

The modelling section : the American Grisons

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THE MODELLING SECTION



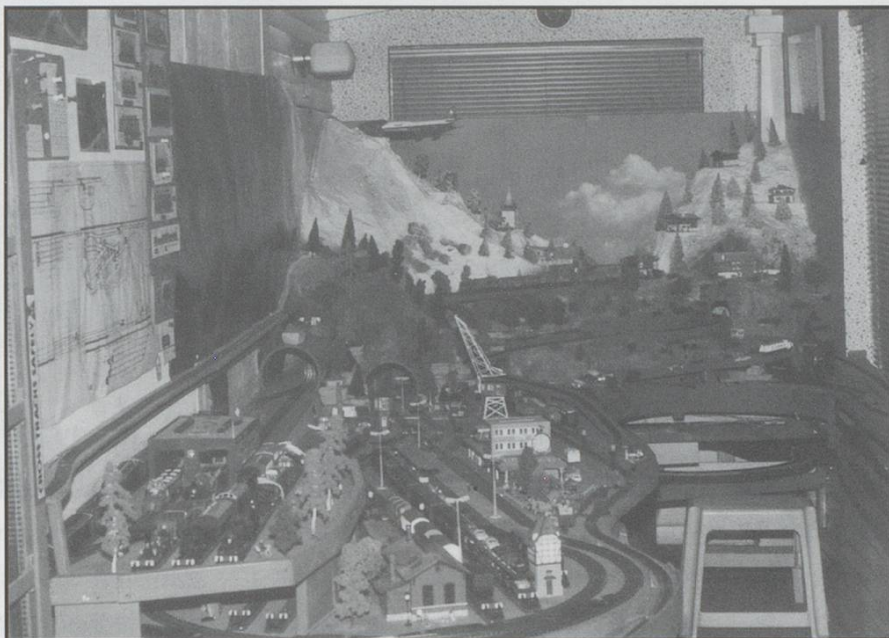
A definite transatlantic feel to *Modelling* this month with two very different approaches to Switzerland and its railways.

Bill Juergens

THE AMERICAN GRISONS

THE PROTOTYPE

Chur, capital of the Grisons canton, lies at an altitude of 587 metres (1926 feet) above sea level. It is an SBB terminus and the major connection point between the SBB and the metre gauge Rhätische Bahn (RhB) to Graubünden and specifically Arosa, altitude 1740 metres (5709 feet). The railway to Arosa was completed in 1914 and a trip from Chur to Arosa takes about one hour.



Overview of room layout. The standing track at left swings down across door access to provide continuous running within the room.

