

Book & DVD reviews

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Switzerland Without a Car

Author: Anthony Lambert. Published Bradt Travel Guides, IDC House, The Vale, Chalfont St Peter, Bucks., SL9 9RZ. Language: English. 380 pages. Some colour photographs. Format: Softback, 8½" x 5¼". Price: £15.99 from all good bookshops. The SRS suggests that you support them or loose them! ISBN: 978 1 84162 447 1.



This is the fifth edition of this guidebook that I understand has been extensively revised by its author over the last couple of years. Reading it I find that there are interesting echoes from a 1913 Baedeker guide to Switzerland. This too was looking at travelling around the country 'without a car' and where Karl Baedeker spoke of a diligence leaving a station twice daily to connect with a local destination; often we now have a PostAuto making a similar connection – although probably hourly. From a Swiss perspective it would be easy to pick up on a

number of small issues that may not necessarily fit with local knowledge, but there are two more general incorrect statements that should not have got past the editors. On P74 it states that Appenzell Inner Rhoden is the smallest Canton. Basel Stadt is less than one quarter its size. On P233 the author discusses the Swiss 'Sugar Cane' harvest – it is assumed he means Sugar Beet. Even with climate change Canton Vaud does not have similar growing conditions to the Caribbean! The author must also be a quite fit judging by some of the walking times he quotes – or perhaps I am getting old. Apart from these points the book does give a very good overview of how to travel around our country in an environmentally friendly manner using our integrated public transport system. I doubt that there is another country in the world where all of it can be easily accessed in this manner. This book is therefore a celebration of the ability to leave the car at home and use the excellent Swiss Pass (or local alternatives) to see the country. A major plus-point is that it points the independent traveller to interesting, and far more typically Swiss, locations that the mainstream guidebooks ignore. This book should be in the pocket or day-pack of all English-speaking visitors to Switzerland.

Jakob Jäger

Double DVD Cab Ride - 'RhB Lines 2'

Produced Perren Films, website: www.fuehrerstandsmitfahrten.ch £36.00 for double DVDs, £21.00 for single DVDs including UK postage. Available from SRS Sales - see advert in this issue of *Swiss Express* for more details.

Perren Films are in the process of making a series of cab rides covering every line in Switzerland, and they mean every line including the obscure ones and those only used by the military. It is very much a "labour of love" and a very ambitious project. They are being made with the full co-operation of the relevant railway concerns. Each DVD is 90-120 minutes in length and includes the entire journey including tunnels but the length of station stops is truncated. The company is owned by Andreas Perren, who is the cameraman, and Daniel Felix, who is the editor (and works for Swiss television). His father was a well know TV producer in Switzerland and Germany. This review concerns *RhB Lines 2* and covers the routes Landquart – Chur, Landquart – Davos Platz - Filisur and Pontresina – Scuol Tarasp –

Klosters Platz, a total running time of about three and a half hours. The DVDs start with a main menu to select the route to be viewed; once the route is selected the sub-menu gives information about the loco used, train number, recording date and time etc.; there is then a map of the selected route. There is no music or commentary but on screen graphics show the station names. The journey commences with views of the station and the locomotive we will be travelling in. The camera view, tripod mounted, is forward facing alongside the driver, filmed in widescreen and high definition. The weather conditions are good, mainly sunny and the camera view chosen to give quite a wide angle, so where the topography allows, a good view of the surrounding countryside is shown; useful for modellers and those who simply like to see the Swiss countryside. Video and sound quality are excellent. I was rather dubious of the point of filming within the tunnels, but the modern camera gets sufficient light from the loco's headlights to see plenty of detail. I can wholeheartedly recommend this DVD to those who like cab rides and indeed anyone who likes to see the Swiss landscape as seen from the train. I suggest that members keep looking at the Perren Films website as the range develops (there are about 17 DVDs up to the beginning of June) and all these are available from SRS Sales. Brienzensee

DVD Swiss Railways 3 - 'Killwangen - Spreitenbach and Olten'

Playing time approx. 69 minutes. Produced by: Great Eastern Transport Films, 31, Ives Road, Norwich, NR6 6DY.

Tel: ++44 (0)7585 923605 www.greateastertransportfilms.co.uk
DVD obtainable directly from Mark Ellis at the above address. Price £10.00 (post free).

The 3rd in the series of Swiss Railway DVD's looks at Killwangen-Spreitenbach and Olten. Filmed on 14th and 15th June 2011. If you like to spend the day at the end of the platform, as many do, you will love this DVD. There is no commentary, only the sound of passing trains. At both Killwangen-Spreitenbach and Olten there is a great variety of local, national and international passenger and freight trains to be seen passing. It was interesting to see the mix of passenger and freight rolling stock.

Good references if you are a modeller. The locations were well chosen as there were times when several trains were moving through the picture at the same time. In 2011 there was still a variety of loco hauled trains to be seen. I did manage to count ten Ae 6/6s, occasionally the same one going in the opposite direction. There was some shunting to be seen as well as the occasional bus and spot the kite!

The film quality is not quite as good as the very best DVDs but it is still high. I would have liked either a verbal or copy introduction to each station's viewing, perhaps something about the station and what sort of trains to expect and also a map to identify where the stations are would be helpful. Filmed in 4.3 with playback in 16,9, although I did have to change the aspect on my TV to avoid wide locomotives. Information about the other available Swiss DVDs can be found in the producer's advertisement on P46.

Gerlad

