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DVD Review

Swiss Railways Freight and Passenger Trains Volume 2

One of a series of Swiss Railway DVDs produced by Dave's Railway Films. Available from Society Sales at £10.00 including postage, or £9.00 from our stand at exhibitions, etc.

This DVD was filmed in February 2008 at various locations in Switzerland including Interlaken, Thun, Brig, Montreux and Flüelen. The camera view is generally from the station platform and is hand-held with an informative location commentary from Dave himself. The camera viewpoints are well chosen and the image is sharp. We see the ICE and Cisalpino passenger trains, together with freight from Italy, Germany and France as well as Switzerland. The DVD runs for approximately 60 minutes. This is one of a growing series of DVDs of Swiss subjects made by Dave that includes: Alpine Railways Volumes 1 to 4; Freight and Passenger Trains Volumes 1 to 3; Brunig Line 2009; and Brienz Rothorn Bahn, all of which are available from Society Sales as detailed above.

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Book Reviews

Railway Modelling FAQs

Ian Futers, Peter Marriott, Chris Nevard & Pelle Søeborg. ISBN 978-0-9559626-5-3. Published by British Railway Modelling, Warner Group Publications PLC, The Maltings, West Street, Bourne, Lincs, PE10 9PH. Format 245mm x 188mm. 120 pages. Softback. In full colour. Price £14.99.

This is book No 6 in BRM's series of modelling guides, this one dealing with, as it says, "More than 75 regularly asked questions with answers from experts". It is definitely a beginner's book, though having said that, I did pick up one or two new ideas. As with other books in this series, the layout and presentation are superb, making one want to delve into its pages. Some of the questions it covers are fairly basic – "What is the best scale for those new to the hobby?", "What's the best material for building baseboards?", "Where can I look for further advice?" etc, whilst others are more advanced, such as "What are the different ways to ballast track?" and "Can I operate DC locomotives and a DCC system?". Within the space available the answers are fairly straight forward but many are combined with a selection of Internet addresses where further information can be gained. For some reason, yet again information on electrical connection of a layout seems to be missing. The quality of the illustrations is excellent and they certainly give the reader inspiration to "have a go".

Whilst mainly geared to British prototype practice, some foreign railways are included and the techniques covered apply to all model railways, including Swiss. TB

Industrial Railways and Locomotives of Switzerland

Richard A. Bowen. ISBN 978-1-901556-59-9. Published by The Industrial Railway Society, 24 Dulverton Road, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, LE13 0SF. Hardback 8½" x 6¼". 512 pages, 16 in full colour. Price £34 including P & P from SRS sales or £29 from our stand at exhibitions, etc.

This volume must be the ultimate reference book for anyone who has an interest in the history, operations and equipment of the multitude of industrial railways that exist (or have existed) in Switzerland. The book was compiled from a wide spectrum of sources by Richard Bowen who sadly died shortly after it was completed. Even for someone who thinks that they know Switzerland's transport system this book is a revelation as it gives details of many hundreds of operations ranging from single sidings to complex operations. It also lists the large number of systems both large and small that once operated but no longer exist and, where possible, lists the stock that operated on them. The entries are clearly arranged by Canton and although inevitably former operations outnumber current ones those that are still working and use their own industrial locomotives are clearly referenced in bold type. The body of the book is well illustrated with numerous good quality black & white photographs and there is a selection of excellent colour images in a 16-page section at the back of the book. The contents of this volume represent the opposite end of the railway spectrum to the glossy image of main line operations and tourist trains normally associated with Switzerland but detail the sort of line and loco that help keep, or kept, the nation's industrial economy on the move. JJ

Bernina Express - The official book for the 100 years, celebration of the Bernina Railway and the UNESCO World Heritage "The Rhaetian Railway in the Albula/Bernina Landscape".

Authors: Robert Bösch, Iso Camartin and Gion Caprez. Published by AS Verlag A.G., Buhnrain 30, CH-8052 Zürich. Languages: German and Italian. 224 pages, 191 photographs in colour and b+w. Format: Hardback 9½" x 11½". ISBN 978-3-909111-69-6 Price in Switzerland: CHF 88 or €55: www.as-verlag.ch

In spite of its main title, this book about the Rhätian Railway actually contains two books in

one cover: one about the Albula Bahn and the other about the Bernina Bahn. The fact that you have to travel over the first railway to reach the second one already has prompted the UNESCO Committee to include both together in the World Heritage site. As you might remember, a few years ago this publisher brought out two separate books on both of these Railways in their "Bahnromantik" series. So why this one now? Well, the focus of the "Bahnromantik" series was essentially historical, with photographs in black and white. This volume, brought out for the dual occasions of the centenary of the Bernina Railway and the awarding of World Heritage status, is in glorious colour and mostly about the railways as they are running today.

Most of this big book consists of large photographs. As can be expected from this publisher, they are superbly printed, many over two pages. Normally, I am not a great advocate of the double page print, as the gaps in the fold are usually noticeable. In this book however, the matching on the fold is done so flawlessly that I am impressed. Some of the beautiful nature pictures (taken in all seasons) could be scanned and after scaling up to size, used as backgrounds. If you bought the book, this is legal for private use only. The photographer, Robert Bösch, is a professional mountain guide as well and it shows in a lot of his work. Some of his shots look aerial, but I know from the location they could not have been: too close to the mountain, so he must have climbed up there! As always, photos like these are a great help to layout design. But not only the aerial ones, have a look at the sleepers of the track on the very sharp curve of the famous Brusio viaduct on pages 210/211. Even I had not realised they were laid like that - and I have had a few cab rides over it... I probably was talking too much!

The history is not quite forgotten, as there are also quite a few wonderful photographs of the construction of these lines. As all this took place a century ago and quite a lot of it had to be done in very hostile environments, they are spectacular documents of the determination and resourcefulness of the builders. I am an experienced civil engineer myself, but with all the modern resources, methods and machines I would have at my disposal nowadays, I would still be daunted at such a task.

Even though the book is written in German and Italian, I am sure most of our members will be able to decipher the essence of the photo captions. Some of them were written by Gion Caprez, who is a driver on the RhB. Non German speakers, however, will miss out on Ivo Camertini's

travelogue of the trip to Tirano, which is full of quotations of his fellow travellers. You probably think I enjoyed this book. You are right! GMH

Peter's Railway and the Forgotten Engine

Author: Christopher Vine.

ISBN 978-0-9553359-3-8

Published by: Chris Vine, PO Box 9246, Bridge of Weir, PA11 3WD. English. 96 pages, 44 in full colour. Format 9.5" x 7" hardback. . Price £11.99 each plus £1.50 p&p from the above address. Also available at many preserved railway's book/gift shops or via www.petersrailway.com.

As I noted in Swiss Express 98 it is not normally our practice to review works of fiction but again I have decided that an exception is required. This is the third book in the Peter's Railway series, which has already sold over 8,000 copies, which is aimed at children aged between 6 and 12. Like its two predecessors it is also not totally a work of fiction. Although the narrative revolves around Peter and his Grandpa extending the railway they built across a farm to the nearby village, the text is punctuated with simple to understand explanations of factual information about how railways work.

Again I asked Elizabeth, a retired primary school teacher, to read the review copy. As before she considered that it was both well written and would reach and hold its target audience with ease. However, as the daughter of a mechanical engineer she was a little concerned that the narrative is very male orientated and considered that perhaps Peter's female sibling could begin to take a more active interest in the project. It is also a good read for interested adults. Buy it, read it and pass it on to your children, grandchildren, etc as a birthday, or perhaps Easter, present. Editor

