

Book reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS

A HANDSOME TRIBUTE TO THE MOB

The MOB has not received the same attention from publishers as some other Swiss narrow-gauge systems. However, "Montreux-Oberland Bernois" goes some way to remedy this situation. It is a somewhat unusual book, being published in Switzerland with the blessing of the MOB but written by an Englishman, Edward Paget-Tomlinson. In addition the book is in three languages - English, French and German - and although it does not have any colour photographs it does include 28 very attractive (and well reproduced) watercolours depicting scenes on the MOB. These are all by the author who has not only produced a very readable text but is also an accomplished artist.

The watercolours are supplemented by 63 black and white photographs plus sketches and several maps. The text takes the reader over the line and covers the history and construction and the present day operation of the system and its subsidiaries. There are chapters on rolling stock (including motive power, passenger and freight vehicles) and signalling.

The book has 112 pages, but if the watercolour pages are included (they are not numbered) the total becomes 172. Station track plans would have been a useful addition.

The exclusive UK distributor of the book is Robert Spark Railway Literature, Evelyn Way, Cobham, Surrey KT11 2SJ. Price £23.85 or if provided with an additional separate portfolio of the watercolours (suitable for framing, etc) £36.85. (SRS members receive a 10% discount on the above prices).

NIGHT FERRY

by George Behrend and Gary Buchanan

136pp 233 x 168mm 140 black and white pictures. Many BR steam, scale drawings, map & c. Laminated cover with colour pictures front and back; no separate jacket. From 1865 to 1936 a passenger train across the English Channel was but a dream. The first chapter outlines the history of train ferries in Scotland and England during this period, when the Channel Tunnel project, once more in the news today, hovered in the background. Then for forty-four years Britain's only International train afforded its passengers a comfortable, convenient connection between London and Paris, and later, Brussels and Basle. The Anglo-French mails, World War II, Wagons-Lits and Pullman have their place in this saga. The history, both operational and personal, of this famous train has been carefully researched by the authors, and now provides the general reader with a factual portrayal of this mysterious train, and supplies much information previously unavailable to the enthusiast in 7 Appendices, so as not to detract from the narrative. The Appendices include the seven ships that carried the Night Ferry across the Channel; locomotives that hauled the train, with emphasis on Britain's Southern Railway types; details and scale drawings of the special rolling stock and engine; and staff duties, together with the Wagons-Lits & Southern Railway Agreement. The Foreword by no less a person than James B. Sherwood, President of Sea Containers Group-Owners of Sealink British Ferries - gives a controversial introduction to this fascinating story, which itself pulls no punches, and gives a brief glimpse into what the future might hold for the Night Ferry. 136 pages with 140 illustrations, and chronologies of the individual sleeping cars provide, for the first time, an authoritative account of the train, esteemed by European businessmen and Parliamentarians, and besmirched by some Railway Administrations and ferry operators with a preference for road freight. Price £9.95 from Swiss Railway Society book sales. Address page four.