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REVIEWS

SÜDOSTBAHN – PICTURES OF THE SÜDOSTBAHN AND VORALPEN EXPRESS.

Produced by Ernst Leutwiler, Olberg 5, CH-8755 Ennenda, Switzerland.

DVD or VHS 60 minutes in length. Available in the UK from The Signal Box, 1 Albion Street, Anstey, Leicester LE7 7DD. Tel 0116 236 2901 or e-mail <signalbox@talk21.com> £21.95 for either DVD or VHS, post free in the UK.

This DVD /VHS was filmed between 2001 and 2003, from many points alongside the route of the Voralpen Express which runs hourly between Luzern and Romanshorn. The shots are mostly from the lineside and show the countryside along this pleasant mostly rural route. The Voralpen Express itself features strongly, and is the link between the other sections, which include the new SOB livery, locos and NPZs, as well as a whole range of colourful other trains. Each sequence is explained in slow, clear Swiss German, and is not difficult to understand even for people like myself who have very limited German. The background noise is authentic: crickets, level crossing gongs, birds and cow bells (at one point the cameraman was obviously being investigated by the cows in the same field and they managed to get into the sequence!) There is a long sequence taken from just above the siding ends at the works at Samstagern – which has always interested me for having such a variety of rolling stock. This section of the disk is fascinating, with all types of train activity, and here the first of two bursts of music – typical Swiss hurdy-gurdy, is played. Pearls of stock like the ex DDR electric locos, a CIWL teal diner, and parallel departures feature. Further on, a fortunate sequence is taken at one end of a charming street in Necker; a Post Bus comes directly towards you while trains pass in the background on the track on the hillside. Another lengthy sequence includes long panned shots of the brightly coloured electric power car and two balcony coaches of the Amor Express, again accompanied by the typical music. Herisau is featured, another depot and home to no.11, a veteran Bo Bo of 1913, which is seen shunting and then later on departing with a service train. Closer to the destination of Romanshorn we see many dramatic viaducts, and some of the sequences look like model railways with trains passing over, under and through the many bridges. A charming sequence is taken alongside the line where the farmers are hay making by hand - a common sight in Switzerland. Finally, we see steam in the form of an immaculate 2-6-2 tank at Herisau on a special train, which we travel on as well. A tremendous variety of trains and locomotives – thoroughly recommended.

TRAM

BAHN 2000/RAIL 2000 (DIE BAHN IN SCHWEIZ)

(Les Éditions Télépresse SA in collaboration with CFF SA) November 2004 – No ISBN/ISSN. SFr 5.00 (from Relay news agency and possibly others)

This publication, found by chance in a branch of Relay one of Geneva's news agencies, is a bilingual (French/German) ninety-four page souvenir booklet published to coincide with the major Rail 2000 changes that were introduced with effect from December 12th, 2004. The changes were of major significance to the Swiss Federal Railways and sufficiently important to have made the front page of the International edition of the Financial Times on December 10th and the third leader of the UK edition on the 11th.

Apart from advertorial and advertising from the major commercial players, such as Alcatel, CityNightLine & STRail, thirteen sections are devoted to aspects of the Rail 2000 project:

- Rail 2000 –Panorama
 - An overview of the Rail 2000 project
- A la veille du grand chambardement: Sept questions au patron du CFF
- Le project Rail 2000
 - Comments by Paul Moser, Délégué de la Direction des CFF à Rail 2000.



- La plus grande revolution depuis l'introduction de l'horaire cadence
 - Reviews of the new timetable in the various regions across Switzerland.
- Des super-locomotives: des voitures à deux niveaux et des rames pendulaires
 - The ICN, class 500, trains and the IC2000 double decked coaching stock.
- Rénovation et aménagement des gares
 - Looking at the changing position of stations ranging from les Grandes Gares (e.g. Bern) to the 619 petites et très petites
- Rive du lac de Neuchâtel: une correction qui a bien remodelé le paysage de la region
 - The new line between Onnens and Gorgier–Saint–Aubin, opened in May 2001.
- La troisième voie Genève – Coppet
 - The works involved and the traffic implications of the third line installed between Genève and Coppet. The line now provides the facility to operate a half hourly service (hourly SSu) between Coppet and Lancy-Pont-Rouge serving the new station at Genève–Sècheron. The new line also permits additional services between Genève and Lausanne. Regional services between Coppet and Lausanne have also been completely recast.
- Collaborations entre acteurs des transports publics
 - Discussion around the collaboration between the various rail organisations and the various mergers since 1997.
- Et le trafic regional, dans tout cela
 - A brief review of how the Zürich RER is typical of how the regional traffic services are developing.
- Transfert de la route au rail: un laboratoire pour l'Europe!
 - A review of the Swiss encouragement for the transfer of freight from road to rail, the new freight timetables and photographs of classes 484 and 840.
- Les nouvelles liaisons ferroviaires alpines (NLFA)
 - Reviews of the new alpine railways: Saint-Gotthard, Lötschberg,
- Nouvelle ligne du St-Gotthard: Rail 2000 met cap au sud
 - An overview of the AlpTransit St-Gotthard tunnel project.

Overall an interesting brochure on the happenings around Rail 2000's introduction and worth reading or purchase by any enthusiast of Swiss Railways in 2005.

