

Zeitschrift: Swiss express : the Swiss Railways Society journal
Herausgeber: Swiss Railways Society
Band: 3 (1991-1993)
Heft: 6

Artikel: Ingrid is alive and well
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-855197>

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Ingrid is Alive and Well

by Mike Polglaze

In the final paragraph of his article in the last issue of Swiss Express, I suspect that David Broomfield was referring to me, as we had a discussion on this subject at Contex in London last November.

I did intend to get and try out the N gauge version of the Roco Track cleaner, but the only type Howes had at the show was the HO version, so one of those was obtained instead. I had hardly got back to Via Mala when Barry Richardson, one of our operators, pounced on it and proceeded to remove all standard gauge running gear and replace it with a pair of Bemo bogies. All the Roco weights and other fittings were left in place. A body, a Roco convert, was nicked from another Halk and *Ingrid*, as Barry christened it, entered service.

To enable it to work over the Via Mala we removed one spring and allowed that end of the cleaner to float. *Ingrid* was coupled to one of our local trains and by the end of the show she had a very dirty bottom. It must have

worked well! It is not the be-all and end-all to track cleaning however, but it does help keep the rails polished during a show.

Why *Ingrid* you may well ask. It's our answer to NSE's *Swedish Scrubber*.

Since the show the chassis and original body have now been re-united as a Usego van and the unit continues to work on local trains; these make more circuits per sequence than any other train. The second spring has been replaced and to overcome the additional drag a Ge6/6" is usually allocated to the service. The grey track rubber edges have been painted matt black and can hardly be seen. The only indication that *Ingrid* is working is a sudden slow down and acceleration as she picks up another bit of stray dirt. This slow down and pick up is felt through the controllers rather than seen by the eye. She also makes a good brake vehicle on the downgrades.

We are always prepared to show *Ingrid* to interested visitors at exhibitions if requested.

Editor's Jottings

As you may (or may not) have noticed, I have discovered where, in the software, the umlauts and other accented letters were hiding - plus some other useful sorts, to use the printer's term. Pity the instructions didn't include this information, it's relatively simple when you know how.

A recent letter from a member spoke of SRS "Headquarters". We have many features, but headquarters are not among them. We do have a committee, which meets four times a year and at the AGM but its activities are mainly concerned with the mundane matter of keeping the Society solvent and providing a framework on which individual members can build, rather than forming a central organising body which lays down rigid guidelines and procedures.

Apart from the "Official" Area Groups, there are a number of smaller groups of members. Many of these are based on a joint layout,

which turns up at various exhibitions. This, if properly organised, not only provides an excellent means of bringing not only the Society, but the fascination of Switzerland's railways before and interested section of the public, but these layouts also form an invaluable focal point for members visiting the various shows.

Unfortunately, up to now only one group has regularly provided Swiss Express with advanced notice of the shows it will be attending. Clearly, we should be doing more, but until each active group provides me with a contact address, I can't set up the computer to send out reminders of our next copy date in good time, which is the best way of ensuring that the information is not overlooked. Furthermore, until we have a register of such layouts, the Committee can't set about funnelling publicity material and, above all, prospectuses and membership forms to the groups concerned.