

The reviews

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THE REVIEWS



Die Tee Züge der Schweiz-Luxus-Züge für Europa.

Author: Hans-Bernhard Schönborn. Published by GeraMond Verlag D-81673 München, 2002. German text, over 100 black & white photos and drawings. 144 pages, 6 inches x 9, hardcover. CHF 38.60 /€22.90. ISBN 3-7654-7122-4.

The author of this book, Hans-Bernhard Schönborn, is a colleague of mine in the "Swiss Railway Journalists" association. He is an editor of the well-known Journal "Schweizerische Eisenbahn Revue". He is also an accomplished organist and lives in Sempach. As he mentions in his preface, although the actual hey-day of the TEE trains in Switzerland was almost thirty years ago, there is still a lot of interest in them. One of the original RAm diesel-TEEs was brought back from Canada and one of the electric RAe TEE II, now "grey mouse" - sets is designated as a historic vehicle and will be restored close to its original state. The one thing all TEE trains had in common in those days, next to the TEE emblem, was the universal Bordeaux-red and cream livery. Nowadays, all "premium" international trains in Switzerland, be they Cisalpino, TGV, Thalys or Talgo, have their own identity and colour scheme. In his book, Hans-Bernhard divides the information into five groups: the history of how cooperation between European railways made it all possible. Then follows an explanation of all the necessary, sometimes quite revolutionary, technical achievements. The daily running of the Ram TEE I and Rae TEE II sets all through western Europe, as well as their eventual fates as "Northlander" and "Grey Mouse" makes up the next section. It is filled with many facts and anecdotes. The following section deals with the other, mostly loco-hauled TEE trains. And very appropriately, the final chapter deals with... the models! A small register and an interesting bibliography round off this pleasant book. I enjoyed all the technical information and drawings, which are presented in such a way that non-engineers will be able to understand them. The photograph of a "meeting" of one of the RAm "Edelweiss" sets with a tram in Zürich (while the RAm was on a transfer from the manufacturer's depot, it really did happen) is a gem. Obviously, with such a book, a basic knowledge of German is helpful.

GMH.

Shunting in Disentis

Produced by REOS Image Productions. Original sound without any additional music or commentary. Subtitles provide information about the trains. 53 minutes.

Available from SRS Sales or at Society exhibition stands. £10.75 plus £1.00 postage.

Disentis/Mustér is where the Rhätische Bahn (RhB) and the Furka-Oberalp-Bahn (FO) meet and whilst each runs their own local services into the station, locomotives are changed on the through running Glacier Express. The first part of this video is taken in fine weather in August 1988 with an analogue camcorder and includes many shots of trains with a variety of motive power arriving from both directions as well as showing many aspects of the station as it was before reconstruction which commenced shortly afterwards. Of particular note are the movements and sound of the small RhB diesel shunter Tm2/2 25. The second half of the video was taken with a digital camcorder in January 2001 by which time the station had been rebuilt including the installation of raised platforms and an overall roof. There is snow on the ground and the filming has taken place during the late afternoon, early evening and morning. There is the expected mix of trains with some of the night shots being particularly memorable. Listen for the local church bells giving a virtuoso performance and look out for the "Do not cross the line" sign in 5 languages, including Japanese – is this the only place in Switzerland where such signs exist? Viewing this video was a very enjoyable experience as it presents a very comprehensive record of the daily movements at a favourite location and even though the quality of the images may not be quite up to the standard of some other producers it is good value and recommended.

Chernex

Goppenstein and Brig stations in winter

Produced by REOS Image Productions. Original sound without any additional music or commentary. Subtitles provide information about the trains. 45 minutes.

Available from SRS Sales or at Society exhibition stands. £9.75 plus £1.00 postage.

Taken in February 2000 in true winter conditions and using a digital camcorder this video starts in Goppenstein station with the departure of a Kandersteg bound car-carrying train. There then follows a 15 minute sequence showing a range of moving trains taken from the platform, presumably using the station canopy as a shelter against the snow. Included in the motive power passing are a selection of SBB Re4/4II, SBB Re 460 and BLS Re4/4 and Re 465 on both passenger and freight trains. Of particular note is the southbound Limberg to Domodossola clay train hauled by two BLS Re 465 and tailed by another two, which are attached for braking purposes down the Lötschberg south ramp. The location then moves to Hohtenn where two trains are passing in very poor weather, and there follows another short interval at Ausserberg with somewhat better visibility. The final 27 minutes of the film are taken entirely from platforms at the western end of Brig station with much use of the zoom lens and starting with a general view of the BLS depot. Again there is a similar locomotive mix on the trains shown to that at Goppenstein plus an added bonus of an SBB Ae6/6 on an oil train from the Rhône valley. The southbound clay train with 2 BLS Re465 at each end is seen again and the video finishes with a brief view of an SBB Ee3/3 running light through the station from the west. The video portrays quite nicely the feeling of busy stations and the nature of the traffic passing through Goppenstein and Brig, but more variation in the camera locations would have helped to overcome a feeling of repetition. This is certainly a video for the train enthusiast (try counting how many of the 18 BLS Re 465s appear!), but perhaps it will have limited appeal to the general audience although it is good value for money.

