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Peter Marriott looks at a splendid Rivarossi model based on one of the world's best trains


PHOTOS: Peter Marriott

In October 1883 the first original Orient Express ran from Paris through the Alps, Budapest and Bucharest to Constantinople. This legendary train continued to carry royalty and celebrities between European cities up until its 1920s heyday. After World War II other forms of transport led to the last service of the Orient Express as a regular passenger train in May 1977.

The legendary luxury train was saved by entrepreneur and rail enthusiast, James B. Sherwood. In 1977 he bought two of the train's carriages at a Sotheby's auction in Monte Carlo. Over the next few years \$16 million was spent locating, purchasing and restoring some 35 vintage carriages. Many of the current day Venice Simplon-Orient-Express carriages date from the 1920s. In May 1982 the famous train was reborn when the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express made its maiden run from London to Venice. Today the train continues to run as one of the world's most exclusive trains.

The model

Rivarossi, part of the Lima Group, began manufacturing model railways in Italy in the 1940s and they are now owned by Hornby International www.hornbyinternational.co.uk. One of their latest HO-scale carriages is a CIWL Cruising Service Car for use on the Orient Express luxury train. The buffers are sprung and there are a lot of already applied parts such as pipes and handrails. The carriage runs well on its metal wheels. The model comes with several add-on details including piping for the brakes though these parts can only really be fitted if the model is to be static because they would be fouled by the coupling if the model was running. There are a lot of nicely applied decals and raised details on the model although they need a magnifying glass to get the most

from them. The carriage is numbered 4013 and is the one that David Suchet posed next to whilst making the ITV programme "David Suchet on the Orient Express" shown over Christmas 2010. This is one of a set of carriages that form part of the Rivarossi Orient Express Collection. This model is Rivarossi HR 4137. It costs £61.50 and is available in the UK from On-Tracks www.ontracks.com and other retailers. For more information about the actual carriage go to www.irps-wl.org.uk/4013.shtml 



THE KERSTELNBACH BRIDGE IN HO – Part 1

From Perth, Australia, Martin Engel sets out his bridge building saga

My interest in Swiss Railways is focused on the Gotthard rolling stock from about the 1920's to the era of the Re 6/6 - a time when Swiss locomotives were green and had round headlights. Unfortunately I have no model railway to run these trains, mainly due to suffering from 'imagination construction' (it is at least easy to make changes) and my own expectation of the end result. The grand plan has always included a bridge as the focal point, which the Gotthard has in abundance, and I chose the Kerstelenbach Bridge on the north ramp at Amsteg. Completed by the Gotthard Railway in 1881 its final form, prior to being replaced in 1969, captured my imagination - the character of old world iron lattice construction has an individuality that some single span stone arches and welded steel beams lack.




The Kerstelenbach Bridge after electrification.

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The spans underwent several upgrades over their eighty odd years of service due to increases in traffic and train weights. In 1903 the Directorate General of the SBB decided that the load bearing calculation had to be improved, and existing bridges strengthened to 20.6 tonnes load above that of the existing bridge regulation. The original single track spans of 1881 were strengthened with negative reinforced straps (fish belly), the newer spans carrying the second track were designed to the 1892 first Federal Bridge Regulations and only required the strengthening of the bottom chord.

Collecting and finding information on the bridge, construction methods used and the local area geography in Amsteg has been a prolonged process. My book collection has certainly grown over those years! I owe thanks to Brian Hemming, Malcolm Hardy-Randall and the Archiv fur Denkmalpflege (Archive for Monument Care) in Bern who helped a great deal when starting this process more than ten years ago. Along the way I did waste time on 'imagination construction' by considering modelling the spirals at Biaschina, but realised eventually that the space required for a 1:87 scale layout was going to be an issue in our home. Any home! The Pianotondo viaduct would have looked magnificent, but taken the space of a family car on its own. In saying that Kerstelenbach in 1:87 scale is, well, big. It stands 565mm high from the lowest point and is 1670mm long from the ends of the stone arch approaches. Its impact will certainly achieve what I want. In the end the bridge could suit as a diorama for pictures, if not part of a layout.

The bridge construction phase of this project has been on and off for just over two years to date, and is approaching the stage where I am thinking about the base board design. At 8m long the scale length will be maintained from the Windgällen tunnel to the Bristen tunnel, the scene will be in perspective and hopefully an outstanding model railway one day.

In autumn 2010 my wife and I visited Switzerland and the rustic colours from the train window looked like a large patchwork quilt on the mountains we passed. This would certainly add to the interest on the layout, something a little different from green pine trees and grassed meadows that most people would expect. An afternoon visit to Amsteg resulted in my literally taking pictures of everything, from the interesting little railwaymen's huts on the line to the sign on the main pillar next to the road, which in true Swiss fashion gave the potential offending person no reason to misunderstand the regulation. To get to some vantage points it was damn steep and I found out how unfit I was that day, but I did remember to collect the obligatory souvenir piece of ballast - *only one!* 

The 1:87 scale model of the Kerstelenbach Bridge in front of my single car garage door, waiting for two more spans and additional detail.

PHOTO: Martin Engel

