

Book reviews

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Stand, will be at the following Model Railway Exhibitions in the next few months. Dates and venues may change. Always check with the organisers before you travel.

- **Saturday 15th & Sunday 16th June** – German Railways Society at Cromford Community Centre, Matlock Road, Cromford, Derbyshire, DE4 3QF.
- **Saturday 21st & Sunday 22nd September** - Blackpool and North Fylde Model Railway Club Exhibition at Fleetwood High School, Fleetwood, Lancashire, FY7 8HE.
- **Saturday 28th & Sunday 29th September** - Soar Valley Model Railway Exhibition at Charnwood College, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 4SQ.
- **Saturday 5th & Sunday 6th October** - Manchester Model Railway Society Exhibition at Armitage Centre, Moseley Road, Fallowfield, Manchester, M14 6ZT.
- **Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th October** - Furness Model Railway Club at Barrow in Furness 6th Form College, Rating Lane, Barrow in Furness, Cumbria, LA13 9LE -.
- **Saturday 9th & Sunday 10th November** - Tolworth Model Railway Show at Leisure Centre, Red Lion Road, Tolworth, Surrey. KT6 7LQ.
- **Saturday 23rd & Sunday 24th November** - Warley National Model Railway Exhibition at NEC, Birmingham, B40 1NT.
- **Friday 29th, Saturday 30th November & Sunday 1st**

December - Wakefield Model Railway Exhibition at Thornes Park Athletics Stadium, Horbury Road, Wakefield, WF2 8TY.

Member's Letters

From: Gervase Dawidek – by Email

Although this is not rail-based I thought I would recount an episode from a ski-ing holiday in Verbier last spring. One day I decided to ski in the Brusson area, which is separate from the main Verbier ski area. I caught the bus from Le Chable and walked up to the chairlift. I put on my skis and consulted the piste map and then discovered to my horror I had left my ski poles on the bus, which was driving merrily off down the road. I spoke with the lift attendant who advised me the bus would be back in 35-minutes. He then disappeared into the ski hut and came out with his own ski poles, which he lent me. When I came back four hours later I exchanged his ski poles for mine that he had very kindly recovered from the bus. I thanked him profusely. Others have said it before but it really is true - Only in Switzerland!

Members' Advertisement For Sale

Bemo Hom RhB Goods Start sets 7258 100 and 7259 110. Both in good condition. £150. and £165. Post at cost.

John Hargaden Tel: **01873 852116**,
E-Mail: hargaden2010@btinternet.com



BOOK REVIEWS

The Isle of Man Railway – 1950s

photographs by David Odabashian:

Author/Compiler: Robin G. Winter.

Publisher: Peco. £9.95. ISBN: 978-0900586392

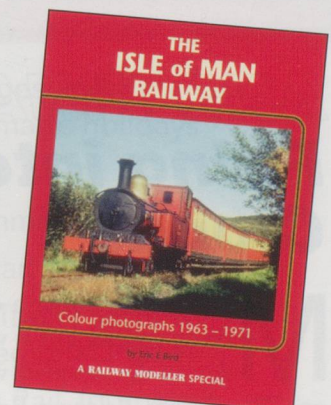
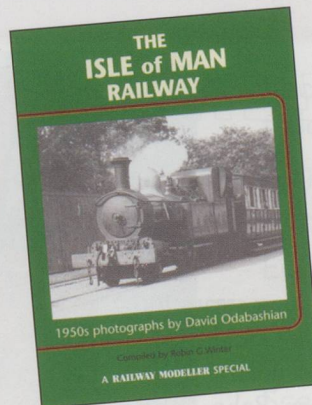
The Isle of Man Railway –

Colour photographs from the 1960s

Author: Eric E. Bird. Publisher: Peco, £14.95.

ISBN: 978-0900586439

Why review two books on Manx railways in *Swiss Express*? British and Irish 3ft lines are only marginally smaller than the Swiss metre-gauge and I know I am not the only modeller who began with 3ft in 4mm scale, running on the same 12mm gauge track which we now use for our Swiss HOm trains. My models of the IMR's former County Donegal railcars were powered in the same way (a motor bogie in the centre van) as my recently-acquired MVR GTW unit from Signalmeister Modellbau. Robin Winter wrote Peco's earlier book on prototype and model Isle of Man Railways and during this time discovered that Peco held a huge resource of black and white photos taken in the 1950s by David Odabashian during the heyday of post-war operations. By the time I ventured across the Irish Sea in 1963 the steam railway was running on borrowed time – although still serving the local population and holidaymakers in the same way it had done for nearly 100 years. The photographs in Robin's book,



digitally enhanced, show almost every aspect of the railway, from locomotives and rolling stock to stations and signals. As a modelling resource it will be invaluable, representing good value by offering almost 250 photographs for £10.

