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BOOK REVIEW

SWISS POSTBUSES

Author: Martin Fisher.

Published by: Swiss Express Publications.

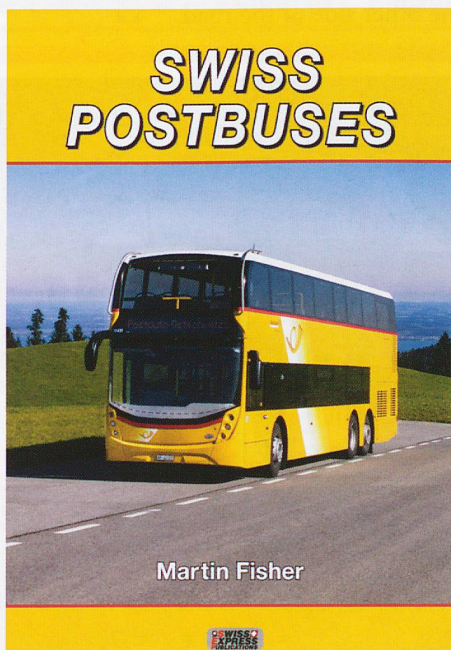
ISBN: 978-0-9926812-9-6.

Photographs in colour, also some black and white.

Hard Back A4 size, 208 pages.

Price: £28 at exhibitions,

£31.50 by post (*it weighs 1.4Kg*).



This revised and enlarged second edition of Martin Fisher's Swiss Postbuses gives three times the page space of its predecessor in its new A4 format. While many pictures are

repeated, a lot more have been added, and in particular many historic black-and-white photographs are included, bringing an impressive picture total of over 650.


The rather small maps in the first edition have been redrawn and are now far more readable. Notable are major new contributions from Malcolm Chase, editor of Buses Worldwide, and Fritz Jenni, a retired Director of PTT, which have strengthened the historical content of the book. The chapter about buses of yesterday is much enlarged and additional appendices provide more vehicle and ticketing information.

Whilst the Postbus undertaking has a good presence in many Swiss urban areas, it is the dominant transport provider in the southern part of the country and in particular the Alpine area, and there's no shortage of sunny scenic locations depicted. The mountain pass routes have been improved over the years such that pretty standard, though comfort-orientated, vehicles are currently used. It's serving the side valleys and hillside villages where the special vehicles can be found, often a demure-looking small coach or minibus, but with a powerful engine to make short work of steep gradients and tight bends.

A huge diversity of passenger-carrying vehicles is illustrated, from having half-tracks to being driverless, and it's pleasing that PostAuto is still buying specialised vehicles today, such as the Hess SwissAlpin low-floor midibus with optional roof glazing at the rear and gutsy Scania underframe, to the ADL double-deckers currently entering service, but sadly with little seat-cushioning.

The reader can combine the useful route descriptions in the book with timetables from the Fahrplanfelder website to plan interesting and scenic holiday trips.

This publication is an essential requirement for transport enthusiasts interested in Switzerland, and is thoroughly recommended.

Sholto Thomas. 



7. SBB, Panorama Coach, 1st Class.

The eighth seat is in an SOB Class 526 2nd Class coach. This is in the FLIRT units operated by SOB. This seat is a more Spartan than others, although comfortable for shorter journeys. It is less substantial than the other seats discussed here, with smaller headrests and firm armrests. There is room for luggage beneath and between the seats. The environment is usually quiet, although the coaches are motorised. There



8. SOB, Class 526, 2nd Class.

are no window blinds, however, the seats do match the windows. There is a small fixed table between the seats allowing easy access.

There is a trend emerging here with the more modern seats being less comfortable than the traditional ones. I intend to continue my survey of seats, looking at BLS stock and more SBB multiple units. 