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SWISS CLASSIC TRAIN

Roger Ellis



Readers of the December edition of Continental Modeller will have seen the article on the "Brig" HO gauge layout of Andrew Cook, but may not be aware that he is also the owner of the steam locomotive and coaches that form the Swiss Classic Train. The builder of "Brig" and fellow SRS member Chris Martin and myself were lucky enough to be invited by Andrew to take part in the inaugural run of this train from Zürich to Brig and return on the weekend of 12th/13th December last year.

The steam locomotive is a 141R built by Baldwin in the USA and part of the

many engines shipped to France after World War II to replace those that had been destroyed. Andrew persuaded the French owner of this locomotive that he really wanted to sell it and operating together with eleven coaches that have been lovingly restored, refurbished and painted in the classic BLS green livery it forms the Swiss Classic Train. A clerestory roofed French Poste car has been magnificently appointed as a support coach for the 141R, an engine that I consider to be one of the finest steam locomotives ever built.

Following our start from Zürich HBF, with the 141R hauling us to Bern, Chris and I made our way to the Bar Car, not I hasten to add for a drink, but to admire the work that had been undertaken on the coaches and also to see and hear the pianist who gave a wonderful show for fellow passengers. To be on a steam train through Switzerland and listening to a Chuck Berry song is something to remember! A locomotive change at Bern and our train was taken to Brig by the historic BLS Ae 6/8 No.205



which like the 141R has been wonderfully restored to its former glory.

The train stayed in Brig overnight, and Andrew's guests were treated to an excellent meal at one of the town's hotels. Prior to the meal he gave everybody a short talk on the *Swiss Classic Train* project and the Lötschberg line. At the end of the evening he was presented with a china "railway station" teapot by one of his friends on the basis that he owns a train and coaches so this last item would complete the set! The Ae 6/8 hauled us back over the Lötschberg next morning, the 141R taking over again for the final run into Zürich. For Chris and me it was a memorable trip. We were looked after very well by all the staff on board the



train and our thanks go to them and to Andrew Cook who made it all possible.

The Swiss Classic Train is, however, a business as well as a passion. Andrew hopes that many people will want to experience being steam-hauled through wonderful Swiss scenery by his locomotive and sitting in the delightful BLS coaches. Members can look for details on the appropriate website:

www.swissclassictrain.ch.

LEFT HAND PAGE TOP: NMS141R hauls its train through the winter gloom near Mattstetten.
LEFT HAND PAGE BOTTOM: 141R awaits departure from Zurich.

TOP: Andrew stands proudly on the front of No 205.

MIDDLE RIGHT: The pianist livens up the atmosphere in the Bar Car.

MIDDLE LEFT: No 205 en-route to Brig.

BOTTOM: No 205 awaits its return from Brig.

