

DVD and book reviews

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DVD Review



Schweizer Standseilbahnen No.2

Produced by Ernst B. Leutwiler, Olberg 5, CH-8755, Ennenda, Schweiz.
 eisenbahnverlag@bluewin.ch DVD Ref. No. 999. Running time 69 minutes. Available in the UK & Europe for £24.95 (including postage and packing) by sending a sterling cheque, payable on a UK bank, made out to Ron Smith at "Rhus", Banff Road, Keith, Banffshire, AB55 5ET.

This DVD from Ernst Leutwiler provides another insight into the amazing variety of transport in Switzerland. Despite having visited there for many years, I did not know of some of these funiculars! The first sequence is of the Drahtseilbahn Marzill Bern (the second shortest in Switzerland at just 105m) which passes in front of the Parliament Building. The second sequence is of a vertical tram! The Matte Lift AG is the Senkeltram, also in Bern, and is actually an outside lift. The next line is the Ecluse Plan in Neuchâtel which is another city funicular, busy with residents in this hilly city. Then the DVD breaks-out into the high mountains with the Corviglia Bahn above St Moritz. This is the longest sequence and shows the spectacular views down onto the town and the lake. The funicular is long, with two-car coaches on a modern concrete raised track, to keep it clear of the snow, and a tunnel. Waiting patiently for the train can have its benefits, and this is shown when a marmot is caught on film surveying the terrain. Moving north it shows the Vinifuni Ligerz on the edge of the lake of Biel / Bienne. The name "Vinifuni" gives the clue to the hillside here, which is covered in terraces of vines, golden in the autumn sunshine. This line is now incorporated into the Aare Seeland Mobil



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Owned by an SRS member, 8 members have now stayed at the chalet, 2 have booked to come back a second time!

network. Moving on to Central Switzerland the Treib Seelisburg Bahn is then featured. Lakeside Treib is where the four founding fathers of the Swiss Confederation met and started the country. The views over the Vierwaldstättersee to Brunnen along with the starting point of the "Swiss Walk" make this a popular funicular. Staying in the area the next sequence features the summer-only Sonnenbergbahn that takes people up from Kriens, near Luzern to a lovely area where there are popular walks. It is not on the usual tourist routes, but worth a small detour to ride on it. Finally, we go to the St. Luc – Tignusa funicular, south of Sierre in the Valais. The sequence shows it climbing up through spectacular autumn colours, with great views over mountains making you want to be there.

The separation between the operations is by a shot of a spinning cable wheel, whilst the whole commentary is in German, but clearly and slowly spoken. There is no music, only natural background noise, including that from the passengers, creaking pulley wheels, and wind on the higher sections of some of the lines visited. This DVD is a must for funicular fans. **KS**

Book Review



Le

grand livre du/Das grosse Buch der MOB

Patrick Belloncle, Jürg Ehrbar and Tibert Keller. ISBN 3-9522494-2-4. Published by Editions Viafer, Postfach 74, CH-3210 Kerzers, Switzerland. Email: viafer@cabri.ch Format 23.5 x 31.5 cm. 420 pages with black and white or colour photos on almost every spread. Price CHF 98.00 or €59

Considering the MOB's lack of popularity compared with the RhB, it has been the subject of a surprisingly large number of books. Top of the pile until now has been the series covering all the "little lines" in the Léman and Gruyères regions, issued by BVA of Lausanne under Jean-Louis Rochaix. Now we have this new title, which lives up to its name – The Big Book of the MOB – with 420 pages, with French text on the left and German on the right hand of each spread. The team of authors is led by Patrick Belloncle, well known for many excellent books about Swiss railways.

Almost every page has at least one photograph and some as many as five – most of which are new to me. A large proportion of the modern shots are in colour and all captions are bi-lingual. As the MOB extended from Montreux to Zweisimmen, and on to Lenk, most stations were built to a standard basic design. There are drawings for each of the different-sized buildings, used according to the status of the station. Unusually for a Swiss book there are no scale drawings of rolling stock but we do have a most comprehensive listing of each of the many different vehicle types. These are grouped together in the construction eras which I found a little confusing; I'd have preferred a list in numerical order.

That said, this is an excellent book, thoroughly to be recommended. If you buy a copy while in Switzerland, just remember how heavy the book is; my bag tipped the scales at the easyJet desk at 19.9kg. (Permitted maximum 20kg – phew!). **MF**