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Tunnel Fire Fighting Vehicle by Stephen Greenfield

The Prototype.

In 1990 I was lucky to be able to join the SRS 10th Anniversary tour to Switzerland, thanks to the Cumbria team who handled my wheelchair without fuss (usually!)

Doubly lucky, in fact, as the trip coincided with my wedding anniversary and I was still able to get my pass stamped!

While visiting the BLS depot at Spiez we were shown their Tunnel Fire Fighting Vehicle. This was of particular interest to me as I work for a leading manufacturer of fire fighting equipment. When I asked questions about the vehicle this caused some embarrassment and Walter Kleine, then Public Relations Manager of the BLS, kindly offered to send me a technical booklet about the vehicle. This was on my desk when I returned to work after the trip, and proved to be very interesting; especially so as it contained a good drawing of the machine and its accompanying rescue coach. Later on in the holiday while travelling separately from the main group we changed trains at Rorschach. Clearly on view from the platform was the depot's Tunnel Fire Train, and a photograph was taken for reference.

The drawing was soon enlarged and reduced to actual HO scale on the office photo copier with a view to making a model. For those who might be interested, details of the prototype were given in Swiss Express Issue 2, April 1985 and the drawing is reproduced here.

The Model.

To make the tank I retrieved from a "laid-up" British layout, two grounded Esso tank wagon bodies. As the required tank is longer than a single Esso tank, they were cut to length, square, using a lathe, three jaw chuck and parting off tool. Joined together they gave me a tank of the right length with two man-lids. The walkways from the tanks were re-used.

For the chassis, my first thoughts were to use the floor and running gear of a bogie open (Eaos). A Lima unit was ordered from Mackay Models. On arrival the DB dark brown livery was so attractive that I could not cut it up so it was kept and I decided to scratch build the chassis.

The solebar and buffer beams are in 3 x 1 mm brass channel cut, filed and soldered. This assembly was then super glued to a floor of .020" plasticard reinforced by a sheet of



Left: Prototype of similar vehicle at 'Rorschach'.

Above: Model on Stephens layout 'Unterhaus'.

Photos: Author

copperclad board. Bogies of the correct appearance were found for me at an exhibition by fellow branch member Ian Edwards. They are robust metal units; I removed one coupling and mounted them on captive 5BA screws. A piece of steel was glued to the underside of the floor for weight.

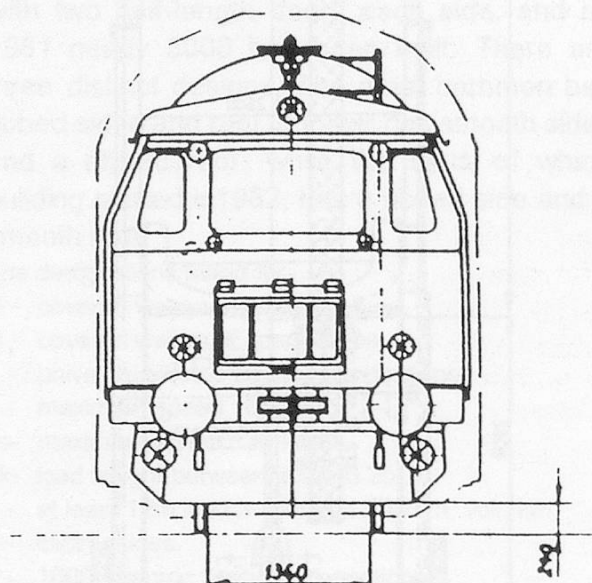
The bodywork was cut from .020" plasticard; the roof curved by using a block of wood and boiling water. The snowplough for the front end is a spare from a Roco loco. Hand rails are shaped from florists wire.

Before glazing, the body assembly was painted using enamel aerosol spray - BR bauxite gave an acceptable colour match. The sliding doors were painted using a silver/matt white mixture to give an aluminium appearance.

After glazing, the roofs and doors were fitted and attention turned to the fire monitors.

A friend, Bob Woodburn, could not resist the challenge, and produced a pair of miniature blabbermouth foam cannons in stainless steel.

I mounted these without paying attention to the drawing and photograph and this error needs to be corrected. At the time of writing, all that remains to be done is the exhaust/silencer and to find some suitable transfers.



Tunnel Fire Fighting Vehicle Drawing from BLS