DM

CITIES AND DAYS OUT-SWISS RAILWAYS IN THE 50s & 60s-VOL.6

Produced by Alan Snowdon from his archive films.

Available exclusively from the Swiss Railways Society. £10.00 each inclusive of postage.

Running time 59 minutes. Commentary by Paul Russenberger.

The filming covers some 17 railway and tramlines in and around the areas of Zurich, Luzern, Appenzell and Basel. The hand held filming at the beginning of the video is a little shaky but this soon improves and should not put the viewer off. Some of the programme is shot in the late 1950s but mainly in the 1960s and as late as 1978 and 1981. Your reviewer is only familiar with some of the lines shown which included some of the more out-of-the-way railway companies but I was fascinated by what was shown. The filming not only shows the railways but also a good number of the tram services in the areas visited. The views from the trams open up the townscapes and for those members who have visited these regions over a number of years this video is a must. The video also will be of interest to all who love to see how the railways and tram services in Switzerland have changed over the years.

Amongst the railways included are the Sihltalbahnhof, Uetlibergbahn, Zürich Trams, Zürichersee Cableway, Forchbahn, Südostbahn, Trogenerbahn, St. Gallen-Gais -Appenzell, Zug Trams, Sürsee-Triengen, Stansstad-Engelbergbahn, Waldenburgerbahn, Basel Trams, Birseckbahn and Birsigtalbahnhof.

I can happily recommend this new addition to Alan's series of fascinating videos.

Gerlad

DAS ENDE DER DAMPFEPÖCHE IN DER SCHWEIZ / FIN DE L' ÉPOQUE VAPEUR EN SUISSE

Author: Hugo Hürlimann jun. and Sébastien Jacobi. **Photos by** Hugo Hürlimann sen.
Published by AS Verlag, Buhnrain 30, CH-8052 Zürich. **Languages:** German and French.
144 pages, 119 photos in two-tone b + w, 9x12 inches, hardback. ISBN 3-909111-04-1.
Price SFr 88 or €54,80

This is a book full of beautifully made and equally beautifully reproduced photographs of steam traction in Switzerland. It is only the occasional photographs with the newly installed catenary or the rare meetings with electric traction, which point to the era in the book's title: the end of steam. But otherwise the nostalgic atmosphere is full of steam, literally! I was fortunate to meet Mr. Hürlimann senior by chance in the late fifties. Steam traction was getting very rare at this time. It was a memorable occasion: although he was almost 30 years older, he was both more agile and knowledgeable on railways than me. He always regarded himself strictly as an amateur photographer, but he was certainly not a "snapper". Unlike myself with my new 35 mm camera (Voigtländer Vito B), he always took great care in thinking out his shot and meticulously set up the camera. This care certainly shows up in the pictures. They are all outstanding. They not only show the engines and rolling stock of the time, but they are also full of other interesting details on the line-side, like signals, level crossings, huts, stations and bridges, not forgetting the way people were dressed in those days. The printers and publisher are to be recommended for the quality of the two-tone black and white reproductions. Mr. Hürlimann started taking pictures as a boy in the early twenties. Most of the published photographs are from the thirties, forties and fifties. They were taken all over Switzerland: in the East, on the Gotthard, around his home in the Northeast, as well as in the West and in the Jura. The text in the book is mostly by my friend and railway journalist Sébastien Jacobi, a professional railwayman. His repertoire of anecdotes about the Swiss railway scene is legendary. This book though, proves his profound historical knowledge. The story of the decline of steam traction in Switzerland is contained in a separate section of the book. The texts accompanying the photographs therefore could be kept short and to the point. Date, location as well as the engines are identified without being overladen with technical details. Both the steam-buff, as well as the historically interested reader will enjoy this wonderful book.

GMH

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT! LOVE ON THE VERGE

Author: Paul Dasilva. **229 pages, 204mm x 127mm, paperback. Published by** Vista House.
ISBN 1-84199-083-3. Price £8.99 (listed on the Amazon.co.uk website – search for the title)

This book came to our notice following contact from our friends at Switzerland Tourism in London. It is the first of a trilogy by this author; the other two volumes have still to be published.

The novel is essentially a love story with a spy thriller sub-plot. The story starts at Victoria Station, London in the late 1960's when the main character Michael T Spellbound joins the boat train for Dover. He is an agent of the Home Office and is on his last mission, which will take him to Switzerland, travelling by way of Calais, Paris Nord, Paris Est and overnight to Basel. The final leg of his journey is to Lucerne where the story is centred and where the mission he has to accomplish really starts. Success will mean a comfortable retirement, but failure would bring disgrace or even prison. During the course of the journey to Switzerland the main characters of the story are introduced, including two ladies also travelling to Switzerland who will play a part in his life later in the plot. On arrival in Switzerland the object of the mission is revealed and there follows a series of adventures, encounters and twists in the story before the narrative is concluded.

One must disregard the few errors that will be apparent to Swiss railway buffs, but the author is consulting with Switzerland Tourism to ensure accuracy in the following two volumes. Many locations in and around Lucerne are visited and the presence of these certainly enhances the story for those who know the area. This book is an enjoyable read suitable for all, but does not quite match up to the claim on the cover that "it is an excellent tale in the manner of a Hitchcock movie". It is nevertheless recommended and your reviewer certainly looks forward to reading the continuation of the story.

Chernex