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[Christian Lüber]
Autor: [s.n.]

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Dampfbetrieb am Brünig und Brienzer Rothorn

Author: Christian Lüber. Published by AS Verlag A.G., Buhnrain 30, CH-8052 Zürich. Language: German. 160 pages, 146 photographs in b+w duotone print. Format: 9 x 11 inches, hardcover. ISBN 3-909111-29-7 Price in Switzerland: SFr. 88.- or 55.- Euro. Internet: www.as-verlag.ch

This is a historical book as far as the era of steam on the Brünig is concerned, which ended with the electrification in 1942. Yes in the middle of the Second World War: Switzerland has almost no coal deposits and Germany saw to it, as it did in the First World War, we did not get much either. The era of steam on the Brienzer Rothorn, however, continues until this day. In fact, all of the Rothorn steam engines are still in existence and are even occasionally still used. The pictures date mainly from the years between 1888 and 1942 and are, naturally, in b+w. In my time at Loki I have seen many prints from this time. A lot of them tended to be a bit dark, scratched and/or faded. This is no surprise, knowing the limitations of the photographic processes of those early years. All the photographs in this book, however, have been beautifully restored and reproduced. In this context, it is understandable that even the newer photos have been reproduced in the same duotone style. I for one, have always found it a bit distracting to find eight

pages of colour in a book which was otherwise fully in black and white. About one-third of the photographs have been taken by the author himself, who has worked on the Brienzer Rothorn Bahn and is well known even outside this very close-knit group. This explains the fact that he was able to supply another third of the pictures from his own considerable collection. It also means you do not just get pictures of the engines, but quite a few of what we tend to call "atmosphere": people, at what was for them very hard work, even though in the pictures, they all seem to enjoy posing for the photographer! Then there are also many pictures of the buildings, structures, station layouts, rock-cuts and tunnels on the lines. As a chartered civil engineer, it is no secret that I am very partial to those views. They also provide lots of very valuable information for the historical modeller – and I know there are quite a few amongst our members. I realise, I have only spoken of the pictures so far, although about half of the book consists of text. But I know that most of our members have troubles with the German language. This is a pity, especially in this case, as there is always so much to enjoy from the writings of someone who has actually done the job himself! I know I have said it many times before, but it is true: make an effort to learn at least the basics of German. Then you can already enjoy a lot with the help of a simple dictionary. But even if you do not understand the language, the pictures alone make this book a very worthwhile purchase. GMH

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