

Book reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS

Schmalspurparadies Schweiz, Band 1. by Gustav Rohr, Hans Schweers and Henning Wall

This is the first of two volumes devoted to the narrow-gauge private railways of Switzerland and it covers lines in the Berner Oberland, Jura, West Switzerland, Lake Geneva area and the canton of Wallis. It is a handsome and well-produced volume which is sure to delight Swiss railway fans.

The quality of the photographs - and there are 90 in black and white and 107 in colour - is very high indeed and there is a useful map of each area or line (with distances marked between stations).

The main text is in German but there is a useful condensation of each chapter in English. What is particularly useful is that some smaller, now closed lines are also included, such as the Leuk-Leukerbad Bahn and the Lausanne tramways (tram systems are featured as well).

Altogether 49 systems are included while there is also an extensive table covering funiculars in the areas covered, plus another table devoted to the motive power of each railway.

A most attractive and useful book which should have a very wide appeal. 176 pages, hardback.

Published by Schweers & Wall, distributed in the UK by Robert Spark, Railway Literature, Evelyn Way, Cobham, Surrey KT11 2SJ. Price £23.85.

RhB Gebirgsbahnen in Graubunden by Bernhard Studer

It might be thought that enough books had already been published on the RhB to cover every facet of this fascinating system. But 'RhB Gebirgsbahnen in Graubeunden' manages to break new ground by finding different photographic locations.

The book is very largely pictorial - the only solid text relates to the history of the line and its motive power, past and present, but this only takes 15 of the total of 208 pages.

Each RhB route is dealt with as a separate chapter with a single page of text referring to it, but the bulk of the book consists of a feast of photographs - 210 in black and white and 40 in colour.

One plus point for this volume is that all the system is included and that means there are chapters on the Chur-Arosa, Bernina and Bellinzona - Mesocco lines as well as the more familiar main lines of the RhB. There is a useful system map.

Published by Motorbuch Verlag, distributed in the UK by Robert Spark, Railway Literature, Evelyn Way, Cobham, Surrey KT11 2SJ. Price £20.60.

(SRS members receive a 10% discount on the prices of the above books).

The Modeller Book of Narrow Gauge edited by David Lloyd

Although only one chapter is devoted to the Swiss modelling scene this book is sure to have an appeal to all those who indulge in the delightful world of the narrow gauge. The Swiss portion of the book consists of four pages of photographs and descriptive text devoted to Dave Howsam's Rhatischebahn HOm layout "Obermutton".

Several other countries are depicted including Belgium, Ireland, U.S.A. etc. The various chapters refer to both the prototype and model narrow gauge railways and there are a lot of imaginative ideas to encourage modellers of the N.G. scene. 72 pages, many drawings and photographs, some in colour. Published by Peco Publications Ltd. Available from Peco stockists or direct from Peco. U.K. price including postage £2.84.

Ticket to the Top by Maureen Cooling

All too few books have been published in this country about the railways of Switzerland and therefore it was a pleasant surprise to discover "Ticket to the Top" which has not only been published here but has been written by Swiss Railway Society member Maureen Cooling.

"Ticket to the Top" is a well illustrated guide and reference book to some of the transport systems in the Bernese Oberland - rack railways, funiculars, cable cars and chair lifts are all featured.

The useful up to date travel information is well supplemented with statistical details and historical facts. 64 pages fully illustrated with maps and photographs, several of which are in colour. Available from M.G. Cooling, Flat C, 55 Harrington Gardens, London SW7 4JZ. U.K. price £4.50 including postage (add £1 for overseas). (above reviews by S.E. Staff).

Walking in Switzerland by Brian Spencer, Moorland Publishing Co. Ltd. ISBN 0 86190 152 5 £4.95

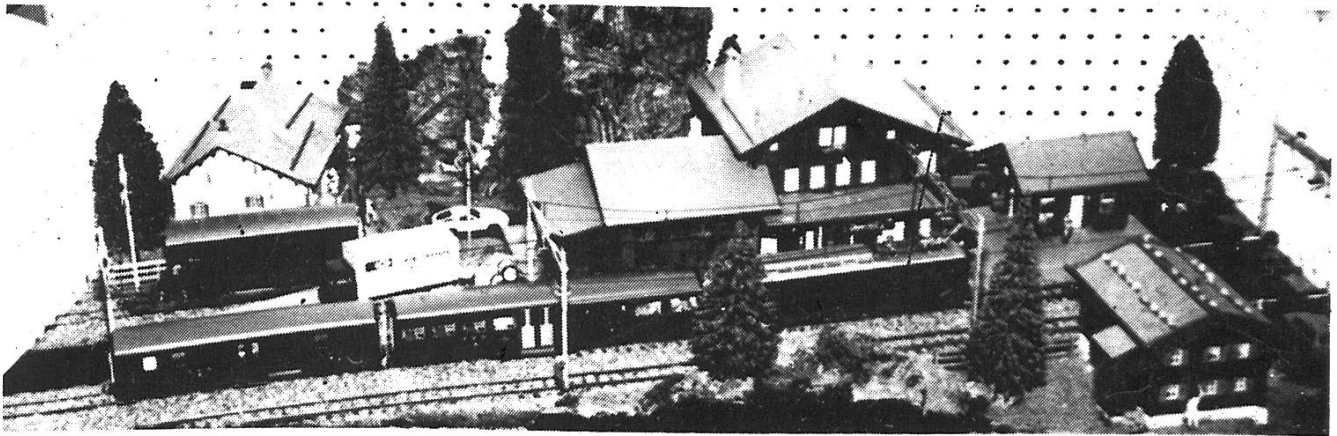
This handy book will make a valuable addition to the library of anyone who loves the scenery of Switzerland. It describes a total of 80 walks based on 10 centres, and gives for each a broad description, particular points of interest, and route instructions. The routes are categorised as easy, moderate or strenuous, and distance and walking times are given for each, as well as major height differences. No climbing is involved, but care is needed at some places.

Each centre has a short preamble describing the area, and giving the relevant Landeskarte der Schweiz map number(s). An introduction describes how to use the book, and makes some general comments on walking in the mountains and safety.

I suppose it is inevitable that a couple of railway-orientated errors have been spotted. One describes the Rhaetian Railway as a 'cog railway', while one of the walks which starts from the Furkablick Hotel shows the nearest station as Furka Halt, which has been closed since the opening of the Furka base tunnel.

The book has only recently been published, and I have not yet had a chance to sample any of the walks, but I hope to fit in a couple in the Autumn as a change from watching trains. (above review by John Jesson)

SCOTLAND SHOWS THE SWISS FLAG by G.B. Horspool



Portable display built by Ron Provan and Graham Horspool. Photo Author.

The Annual Scottish Model Railway Exhibition - organised by the Association of Model Railway Societies in Scotland and held in Glasgow in early March for the past many years has always been characterised by a distinct lack of exhibits with a European bias and, particularly by a total lack of anything to do with Swiss Railways.

In 1984 Ron Provan and myself decided to begin to put matters right by arranging a static display of Swiss Railway models. Accordingly, a small well illuminated showcase was built within which adjustable shelves are used to illustrate the many facets of the Swiss Model Railway Scene.

The showcase is augmented at exhibitions by a T.V. monitor and video recorder on which are shown video films of the Swiss Railway network. Each year, promotional material kindly made available by the Swiss National Tourist Office in London completes the display. Our efforts, represent a modest attempt to publicise the Society to Scots railway enthusiasts. There is, hopefully, more and better to come !!!