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Modelling the FO

by C.J.Freezer

Although modelling the FO in HOm is not as straightforward a matter as it is when the RhB is the chosen prototype, the current situation is quite good and seems set fair to improve. In fact, it is a little less trouble to follow the FO in 1992 than it was to model the GWR in 1962!

Bemo is the main source of supply, they initially offered the Ge4/4" tunneloks Nos 81-82, but lacking any car carrier stock their value on a FO model is doubtful, their best employment is on an RhB model, recording their use on that line until 1982. They also offered a supposedly FO coach, but as this was a repaint of their original short Bernina line stock, we will pass quickly on to the later offerings. The original HGe4/4' are currently listed as available, and the full length FO coaches are now to be seen. As the majority of loco hauled trains on the FO have RhB and BVZ stock in the makeup, this side of the story is straightforward. The new HGe4/4"s are scheduled for delivery in the latter part of this year and judging by recent releases, Bemo have joined that select group of manufacturers whose projected Nuremberg delivery dates are reasonably accurate.

The main lack at present are the motor luggage vans, used for push-pull services and the sleek railcar sets. These are produced from time to time by the specialist brass kit/ready assembled suppliers, but one suspects that most members would need to budget carefully to afford the price.

Signals and overhead gear are virtually identical to those used on the RhB, so one can use Bemo and Sommerfeld equipment here. At present no buildings are on offer but the often spartan station structures should not present any serious difficulty to a serious modeller.

Prototype information is plentiful, if in German. Kurt Seidel's *Furka-Oberalp Bahn* is large and exhaustive, with side elevations of most of the rolling stock up to the date of publication (1982). I've not discovered a

publication offering track plans, but I have to admit that I have not been looking that hard; if any member knows different...

Of course, the most pleasant way of getting prototype information is the field survey, on the FO on a fine day it will be nothing short of idyllic. There is a good local service between Disentis and Andermatt, allowing one ample opportunity to hop out and survey a site between trains. The local service between Andermatt and Brig is a little more sparse and so one needs to plan the journey with care. The *Glacier Express* is not recommended, it doesn't stop at many stations, but on the other hand it does frequently make a local wait for long enough to enable a nimble enthusiast to wield camera and sketchbook to good effect. But be warned, the moment the last coach in the *Glacier* clears the entry point to the loop, the local will be off like a shot, return to your train before the express actually reaches the station.

If you have a 200mm telephoto and know the route, it is possible to photograph the whole of Andermatt's layout from the train whilst descending from Nätschen. There aren't many railways of which that can be said!

The Furka-Oberalp Bahn

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The most glamorous service over the Furka-Oberalp is the *Glacier Express*. These trains run between St.Moritz, Davos and Chur in Graubunden, where they are operated by the Rhb, and Zermatt in Valais where they are operated by the BVZ. In between they run over the Furka-Oberalp. Currently there are, in summer, seven workings, four eastbound and three westbound, though only two in each direction carry restaurant cars and the first eastbound *Glacier A* only runs between Brig and Disentis. In winter one working in each direction suffices.