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new Albula coach-sets), it was becoming difficult to provide enough power for a full length train. This was due to the low 300 V of the heating line (against 1000 V or 1500 V which are European standard) that resulted in quite high currents. Expect to see this new van in operation any time now, along with DS 4219-25 the others in the class which are also under conversion.

● MGB fatal crash

On Friday 23rd July the rear three cars of an eastbound six-car *Glacier Express* derailed between Lax and Fiesch on the MGB. Sadly one person died, six were seriously injured and 36 slightly injured. The incident is subject to the usual full investigation and its preliminary findings indicate that it was probably caused by driver error. The train had been on a 35kph restriction and on leaving it appears that the driver immediately increased the train speed to 65kph with the result that the last car left the line and overturned onto an embankment following a form of "whiplash" movement. It then pulled the next two cars off, but they stayed on the line. Many of the injured appeared to have been standing in the last car and

some may have been thrown out of the large windows and observation panels as it toppled-over. Normal services resumed the following day.

● End of an era

We understand that following the death of Herr Andre Luyten on the 31st December 2009 at the age 79 the well known and old established model shop in Interlaken's main street is no longer trading.

● Why are PostAutos yellow?

This was a question in SE 101. Apparently this goes back to the postal monopoly that the Princes of Thurn and Taxis (from Regensburg) had in Bavaria and some other German states several centuries ago. Their mail coaches were painted in the royal livery of yellow and this subsequently became the standard colour for many postal administrations in Mainland Europe.

Information supplied by: Michael Farr; Theo Stolz; Bryan Stone; Chris Payne; Gordon Wiseman; Jan Bronsema; RhB; Tony Colbeck; John Davis; Bernard Haste; Anthony Warriner; Derek Meakin; Ron Smith; Jakob Jäger; and Swiss Media Sources.

BOOK REVIEWS

Erlebnis Furka-Bergstrecke

Authors: Beat Moser and Peter Krebs.
ISBN 3-909111-71-8
AS Verlag A.G., Buhnrain 30, CH-8052 Zürich.
Languages: German and French. 208 pages,
200 photographs in colour and b+w. Format: 8x
10 inches, hardcover. Price in Switzerland:
CHF 58, or €37. Internet: www.as-verlag.ch

Both authors are colleagues. For many years, Beat Moser has done a tremendous job publicising this wonderful, volunteer-run railway. The incredible success story of the Furka Summit Steam Railway (Dampfbahn-Furka Bergstrecke/DFB) started after the Swiss Government decided the railway

from Chur to Brig should run all year and built a base tunnel between Oberwald and Realp at huge cost. Until then this summit section was closed by the Furka Oberalp Railway for almost three quarters of the year, due to



the many avalanches and huge amounts of snow. Due to damage by avalanches it had to be partly rebuilt every year. Demolishing the old line started immediately after closure, however a group of intrepid enthusiasts wanted to save the line and managed to get an injunction stopping it. An incredible story follows: over the years hundreds of volunteers from all over Europe re-built the line, repatriated and restored the rolling stock and now very successfully operate the DFB. Absolutely amazing is that £15 m was raised through selling pretty stock-certificates stating there would be no dividends! Buyers were mostly private people. In a country of 8m inhabitants – incredible!

The book has five sections. Firstly, the history of the original summit route over the Furka passes. This route, with its stunning views over the then still impressively large Rhone glacier, gave the world-famous Glacier Express its name. In this barren high alpine region construction was difficult and took a long time as during World War One tourists stayed away and finances dried up. The second section describes the Furka Region: barren nature, inhabited only during the few summer months. Amazing but true colours at 7000 ft altitude – of early morning and evening pictures! In the third part, we see why this line only operates in summer: clearing the line from literally mountains of snow is a Herculean task. In parts, you literally have to find it first! Then the yearly re-installment of the “Steffenbach” bridge, winched out of the path of mighty avalanches at the end of every season. The fourth part deals with the restoration and maintenance of the rolling stock: the bases at Realp, Aarau (rolling stock) and Chur (Locomotives). The final section, taking up almost half of the book, describes the experience of the DFB today. The only Glacier “Express” worthy of that name (you cannot see the glacier from the real Express, which runs inside the tunnel), runs through some of the most beautiful scenery in Switzerland. I have used a lot of superlatives in this text, but both the line and its story are quite extraordinary. This book is in German and French. Enjoy the pictures. If you can, read the book, and above all – visit this railway!

GMH

Worldwide Steam Railways

Author: Keith Strickland.

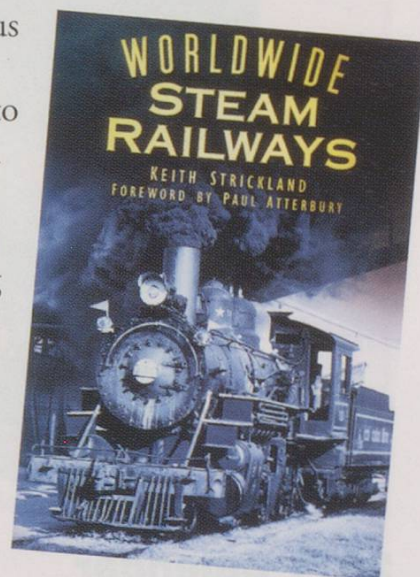
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Published by The History Press,
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Gloucestershire, GL5 2QG.

Hardback 255mm x 180mm - 160 pages of B&W photographs. £19.99 – all royalties will go to the “Railway Children” charity

Whilst all of us who go to Switzerland love to see steam locos in operation, sadly today none are in everyday working service. Although this book of superb black & white images doesn't contain any taken in our favourite

country, for those of us who still get stirred by pictures of steam engines going about the everyday work for which they were built, this book is a must. Your photo editor has known Keith since they were at school together and can vouch for his life long passion for steam railways. Since the demise of steam in the UK, Keith has travelled the world seeking out the last vestiges of working steam railways, often in remote locations most of us would not consider “holiday” destinations. The heat of India, the icy cold of China, the remoteness of South America and so on. All his pictures have been taken on 35mm film and have then been scanned to produce a superb set of images that in most cases can sadly no longer be taken. These aren't “pretty” pictures, they are of everyday workhorses eking out their last days. If you love steam, you'll enjoy this book. And as a bonus, you'll be helping the Railway Children charity (of which Keith is secretary), as he is donating all the royalties from this book to help the disadvantaged children in many countries who have to call the local station their home.



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