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AND FINALLY . . .

or the “Prototype for Everything Department”
from Michael Farr

So, you’ve recently received your two new Bemo MOB ballast wagons from your favourite dealer but you’d like to run a long train of them.

Worry not, for Fred Friedli of Friho of Lenk has promised to produce MOB wagons with the two other numbers (303 and 304). And if you want to run six wagons you can follow the prototype practice I saw at Montbovon and Bulle and run the two tpf/GFM (Transports Public Fribourgeois) vehicles - which Fred also lists - and MOB wagons in the same train. Our Swiss friends avoid too many demarcations and this pooling is apparently standard practice!

I discovered this at Montbovon as our MOB *Train du Chocolat* was reversing, ready to run along the main street on its way to the first stop at Gruyères. The driver of tpf BDe4/4 automotrice No 142 Semsales towing six ballast wagons, four of them empty, had shunted his train into a siding to wait for a path after we and the regular tpf service had departed.

While most of the passengers from the

Chocolate Train explored the beauties of Gruyères I caught the regular service to Bulle to try to find the model shop there. As I was about to walk over a level crossing the barriers descended and the ballast train speeded past me. I noticed that by now all the wagons were full, so the driver must have stopped en route at Grandvillard quarry to fill the empty wagons from the hopper there – and all apparently single-handed!

It was now about midday and as I returned to Bulle station the driver locked the cab door before walking across the tracks to the offices. I suppose his day’s work was over, for the train was still in the same place when we returned from the chocolate factory at Broc four hours later.

Bearing in mind the controversy when my former employers, South West Trains, had the temerity to suggest running passenger trains without guards, I cannot believe that in Britain we shall ever see one man driving, shunting and loading wagons.

Only in Switzerland!