Chernex

European Railways incorporating Euromodel Rail Review

Editor-Trevor Ridley. Published by Atlantic 2002. Language English. 230mm x 300mm ISSN 1477-9412 52 pp. £3.50

Puzzled I was when David Stevenson handed me a new magazine to review, October/November 2002 looked normal but issue 150, what was all this about? For all of those lucky members that remember Robert Spark's excellent publication *European Railways* this is the new updated version that was last published in the late 1980's. Can this magazine fit in between the enthusiasts Today's Railways and the modeller's bible 'Continental Modeller'? I was sceptical at first but on reading it I was quite impressed. The size of the magazine is pleasing as it enables line drawings to be sympathetically reproduced and of a size that can be easily read. Paper quality is excellent enabling generally superb reproduction of the many excellent modern and historical photographs. This comment is tempered somewhat as the Swiss article's photographs on the BLS are at best muddy and unsharp. A disappointing aspect as the article 'Cars through the Alps' is generally well presented and interesting. The magazine presents a nice blend of historical and modern scenes with a particularly interesting chapter on journeys of the late Robert Spark. Certainly seeing SNCF 231Es on the 'Flèche d'Or' and DB Class 044s really evoked past glorious memories of steam locomotive power on the Continent which unfortunately died here in Britain in 1968. A brief essay on each major European railway was covered with accompanying photographs and although much has been reported elsewhere it is presented in a lively and interesting style. Modelling is also well covered and would appeal to the enthusiastic beginner who would get the most from this magazine.

As a first edition, there appears to be much to commend this publication subject to getting the photographic quality control aspects sorted and producing more in depth modelling reports.

Certainly *European Railways* fits nicely between 'TR' and 'CM' and will fill a need in this growing market especially now as Britain is continuing to reduce its locomotive fleet and interest in Britain's railways is on the wane unlike our continental cousins.

G & T

From: Chris Harnett, MITV - The New Glacier Express

Production by MITV. 2002. English/French/German/Italian/Japanese narration. DVD 2 disk set together with a route map. Digital Dolby Stereo. NTSC & PAL.

Comments from the review of the Glacier Express DVD - SE September 2002

Note from Editor - I asked Sue and Chris at an exhibition about a comment made in a review of the above and they promised a technical explanation as to why the DVD was not seamless.

Both Sue and I would have liked to have made the DVD of Glacier Express into one seamless programme, however this was not possible to do as the DVD has been made in 5 languages. Only one set of pictures is laid onto the disc, so each language must be laid separately and synchronised by time-code with the picture. This is true from end to end of the programme. However, each of the five languages are very different and the length of each sentence can vary by several seconds. Nor do the different voice-over artists necessarily start in exactly the same place or finish together. The result means that while the tracks are fine for each of the programmes separately, if we had to cut out the end of one programme and the start of the next programme it would have meant a very long and costly editing and authoring job to line up the various languages after the join of the two programmes. The result would have been a vastly increased cost which we would have had to pass on to our customers. As it is we are able to offer these two programmes at a most attractive price equivalent to the original video price for only one of the tapes.

A little technical explanation as to why we made the DVD on two discs, one PAL and one NTSC. Those of a technical disposition can try this at home! The NTSC disc will play on a UK DVD player, as our DVD has no region coding, however if the DVD player is connected to the ordinary PAL composite output of the television set the NTSC pictures will judder when the train is moving, this is called "motion artefacts". If the DVD player is connected to the television set via the RGB input however the TV will work at the USA frame rate of 60hz, which is slightly different from the UK and the picture will be perfect. The PAL disc will work fine on a UK player with PAL composite output of the TV, but would not play properly on the USA or Japanese home set-up. If possible in the UK it is still best to use the RGB or component input of your television for DVD as this gives a much better result than the single PAL composite feed whether it is via a yellow phono socket or the "scart" input (although please note that not all scart inputs are RGB capable).

To sum up, the DVD is in this 2-disk form to give the highest quality at a sensible price, something both Sue and I have always strived for. Maybe in the future costs will come down drastically and computers improve to the extent that future projects can be altered. Just as a note on other DVDs, many discs are NTSC mastered and will judder on a UK set up unless the DVD and TV are RGB connected, a real problem with moving footage such as is found on all railway programmes.

THE EDITOR HAS HIS SAY!

No room at the Inn again, now where have I heard that before?

Many thanks to the many members who submitted articles and photographs. The response was splendid. I have had to leave loads of good things out so there is much to look forward to in forthcoming editions. This will include full details of the RhB's Albula celebrations, a new route to Switzerland via Friedrichshafen and the Bodensee, more on the Sursee-Triengen, more on the Ticino, Braunwald and loads of great photographs. The use of digital images, by the way, is proving very succesful indeed. It also saves money at the pre-press stage.



SEASONS
GREETINGS

The next press date is the 20th December so get cracking. PLEASE NOTE THE NEW EMAIL ADDRESS FOR ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS which is:

Contributions@SwissRailSoc.org

Finally the *Swiss Express* team wish you all the compliments of the season and a very happy and prosperous New Year.

