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Perrapswil by Dave Howsam

A Swiss HO layout fitting model to prototype or prototype to model?

Now that my layout is reality, in that eight baseboards are covered with thirty yards of track and forty points, I dare commit to print some of the thoughts behind this model which does not fall into the normal pattern of Swiss layouts. It will not have high mountains and a rural setting. One day, perhaps, exact details of construction will appear in the model press but in this journal it is more appropriate to deal with the concept behind the model and its development.

A holiday in North East Switzerland, based at Nesslau - Neu St. Johann, showed me that there were railways almost as interesting as the RhB! Whilst my RhB layout was being built I felt there was a need for a portable HO layout which could be transported fairly easily in a car. I had ruled out Gotthard or Lötschberg style lines because of the space involved and SBB and BLS lines would need long trains, but here on the Bodensee Toggenburg and Schweizerische Südostbahn

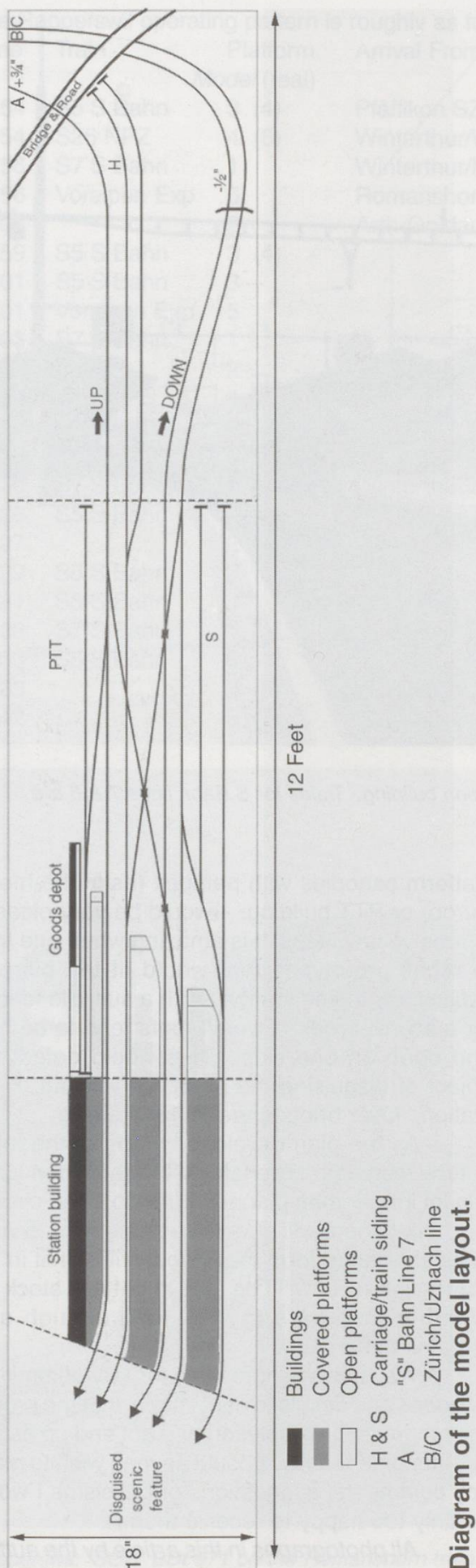
short trains operated on single track with a frequency of service which conjured up ideas for a model.

A group of modellers from the Manchester branch would provide trains for the layout I was to build with appropriate help. Frequency of service was a priority with a predominance of push-pull and quick turn rounds so that the viewer would always see trains running. Computer control was also a possibility. Track leading to hidden sidings was to be short so trains would soon come into view.

To this end a plan was drawn up using two single tracks into a station. The idea was that the rest of the station was not modelled and the tracks would separate off-stage. Thoughts turned to one line being SOB and the other SBB, simply because I liked the SOB & BT trains and locos. No specific area was chosen but a station on the outskirts of Zürich was at first envisaged. The station at



Rapperswil: SOB Re446 445, in ALNO livery, arrives at platform two with the Voralpen Express from Luzern.



Wattwil then provided inspiration as four trains crossed on the hour and two on the half hour. An exact model was not possible because of space, scenic features etc but the size of the trains was right with five coaches on the Voralpen Express as a maximum.

Eventually thoughts moved down the line and settled on Rapperswil. Here was a service ideal to our requirements. There are six arrivals and six departures 'on the hour' with five of each on the half hour. Furthermore the station had three lines in and only one line out - over the causeway joining the upper and lower Zürichsee. There was plenty of scope for pendelzugs with Re 450 S-bahn trains, RDe 560 NPZ Kolibris, SOB RDe 566 Kolibris, SOB/BT push pulls, RBe 540 push pulls to Ziegelbrücke/Linthal and the Voralpen Express - loco hauled EWIV coaches of SOB/BT/SBB. Plenty to get one's modelling teeth into there!

