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BOOK REVIEWS

chase it from the small magazine stand almost opposite the station. That's where I got my copy from and it's available in several languages, including excellent English. It is split into several chapters including; the basic history of the RhB; the history of the Bernina line; the rolling stock, and the journey along the line. It also has a piece about the Romansch language and a reprint of a lady's description of the line in 1913. There are maps of the line, and the major towns and villages it serves, whilst the photographic quality is superb. It is ideal for those of us who like to break our journeys at the intermediate stations, as the places of interest are described in a very inviting way. I thought I knew a fair amount about the Bernina line but after reading this I can't wait to go back and explore some more. And at €10 (about £7) it's an absolute bargain. Don't leave Tirano without a copy! **Tony Bagwell** 🇨🇭



And finally...

Bryan Stone introduces SBB's new self-propelled maintenance equipment.

SBB has some 2,700ha of embankments and cuttings, an area equal to 3,800 football pitches. Keeping these trimmed and stable is a big and costly task. In the interest of sustainable resource use, and efficient operations, SBB have arranged with Pro Specie Rara, an association which helps preserve rare, historic and threatened species, that flocks of sheep will in future be used, under expert supervision, at various locations. The breed of sheep to be used is unusual. They are 'Skuddn' sheep, originally from Estonia, Lithuania and the former German East Prussia, and are believed to be an early Celtic breed, and accustomed to hard conditions, but by 1970 they had almost died out. Subsequently they have been bred in Germany and Switzerland and are now well established again. SBB expects that a single small flock can clear 1000 m² (1ha) in a 22-hour working day – apparently the sheep only sleep for 2 hours a day! Additional advantages are that by being selective feeders



"We are the sheep!"

Photo: courtesy of SBB

they help the plant bio-diversity to flourish, are docile, stable and loyal, and are happy on steep slopes. Their fleeces also produce excellent wool. The flocks will be moved about as needed, always working within an electric safety fence. Your correspondent wonders if they will require a UIC ten-figure number, so as to be registered as railway equipment, and if numbers and locations will be published periodically to help sheep-spotters. Working hours and conditions will no doubt demand careful supervision. (www.sbb.ch/schafe) 🇨🇭