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Book & Video Reviews

Bahnsinnigen GRAUBÜNDEN - Landquart to Chur. Rincovision, Hagenholzstr 81A, Zurich, CH-8050. Price SFr 39. Review copy kindly loaned by; MITV, Southampton, England. Please refer to MITV for current UK price.

This 60 minute video recording is a useful reminder of the superb 150th anniversary events that took place in the Graubünden over the weekend of June 7 and 8 1997. For Crocodile fans it is a real treat!

The production concentrates upon the journey of green liveried SBB Crocodile Be 6/8 13302 from Rapperswil to Chur. Between Chur and Domat Ems we witness the unique parallel running of this standard gauge Crocodile and brown liveried RhB Crocodile Ge 676 415 on the adjacent metre gauge line pulling a rake of RhB salon carriages.

The main cover photograph shows the RhB No 1 "Rhätia" in the streets of Chur. This locomotive is recorded pulling a special passenger train along the first part of the line to Arosa. Rhätia is also featured on the main line working along a German standard gauge loco. Footage (which is mainly in good sunshine) includes lineside, cab, from the bogie, in the works and helicopter pictures. If you ever wondered what a drivers eye view of the dual gauge route between Chur and Domat Ems looks like you will enjoy this tape.

Watch for the naming of SBB 460 Rätia, two sets of Zurich S-Bahn stock on Extrafahrt duties and turntable sequences at Landquart depot with old and new RhB locomotives. The timing of the locomotive drivers of the two Crocodiles and the two steam locos is impeccable as one crosses the other on a viaduct.

During the recording there is some narration in German which is interspersed with live sound recordings. Useful "level crossing barrier" style graphics show the classes of the different motive power. These enable the observer to double-check their understanding of the locomotive class in German!

Picture and sound quality is very good. For RhB enthusiasts in particular it is recommended. The tape concludes with tantalising glimpses of other Rincovision 150th anniversary celebration recordings.

TGV Handbook by Brian Perren. Capital Transport Publishing. ISBN 1-85414-195-3. Available from Capital Transport Publishing, 38 Long Elmes, Harrow Weald, HA3 5JL £10.95 post free. Also available from bookshops e.g. Motor Books, Ian Allan etc.

The original TGV Handbook was published in 1993. It contained comprehensive information about the expanding SNCF TGV network, its trains and future plans. This second edition, published in 1998, has been fully updated and expanded. It now has 160 pages, over 125 colour photographs various maps and charts. All recent developments have been covered.

The 30 chapters cover the history of the high speed network within France together with its growing tentacles under the Channel and into Belgium. Chapters are included on lines presently under construction and those still at the planning stage. These include; TGV Mediterranean, East European, Channel Tunnel Rail Link and the Netherlands South line. The planned East and Rhine/Rhone TGV routes would reduce the travelling time between Paris and Switzerland.

The TGV units themselves are well documented in text and pictures. If you wish to know the difference between Sud Est, Atlantique, Réseau, Eurostar, Duplex Thalys set this book is a valuable source of information. Details are included about the nine 3-voltage Franco-Suisse sets together with pictures of the new La Ligne de Coeur livery.

The extensive pictures are of generally good quality with useful captions. The slim volume concludes with a useful specification chart for all the TGV trainsets. Possible future TGV trainsets are mentioned including tilting, new generation and mini units. The world-wide interest in the TGV product is covered with references to South Korea, USA, Canada, Taiwan, Russia and Australia.

At first sight of the title of the book members may wonder about the Swiss connection until it is recalled that TGV units already extend their services to the Swiss destinations of Zurich, Bern, Geneva, Lausanne and Brig (winter only). Readers who use TGVs on internal services or the Eurostar services from Paris to London and then transfer to a TGV for the Paris/Swiss journey may find this book a worthwhile purchase.

For anyone interested in Eurostar, TGV or high speed trains in general this attractively presented book is thoroughly recommended.

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