Compromise reared its ugly head and in order to achieve a reliable model in the space available (12' x 6'6" - extendible to 18' for exhibitions) I had to settle on 18" curves (all hidden), five instead of seven platforms and severe compression of the station. Many of the sidings had to go, the loco shed and all the loops, as well as some of the cross route connections, disappeared. To make matters worse I had to take extreme liberties with the geography - the lake at the northern end had to be omitted to disguise the tight curves out of the station. The idea looked too promising to discard as all the essential features I required could be retained. Planning thus progressed using a new name in a similar location with a similar operating pattern. Rapperswil became **Perrapswil** which seemed most appropriate at the time, giving a hint to a station that could have been and a layout that might yet be!

Looking at the table at the end of this article one can see my desperate wish for someone to announce an Re450 & driving trailer at Nuremburg! The Arth-Goldau sets (using the 1994 -97 period) need a suitable SOB or BT driving trailer but the appropriate model loco is no problem. The correct coaches in SBB, SOB and BT are available for the Voralpen Express sets as are suitable locos but no Bistro coach is obtainable. In the period to be modelled (with a fair degree of licence) the Voralpen Express and Romanshorn/Arth-Goldau trains alternate on the hour so that the Voralpen Express has arrived from Luzern on the odd hour and departs for it on the even hour.



Rapperswil: Looking from the causeway end, towards the station building. Trains for S Bahn lines 7 & 5 are waiting in platforms 1 & 3 respectively.

Further prototypical trains include double sets of Re 450 S Bahn double deckers, freights, the detaching and attaching of PTT coaches, a double SOB working with loco hauled train attached to RBDe566 and even a mixed train.

Although the full control system has not yet been finalised, it is envisaged that this HO layout will be capable of operation in two modes :- timetable, as the prototype Rapperswil, and continuous running with three independent circuits. In the latter the notion of the single track at the Pfäffikon SZ end of the station is dispensed with and this will give scope for additional trains and something constantly moving at exhibitions - we hope! It should also be possible to fit extra trains into timetable operation by assuming closure of part of the Pfäffikon SZ - Ziegelbrücke line! This stretches credibility but is no more difficult to imagine than the liberties taken with station layout and geographical features.

A way of disguising the Pfäffikon SZ end of the station has not yet been worked out but ideas include a Chur type bus station, overall roof (not really feasible), filling in the space between

platform canopies with perspex (as in the model Europ) or PTT building. I would be very pleased to receive any ideas. It is amazing when one tries to recall prototypes that would fit the bill how difficult it is to find stations with a suitable feature for a scenic break. Overall roofs tend to be high and open on one side. This would defeat the object of disguising the sharp curves out of the station. Over bridges are fairly rare too.

As the plan developed some of the initial criteria were lost. The lead in to the hidden loops is a lot longer than planned but with three circuits it is hoped there will always be something to view. In its shortened form the layout will still fit in the car (I think!) but will I be able to get any stock in? Whether trains are in view long enough also remains to be seen.

Well that's progress so far. By committing my ideas and details to print I hope that the project will progress to completion and not end up as just another pipe dream. Should anyone wish to make any comments, suggestions or criticisms I would be only too happy to receive them.

All photographs in this article by the author.

The Rapperswil operating pattern is roughly as follows:

Time	Train	Platform	Arrival From	Departure To	Stock
		<i>Model (real)</i>			
xx.54	S5 S Bahn	3 (4)	Pfäffikon SZ		Re 450 (no model)
xx.54	S26 NPZ	4 (6)	Winterthur/Wald		RBDe560 (Liliput)
xx.56	S7 S Bahn	1	Winterthur/Meilen		Re 450
xx.56	Voralpen Exp	5	Romanshorn		Loco hauled EW1V's
xx.01		2	Arth-Goldau		Loco hauled pushpull
xx.59	S5 S Bahn	3 (4)		Rafz	Re 450
xx.01	S5 S Bahn	3		Rafz	Re 450
xx.01	Voralpen Exp	5		Luzern	Loco hauled EWiV's
xx.03	S7 S Bahn	1		Meilen/Winterthur	Re 450
xx.03		2		Romanshorn	Loco hauled push pull
xx.05	S26 NPZ	4 (6)		Wald/Winterthur	RBDe560
xx.06	S5 S Bahn	3		Pfäffikon SZ	Re 450
xx.15		5 (7)		Samstagern	RBDe566 (Liliput)
xx.26	S7 S Bahn	1	Winterthur/Meilen		Re 450
xx.26	S5 S Bahn	3 (4)	Pfäffikon SZ		Re 450
xx.27		2 (5)	Linthal		RBe540 set (Lima)
xx.29	S5 S Bahn	3 (4)		Niederweningen	Re 450
xx.31	S5 S Bahn	3	Niederweningen		Re 450
xx.33	S7 S Bahn	1		Meilen/Winterthur	Re 450
xx.33	S5 S Bahn	3		Pfäffikon SZ	Re 450
xx.33		2 (5)		Linthal	RBe540 set
xx.42		5 (7)	Samstagern		RBDe566



Rapperswil: SOB BDt 971 on the Romanshorn train. The service consisted of refurbished air-conditioned stock.