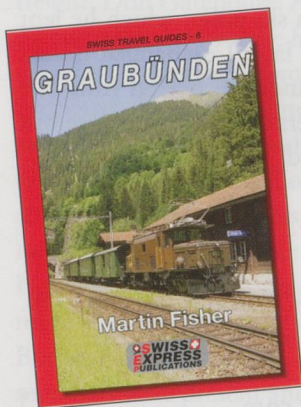
Peco's second recent book is a collection of about 200 photos (all but 18 in colour) taken between 1963 and 1971. Eric Bird had the advantage of living on the island and his style of photography had been inspired by Beebe and Clegg's classic American railroad book 'Mixed Train Daily' in which the train is seen as part of the landscape. To achieve the same style in his own views he explored the island by cycle, and latterly by car, to find the best vantage points. As well as a few station shots most of the photos show the trains steaming or

drifting through rural vistas, along coastlines and across stunning spindly steel bridges. The period covers the end of the “old” company with locomotives in Indian red and through the “Ailsa Era” when his Lordship decreed that green was the right shade for locos. However, the coaches are in the familiar and attractive red and cream. Both these books will enable everyone who was fortunate to visit the Isle of Man during the railways’ heyday to revel in nostalgia for the golden age of the narrow gauge on our islands. MF

Swiss Travel Guides No.6 – Graubünden


Author: Martin Fisher.

Paperback A5 size. 56 pages with numerous colour illustrations. Price £7.00 by mail order from Society Sales. ISBN – 978-0-9563436-9-7.



This latest Swiss Travel Guide is the sixth of the proposed series of eight booklets that will collectively cover the whole of Switzerland. This Area Guide takes us to the south-eastern corner of Switzerland and to physically the largest of the country’s 26 cantons. That said, Graubünden is the least densely populated canton and that in turn corresponds to sizeable areas of

natural outstanding scenic beauty, as well as numerous rural villages that retain a unique community charm of their own. For the transport enthusiast Graubünden is well served by not only the largest of the Swiss narrow gauge systems, the splendid Rhätische Bahn (RhB), but also a PostAuto network and numerous funicular, cable car, gondelbahn and chairlift

systems that provide ready access to, and the chance to explore, a host of more remote locations. The ‘*Glacier Express*’ booklet produced earlier in the series covered a journey from the west and through the heart of Graubünden to St. Moritz and Davos, so the author has produced this Area Guide with the lines previously covered being described in the opposite direction. Having summarized the getting to and travel passes to consider aspects, with a welcome sketch map included, our tour commences at the Italian end of the Bernina Pass. Heading north, we reach St. Moritz before taking the scenic Engadine line down to Scuol Tarasp close to the Austrian border. The Guide describes concisely the dramatic line through the Albula Valley, the journey onwards to Chur, before heading west via Disentis and the Oberalp Pass. An excursion to the resort town of Arosa is described before Filisur to Klosters via Davos and then north along the Prättigau to Landquart completes our travels through Graubünden via the RhB system. This Guide is the largest volume in the series to date and the 56 pages of informative script are enhanced by a varied selection of transport and scenic illustrations. To complete the Guide details of the motive power that has served the RhB over the generations are included, as well as informed general information and a useful bibliography. The dramatic landscape of Alpine scenery, passes, gorges, rural meadows and the unique Graubünden ‘sgraffito’ buildings provide a superb range of sights to be savoured. Graubünden has much to offer, ranging from the UNESCO World Heritage status routes of the Bernina Pass and Albula Valley lines to Arosa’s Eurasian Red Squirrels and the liquid ‘dividend’ of the Monstein Brewery! A recommended booklet that will enhance any travel library. DCG 

AND FINALLY... Firing into the Clouds

Many railways offer a day-long steam loco firing course, but if you are looking for a day on the footplate with a difference read on. The 7.6km Brienzer-Rothorn Bahn (BRB) runs from the lakeside resort of Brienz in the Berner Oberland to the summit of the Rothorn at 2250 m. It is the only fully steam operated 100% rack adhesion railway in Switzerland, and still runs locos built in 1891 on a daily commercial basis.

The BRB introduced fireman’s appreciation courses some years ago in the local Swiss-German dialect. These have been such a success that the railway is considering introducing limited courses for English-speaking groups of 6-8 people (men or women), during its 2013 operating season. A summary of the unique highlights of what the BRB is offering to their English speaking guests is: your day on the railway starts at 07:30 and ends around 17:00; you will have



a tour of the workshops as your loco is raising steam; you will be welcomed with Coffee and Gipfeli, and a mid-day meal will be provided; you will learn the basics of your engine and the very significant differences between a rack adhesion loco and a standard design; your driver will explain the method of firing these ‘old girls’. You will fire your engine up the mountain once, and also ride down once, rotating with the other members of the group who ride up-front in the coach;