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Book & Video Reviews

Switzerland in Camera 1; Beautiful Land

MITV, Southampton, England. £14.95 (plus £1 UK p&p or £4 p&p overseas).

This 52 minute broadcast quality video production is a change from the usual MITV railway orientated format. Whilst it contains several shots of trams, trains and boats these are incidental to the recording which is a general tourism introduction to the country.

The film footage was mainly taken in summer sunshine with some snow scenes. There are numerous chocolate box images of Switzerland to enthuse a potential tourist. The historical aspects of the footage are particularly interesting. The footage leaves the viewer in no doubt that the country certainly has a wide variety of impressive castles!

Picture quality on this digitally mastered tape is very good as is the Hi-Fi sound. The majority of the film material is new and includes ground level, mountain peak and helicopter views. The recording has been made in collaboration with various tourist offices. A commentary in English is interspersed with music.

MITV hopes to produce further "Switzerland in Camera" productions concentrating on regions such as Graubunden, Lucerne and Bern.

Those who are unfamiliar with Switzerland will be encouraged to visit by this video recording. Members who have already acquired other MITV railway productions will be pleased to add this tape to their collection as a useful historical and geographical background to the country.

In summary, a first class overall travelogue of a compact but scenically diverse country,

PM

SCHWEIZER GÜTERWAGEN VON DAMALS / LES WAGONS SUISSES D'ANTAN

by Davide De Michelis. Published by Eisenbahn Amateur, 120 pages, 22x28.5 cm, soft cover. Price SF 34,-

The enthusiast of Swiss railways is relatively poorly served with historical treatises on locomotives and rolling stock. In particular, information on the humble freight wagon has been rather scarce, especially as regards the older types. The publication of this book therefore goes a long way to filling the void.

The wagons are broken down into groups corresponding with the SBB wagon classes. All text is in both German and French, and gives a history of the wagon type, the years during which they were built and pre-computer running numbers, together with variations and modifications of the standard type. The text is strongly supported by numerous photographs with informative bi-lingual captions, and dimensioned drawings accompany most of the sections.

Separate sections are devoted to groups of wagons for special uses, such as beer and wine, tank and cement silo wagons, and the Nestlé vans. Several pages of colour photographs of surviving older wagons, taken in the 1980's and 90's, are followed by a number of older illustrations showing the freight wagon and freight train as they used to be.

A group in Switzerland was formed nearly 20 years ago to research and restore freight wagons. A short account of this group, "Association 10264", is given, supported by photographs and a list of the wagons they have restored so far. Not forgotten is the "Historische Eisenbahn Gesellschaft", which has preserved an impressive list of older railway vehicles that includes several freight wagons.

Finally, a list is given of the 1966 renumbering from the older 5-digit numbers to the multi-digit so-called "computer" numbers.

All-in-all, this is an extremely useful book for the historian and modeller. For the former, it gives an interesting insight into the development of the freight wagon in Switzerland. For the latter it provides a wealth of information necessary to the accurate modelling of the older scene. It is highly recommended.

Schweizer Güterwagen von damals / Les wagons suisses d'antan

JJ

Please submit articles for the
June "Swiss Express"
by the 20th April.

THANK YOU