This and all other photos by Bill Juergens

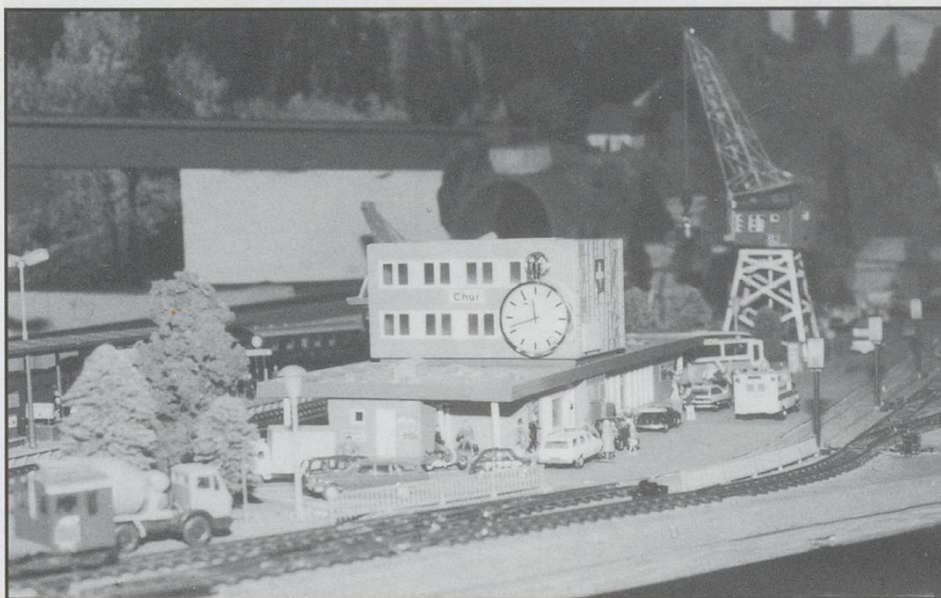
THE MODEL

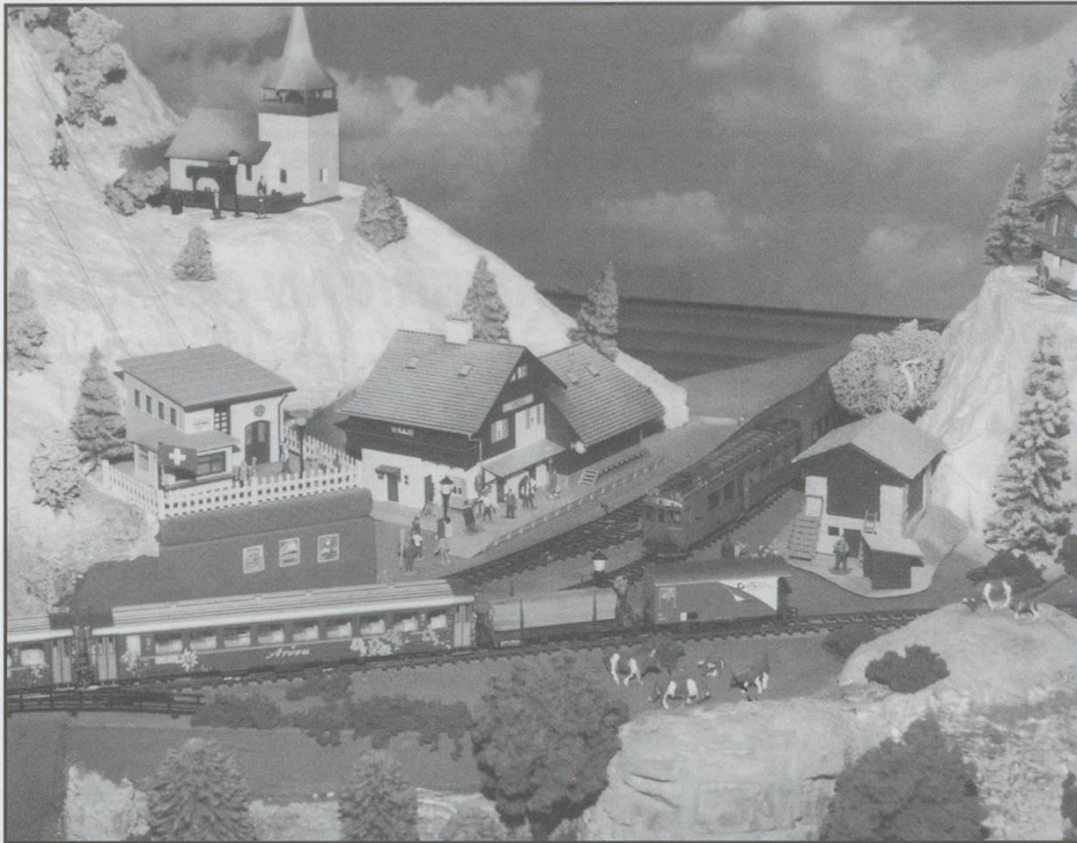
The model train layout was built about ten years ago for the grandchildren of Hans and Heidi Coaz. Hans and Heidi come originally from Switzerland. Every year they host a meeting of the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter of European Train Enthusiasts (ETE) at their

Chur Bahnhof; metre gauge tracks in the street.

home in Los Altos, California. This year, the meeting date was July 14, 2001, a special Bastille Day celebration of all trains of a Gallic persuasion.

The layout is housed in a small, narrow (converted porch) room 6 feet by 25 feet and is built on 1/2 inch plywood, covered with 1/2 inch homasote. Homasote is recycled newspaper that has been formed into sheets the size of plywood. Model railroaders use it because it is dense enough to hold track nails, yet soft enough to absorb some of the vibrations made by the trains.





Arosa Bahnhof.

The focus of the layout is Chur station and it also includes the village of Arosa. The SBB and the RhB share one side of the station, the branch line to Arosa departing from the front of the station.

There is 70 feet of HOm track with a grade difference of 14 inches in 15 feet length. Bemo 2-rail DC rolling stock serves the RhB railway. HOm switches are hand operated and there are four hand operated controllers.

The HO track is mostly Märklin "K" with 180 feet inside the room, not counting the storage and station tracks, with a grade difference of three feet in a 40 foot length. Märklin "M" track is used for storage yards and on a temporary outside table. There are 40 digitally operated switches and two digital controls.

There is an opening in the wall to provide access to

trains running on 50 feet of track outside the house. The trains come out of the room through the hole, and on to a single track bridge, 13 feet long.

The outside track is covered with plastic sheeting at night, the assembly usually stays up for a few weeks in summer. After use, all the track and switches are

removed, the woodwork and bridge is disassembled and stored in a dry cellar. Only the wooden posts are left outside. They have to be realigned for the new season, because the tree roots push them out of position.

I am indebted to Hans for the information in this article and to Hans and Heidi for their hospitality in hosting our ETE group in their garden setting.

Swiss train on bridge

