

Editorial

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EDITORIAL

Spring Meet - York. (Saturday 21 March 1987)

A final reminder concerning the arrangements for the Society's "Spring Meet" incorporating the 1987 A.G.M. on Saturday 21 March at the Riverside Conference Centre in The Viking Hotel, York. The formal business of the A.G.M. will commence at 15.00 whilst the exhibition consisting of model railways (including the much favoured RhB) diagraphmes, videos, slides, photographs, author member Maureen Cooling with her popular book "Ticket to the Top" and associated trade (Robert Spark books, Swiss Trains and Metre Models etc.) will be open from 12.00 noon until 17.30. A private bar will be open for the convenience of visitors.

Dave Howsam who is organising the "Spring Meet", informs me that the event is attracting a lot of interest with members coming from as far away as the U.S.A. Many members appear to have decided to take a weekend break in York as there have been a lot of requests for accomodation for Friday and Saturday night. Bookings for the special dinner to be held at 19.30 on the evening of the 21st have exceeded expectation although it may still be possible to accept late applications for the dinner.

Integra Signalling Company

Those of you who read the article about single line block working on the RhB Bernina railway. (pages 16-19. Swiss Express no. 8) may have wondered who the author was. The article and photographs was in fact kindly supplied by the Integra signalling company of Wallisellen, Switzerland. My apologies to Integra for failing to include an acknowledgement with the published article. In addition I would like to thank Integra for providing additional material for future publication in the Swiss Express.

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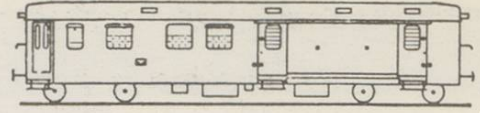
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**RENFE Talgo**

With reference to your note in issue No. 8 about the RENFE diesel locomotives working with the Talgo trains when the Catalan Talgo began running between Barcelona and Geneva, RENFE ordered a number of locomotives for this service with 4ft 8½ in. gauge bogies so that Spanish motive power was used throughout. The 5ft 6in gauge locomotives worked from Barcelona to Port Bou and the 4 ft 8½ in. gauge locomotives from Port Bou to Geneva.

Some years ago when I was editor of Railway World I did a feature on the working at Port Bou and Cerbere which appeared in the August 1970 issue of Railway World which described the cross-border working at these two stations with a description of the operations to get the Catalan Talgo through the gauge changing equipment at Port Bou. The use of Spanish locomotives in France and Switzerland however did not last long, partly because it required a specialist type of locomotive, with a standby, for nothing else but the Catalan Talgo working. Unfortunately I cannot immediately put my hands on the number of locomotives that were built for 4ft 8½ in. gauge or when they were converted to 5ft 6in. gauge for working in Spain, when SNCF locomotives with coupling adaptors to match the Talgo trains took over, but the details were given in Modern Railways at the time.

G.M. KICHENSIDE, LIVERTON, NEWTON ABBOT, DEVON.

RENFE diesel hauled Talgo

In answer to the 'Cross Border Workings' enquiry, - page 9 in the 8th edition of the 'Swiss Express', there was indeed a Talgo loco, a type 253 that was used to haul the Catalan Talgo between Geneva and the RENFE network. It had been converted or supplied to standard gauge which I believe to have been German built. Unlike the Talgo coaches that in some cases do change gauge (such as the 'Catalan') this one loco was kept to the French and Swiss lines, and didn't work into Spain. The loco was operated by RENFE and I believe was unique to be used in such an arrangement. A photograph of the loco in question appears in a magazine that I have.

MARTIN LEWIS, GREAT BARFORD, BEDFORD.

RENFE diesels to Geneva

In Swiss Express No. 8 Gregory Beecroft doubted that RENFE diesel locos worked the 'Catalan Talgo' through to Geneva. The French book 'Sur les rails de France' (obtained from Robert Spark) has a picture of RENFE diesel BB number 3002T 'Virgen de Fatmia' on French standard gauge track in the Rhone valley in September 1969. The text describes it as a standard gauge loco although I seem to remember reading elsewhere that the wheelsets were indeed adjustable in the same manner as the coaches. The loco was fitted with automatic couplings which may explain why SNCF locos were not used. The practise appears to have continued until SNCF wires reached Cerbere. The SNCF locos used later do not seem to have had auto-couplers so presumably the stock was modified.

STEVE BRATT, CREWE, CHESHIRE.

Re the item on Spanish locos on page 9 of the December edition. RENFE locos did work the Catalan Talgo to Geneva. Some of the 3000 class diesel hydraulics were fitted with standard gauge bogies and ran in that condition from June 1969 until September 1970. I have seen pictures of only two locos of the class of these being 3002T "Virgen de Fatima" and 3005T "Virgen de la Bien Aparecida".

ANDY HART, EDITOR, SNCF SOCIETY JOURNAL, 14 KEATS CLOSE EARLS BARTON, NORTHAMPTON NN6 OPR.

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Cross Border Workings

RENFE had some diesel engines at Port Bou on the standard gauge specially to haul the Catalan Talgo identical to those used on it in Spain. Reason being SNCF did not want to haul the Talgo, I believe. I travelled on it in 1969 and was most surprised. Nowadays certain SNCF BB 7200's have special couplings for use on these trains.

At Basel - SNCF series 16000 were regular visitors before the arrival of the series 20200.

Geneva. In pre-war days Tram 12 started in France at Annemasse. Eaux Vives was the terminus of line 5 to the Bitilo (International Labour Office). Tram 12 continued from its present terminus to St. Julien en Genevois I believe and was thus unique in starting and finishing in France.

