerque and the train ferries. Alas, the Basel car only lasted 18-months, and the Night Ferry, started in 1936, suspended in the war and reinstated successfully in December 1947, was itself suspended in 1980. I took it a number of times from London and Paris, and occasionally from Lille, after an interminable ride from Basel by an evening semi-fast. A sleeper on the Night Ferry was, well, different. Christopher Elliott and Eric Duvoskeldt have written a 75th Anniversary history in French and English for the International Railway Preservation Society. It is on my desk, as they were kind enough to use some of my old pictures. They have got together a great story, about cars, ships, passengers, engines and incidents, and found some rare experts, and you can buy it by contacting the Nene Valley Railway. For me it's part of our Swiss story – even Eurostar couldn't, in the end, give us a night train to follow it.

BAS



CHRISTMAS COMPETITION...the result

Graeme Easton, who came-up with the competition, has supplied an answer to the question. How long would it take to travel by public transport through all of the Swiss Cantons stopping, but not necessarily alighting, in each one? The elapsed time that Graeme worked out is 20 hours and 4 minutes starting from Maienfeld in the Graubünden at 05.01 and finishing in Genève at 01.05 the following morning. A copy of his schedule will be posted on our website. None of the submitted entries beat Graeme's time but the best was sent in by Jorma Huhdanmaki an SRS member in Finland. His elapsed time was 22 hours and 51 minutes leaving Airolo at 19.58 on a Saturday and finishing at Maienfeld at 18.49 on a Sunday.

Well done to Jorma, and to all those who took part. 