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FRIENDLINESS AT FRAUENFELD

Chairman Paul Russenberger recounts his annual visit to the SVEA AGM



The Chairman discusses the origins of Brown valve gear with Richard Blatter of the Schaffhausen club.

Photo: Alan Pike

Never having done the FW, it was too good an opportunity to miss and I enjoyed the half-hour or so journey – pity there was no time for some roadside photography.

The O-gauge club in Wil proved to be quite a long walk across the town, but it was well worth it. Models of all sorts of Swiss trains were running round a very large looped circuit

through generously sized scenery. The advantages of 1/42 scale were driven home by the real water in the river! I have to concede that one member's LMS tank engine was a little out of place, but never mind! Outside the building is a plinthed ex-Frauenfeld – Wil 0-6-0 tank, SLM 462 of 1887, equipped with Brown valve gear.

Back in Frauenfeld, it was down to business in the building that had once housed the

“Ah, Mr Russenberger, your friend is already upstairs, do come and have a coffee!” were the words which greeted me as I came out of the station at Frauenfeld one Saturday in late April. It really is getting rather unnerving being recognised before I have even left the station every time I go to represent the Society to the Schweizer Verband Eisenbahn Amateur! I was guided up to the model railway society's room where a coffee was on hand and so were several layouts. Undoubtedly the most interesting was a section of the erstwhile Mittel Thurgau Bahn in pre-electricity days.

While the Saturday morning was free, we were recommended to go across to Wil where a large O-gauge model club was having an open morning.

The Chairman at the stand with the “Continental Modeller.”

Photo: Alan Pike





cantonal parliament. After the usual greetings from the local Gemeinde, Herr Rüegger, the SVEA President, called the visitors to give their news. I really was not expecting to be called first, but I took the stand armed with a copy of "Continental Modeller" with Dave Howsam's "Perrapswil" on the cover. Having seen many excellent models illustrated in "Eisenbahn Amateur", it was gratifying to be able to show the Swiss that "we can do it too" and to explain that an SRS member had also won the annual competition for the best article in the magazine.

After the meeting, which went as all AGMs do, I was able to negotiate and get agreement for the use of the SVEA point indicator logo on the Society's EA letterhead. I also discussed the advertising of SRS Branch Meetings in *Eisenbahn Amateur*. This, too, is going ahead. While I doubt it will produce a massive influx of visitors from Switzerland, it does further strengthen the link between the Society and the SVEA.

There was time for a break before going out in the rain – Alan Pike was around – to the dinner in the local Roman Catholic church hall. On the way I passed a local bar advertising St George's Day – surely another Swiss example those of us who live east of the dyke and south of the border should be following! (After the reaction

to the Editor omitting the word “language” referring to the SRS in an earlier issue, I have to be very careful.)

On the Sunday we had what was very definitely a technical visit to the Stadler Works at Bussnang, near Weinfelden, to see the new units for the “Turbo” services under construction, having reached them in our own special unit from Frauenfeld. What undoubtedly impressed me was the utter tidiness of the workshops, such that I almost wondered if it were possible to carry on engineering work under such conditions! Our special unit then took us back to a Swiss lunch at Märstetten, one stop back on the line to Frauenfeld, before breaking up with much hand shaking, good wishes to and from all and the hope that we will meet again next year at Liestal.

Travel note: I used Eurostar and SNCF/SBB to reach Frauenfeld, leaving Waterloo in the late afternoon on the Friday, having a hot chocolate in Paris before the 7 minute walk between the Nord and Est stations. Arrival in Zürich was at about 06.20, by which time the station restaurants were doing a brisk trade. The return journey left Zürich at 23.00 with an arrival at Waterloo before ten.

FACING PAGE UPPER: Frauenfeld – Wil number 12 stands at Frauenfeld.

FACING PAGE CENTRE: A small section of the pre-electrification Mittel Thurgau Bahn at the Frauenfeld club’s room, showing the viaduct at Bussnang.

FACING PAGE LOWER: Frauenfeld – Wil trailer 114 is hauled through the street at Frauenfeld.

UPPER: Welcome to Frauenfeld!

CENTRE: Frauenfeld – Wil number 14 stands at Frauenfeld. Only one line is in use.

LOWER: 526 681 passes the SVEA special at Bussnang outside the Stadler works.

ALL PHOTOS:
PAUL RUSSENBERGER