Post Buses

With reference to Peter Bowen's excellent Post Bus article (Swiss Express No. 8). The two wheel mail trailers have separate P registration nos. to the buses pulling them ! P.T.T. often lend agents vehicles when their own are being repaired etc. There are far more agents vehicles than some years back. On certain summer routes e.g. Grimsel-Furka, drivers come for the season and spend the winter in the central repair works in Bern . I have been studying these things since 1929 and never knew before that the P. reg., nos., referred to the type of bus. You learn everything in Swiss Express. Chur is a very good place to see large numbers of buses. The word Extrapost dates from horse days when the extras were lighter than the mailcoach. The P.T.T. agents are often railway companies themselves e.g. G.F.M. I believe carry mails.

GEORGE BEHREND, ST. MARTIN, JERSEY, CHANNEL ISLANDS.

Where are they now ?

Some years ago when I first became interested in Swiss Railways, I found a list of films marketed by Colourviews Ltd. Two of these films in particular interested me, "The Brunig Line" and "Snow Train" (Furka Oberalp). I wrote to Colourviews on two occasions but received no replies, I assumed that they were no longer in existence or had moved away. I was inclined to the former view, as I could not find an advertisement in any current issue of the various railway magazines. So I gave it up as a bad job.

A few days ago I found a book in my local library by John Huntely entitled - "Railways in the Cinema". In the back of the book I found a comprehensive list of films on railways, from the Hollywood types to technical and instructional types. There in the list were the films I had enquired about, plus some others I had never heard of. (A list of titles with a Swiss flavour is attached). I wonder where are these films now? Who owns them? Are they available to interested parties for viewing or purchase?

The list of films includes: 1. Alpine Roundabout (Britain 1956) - Journey through Grisons & Engadine. 2. The Brienz Rothorn Bahn (Britain 1961) (Colourviews). 3. The Brunig Line (Switzerland) (Colourviews) Lucerne - Interlaken including 0-6-0 T No. 1067. 4. Call of the South (Switzerland 1955) Story of the St. Gotthard Tunnel. 5. Europe by Train (Britain 1965) (Brit. Tram.Films) Italy, Switzerland, Germany and Spain. 6. La Ferrovia del Bernina (Italy 1913) (Nat.Film Archive) Rail tour Poschiavo - St.Moritz. 7. Mount Pilatus Rly. (Britain 1900) (Nat. Film Archive) A journey up and down the line. 8. The Snow Train (Britain 1963) (Colourviews) Reopening operations and snow clearing by steam locos Brig - Desentis. 9. Through the Trient Valley (Switzerland 1941) SBB Film of trip from Martigny up the Rhone Valley. 10. Train journey through the Alps (Britain 1947) Journey from Milan via Simplon Tunnel. Other interesting titles included: "The Arlberg Railway" (Britain 1906). "Austrian Narrow Gauge" (Britain). "Austrian Rack" (Britain 1962) Achensee bahn. "Bataille Du Rail" (1947) Resistance railway sabotage. "Le mistral" (Britain 1960) Nice - Paris 141R, 241 P & Electrics. "Mistral" (1957) (SNCF Paris - Nice. "Race Against Time" (1956) World Rail Speed Record. "The School Train (Britain 1961) Zillertalbahnhof. "The

Semmering Line" Britain 1961) Steam and Electric. "The Settebello" (Britain) F.S. Express.

GRAHAM WATSON, WILLESBOROUGH', ASHFORD, KENT TN24 ONG.

Proposed informal meeting for members in Cumbria and Lancashire

Are there any S.R.S. members in the Cumbria/Lancashire area who would like to meet for informal discussion, slides etc. Travelling is unfortunately difficult for me but members would be welcome to meet at my house. If you are interested please contact me.

STEPHEN GREENFIELD, MEADOWSIDE, 39 HORNCOP LANE, KENDEL, CUMBRIA LA9 4SR. TEL. 0539 25494

Information in the U.S.A.

.....I must tell you that very little information is available on Swiss railways over here. In a recent order I placed with Swiss Trains I wrote that I feel like a blind man who has suddenly become capable of seeing, and each new wonder leads to more questions.

My main source of information prior to a little less than a year ago had been model railway catalogs! Roco, Lilliput, Fleischmann, Marklin, Arnold and Bemo are about all that we can get here. No books except for a (very) occasional one from a Bemo distributor in California. Fortunately, Euromodel Rail Review put an advertisement in Model Railroader Magazine (which in the 28½ years I've been reading it has had one non-North American article) some months ago. A subscription opened up a whole new world and, of course, led to my finding out about the Swiss Railways Society.

You can't imagine how much I appreciate the fact that such an organization exists, and even more so, your patience with my requests. Hopefully I'll be able to one day attend a society dinner or AGM so that I can meet you and thank you personally.

GARY M. HARTMAN, BOX 92 JEROME AVENUE STATION BRONX, NEW YORK 10468-0092.

Feedback

Thank you for the latest edition of Swiss Express. Splendid - so full of interest, so informative. One wishes one could visit La Swiss more often. Keep it up!

HENRY ROWE, DORNACH, SUTHERLAND, SCOTLAND.

"Firing Days"

Many of you will know that your Editor was a steam locomotive driver. But before one becomes a driver, one has to be a fireman. Alan became a fireman again in February. Preparations for a fondue ended spectacularly when the pot caught fire.

Quickly applying rule 323 (c) 1 (*), **DON'T PANIC**, Alan dropped the fire while your Chairman cleaned the boiler and disposed of the ashes in preparation for the next run.

The steak fondue turned out quite well in the end. Damage was confined to a burnt table, oily deposits everywhere - and dignity.

ALAN PIKE, CHAIRMAN, SWISS RAILWAYS SOCIETY.



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