

Transalpin in Graubünden : stock changes for San Giacomo

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plates to my Swiss locos, but not this time as the printed ones are so good.

On the roof, the working pantographs are made up of etched components and are very nicely done. The power conduits are moulded in a bright red plastic that definitely needs toning down, but is commendably fine and mounted on two types of dull green insulator. The walkways along each edge of the roof are moulded as part of the body, but are picked out in brown. The underframe sides are well moulded, showing details of the suspension and axle journals, each complete with its little Swiss Cross in the centre. The wheels all have plastic centres with a turned metal rim of darkened metal. The driving wheels show details of

the prototypes Sécheron drive mechanism and the pony wheels have 9 spokes.

Overall, this is an excellent model from the Rivarossi stable. The only improvements would be the elimination of that one little design flaw on the bogie pivots and the replacement of the plastic sand pipes with metal ones that really could be bent to shape. It would also help if all the additional pieces were shown or listed. Oh, yes, please can the locos be fitted with NEM coupler boxes. Even better though, we have baby's big brother, the Ae 3/6^{III}, to look forward to, this having been announced by Rivarossi this year.

Mike Polglaze

TRANSALPIN IN GRAUBÜNDEN *Stock Changes for San Giacomo*



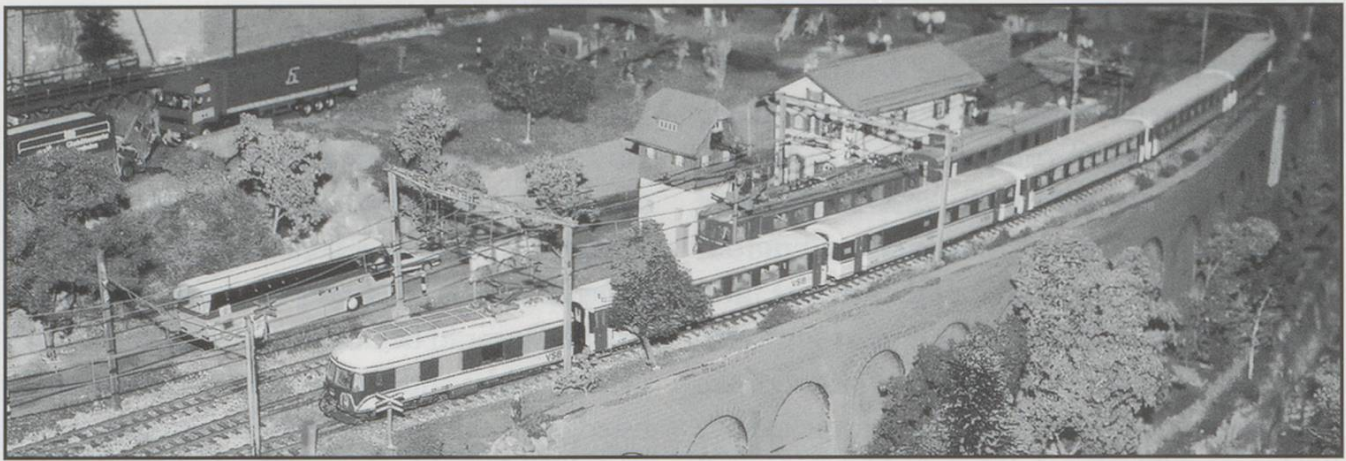
The former Lima Transalpin motor car, altered slightly by Mike Polglaze and on his new layout, San Giacomo. Pictured at the Derby exhibition, April 2001

Photo: Editor

The "San Bernardino Express", known to the operators as the SBE, a name borrowed from a PTT post bus service that runs, or ran, from Thusis to Bellinzona, has had a change of stock. Over the years I have collected quite a number of Bemo short coaches. Two of them, a BD, one end dealt with the same way as Z 91, and a B already in Bernina colours, worked on the SBE along with a set of Pullmans and WR 3814. Four of the shorties were repainted in Bernina colours and the six coaches plus the WR now form the SBE. The

Pullmans, like their prototypes, now only work on special trains.

The final change is VSB not RhB. It was in Switzerland in the 1970's that I first saw the ÖBB 4010 units on the "Transalpin", then running between Basel and Wien. They very soon became a firm favourite, I was to see them many more times, in Austria, after the "Transalpin" traffic outgrew them and became a loco hauled service. I must say I do not like them so much in the new ÖBB colours as I did when they were in blue and cream.



The whole 'Transalpin' rake at San Giacomo.

Photo: Editor

I know this may well offend RhB purists but as I have said I am very fond of the 4010 units. I often wondered how the VSB would have developed had it been built and the result was a metre gauge version of one of these units which works from Landeck to Bellinzona and back. I have never discovered if there is a second unit which detaches at Thusis and goes on to Chur, joining up on the return journey.

I had a Lima 4010 set on my now defunct HO Ziegelbrücke layout, which was not used for many years. Eventually I grafted the front end from the Bt on to a Bemo coach and this worked on the VSB pendelzug service for some time. Then last year I had a good look at the Lima power car. After checking and rechecking I reckoned it could be made to fit over a Bemo FO 'Uri' chassis. These chassis have extension pieces at each end to accommodate the longer FO body, the basic chassis being from an RhB Ge 4/4¹ (if you look at the axle boxes on a FO model you will see they have RhB on them).

The complete back end was removed as was the large grill on the roof at the front end. The Lima pantographs were discarded. About an inch was then cut from the rear of the body. Next the body was cut along its length. The first cut, very carefully, was down the spar between the front windows. Then by trial and, fortunately, very little error the two halves were filed until they made a snug fit over the chassis. Not a lot more than the saw cut was in fact needed. The rear end was cut to fit the new width, the large

grill replaced, I did not narrow this, and a single scissors type pantograph fitted. Once the unit was reassembled a piece of plasticard was fitted inside the front end which slots into the extension on the chassis. This together with a similar one at the rear gave me the correct height for the power unit. The height was obtained by putting the power car and a standard Bemo coach on a length of track and lining up the roof heights. Once this was obtained the plasticard pieces were glued in position on the body. On the rear another piece of plasticard was superglued upright and a securing screw fitted inside the corridor connection.

All VSB stock, which is standard Bemo plus a Brünig Barwagen, was then painted in the blue and cream. The blue is Humbrol 190, no longer produced, but I picked up a couple of tins during a trip to Germany, which might be a shade darker than the ÖBB blue. Does anyone know the RAL number for the ÖBB blue used on the 4010 units? The only change I made was to paint the passenger doors red.

Both ends of this unit plus the BDT's on the RhB pendelzug sets have been fitted with directional LED head and tail lights. A bit of a job to fit five small LEDs and the wires into each end but well worth the hassle. The RhB locos have only been fitted with tail lights having already got headlights, although not so bright as LEDs. This may well change in time!