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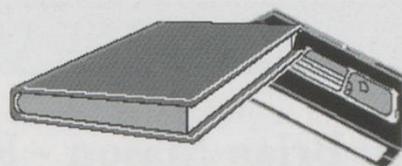
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THE REVIEW SECTION



LE CHEMIN DE FER RHETIQUE 1889-1999 by Patrick Belloncle.

Published by Les Editions du Cabri, France at FRF 498.

How often do those of us with a limited knowledge of the French language, but with virtually no German, long for books on our favourite subject that we can at least gain more from than just looking at the pictures. Here is the book to answer that need and it is by no means a lightweight volume. It is a hardback, 305mm x 230 mm, has 378 pages printed on quality art paper and 1000 illustrations of which 64 are in colour. Every aspect of every part of the RhB is dealt with, starting off with a geographical description of the area, Grisons, and then continuing in separate sections with the history, construction, traffic, features and rolling stock of not only the main network, but the Bernina, Arosa and Messocca lines. The history is fully up to date with details and photographs of the construction of the Vereina tunnel and even the date of opening. The book contains many excellent drawings and maps (including one showing what might have been), as well as extracts from the public timetable. It is churlish to find fault with this superb book which is undoubtedly the most up to date and comprehensive single volume dealing with the RhB, but your reviewer would have liked to have seen a more detailed index. This is a must for anybody remotely interested in the RhB and well worth the investment even if the French language might be thought to present a barrier.

The Society is in negotiation with a source of supply for this book, which will hopefully be at a reduced rate (to be confirmed) and payable in sterling at the time of order. Any member interested should write to the Secretary for details, enclosing a stamped self addressed envelope.

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MITV - THE BOB AND THE WAB CAB RIDES.

Produced, directed and distributed by MITV at 15 Trent Way, Southampton, SO30 3FW.

BOB Cab Ride is £16.95 / WAB Cab Ride is £19.95

Two new videos from the masters, or should that be master and mistress, I digress. In consciously dealing with the two rides together one can make the comparison between two very different, but interdependent, railway lines. The BOB, an incredibly busy system feeding into the valleys with many of the passengers being transported further by the equally busy, but far slower trains of the WAB up to the snow line, and of course beyond.

The BOB ride is fascinating, the trains are long and fast, indeed one of the trains has some borrowed SBB Brünig coaches in its consist. Flat country to start with and then onto the gradients and occasional rack sections where there is still quite a turn of speed. Highlights include the building works where the line is being doubled, level crossings in the stations, wooden catenary posts on the Grindelwald section and the separating of the trains at Zweilütschinen. The two branches are covered fully, first from Interlaken Ost through to Lauterbrunnen and then from Zweilütschinen to Grindelwald. Fantastic weather throughout. How do they do it?

The WAB ride is very different, the trains are slow and both branches are covered fully, starting at Lauterbrunnen to Kleine Scheidegg and then from Grindelwald, down to Grund, reverse and up to Kleine Scheidegg and the wigwam. Highlights, apart from standard MITV weather, were the cattle grids which did not seem to stop one cow which had to be shooed out of the way, the occasional sound of either Chris or Sue as they probably battled for space in the narrow cabs and the long loops where trains passed, sometimes 3-4 in either direction. The loops hold between 6-8 trains!

The standard of photography is excellent as is the sound quality (ambient sound only - no soundtrack). Stations are captioned and one is able to note the track layout. Both videos are recommended and are excellent companions to the Jungfrau Railways parts 1 and 2 produced earlier in that they complement each other well.

They are available from SRS Sales post free, as are all MITV's videos.

Reviewed by The West Midlands SRS Group at a regular monthly meeting.