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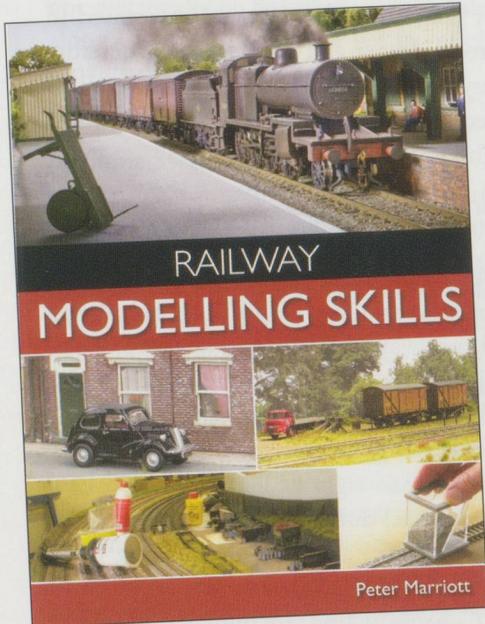
BOOK REVIEWS

"Railway Modelling Skills"

Author: Peter Marriott.

Published by: The Crowood Press, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 2HR. Tel. 01672 520320.

Softback: 224 pages 24.5cm x 19 cm. Full Colour: £22. ISBN: 978 1 84797 955 1



full of useful advice and ideas and the multitude of colour photos are instructional and inspirational. Whether you're new to the hobby or a seasoned expert, you're sure to find something of interest. The chapters lead you through the processes from designing a new layout, choosing the right scale, baseboards, track, and landscape scenery. Do you need DCC or will conventional electrics do; how to improve and weather your rolling stock; the latest scenic products and techniques and even how to photograph your end results. Obviously for such a large topic, only the basic ideas and information is presented, but there are pointers to obtaining more information and a useful appendix of material suppliers. Peppered through the book are light blue text boxes of tips relevant to the main text and there are full colour photos on virtually every page. Whilst the book is heavily geared towards British railways (he has managed to slip in a couple of Swiss layout photos), the information within is equally applicable to foreign based layouts although there's no mention of how to install overhead catenary which would warrant another book all on its own. Anyone reading this book is sure to pick up something new and it may even get some away from their computers and start building something very worthwhile. Recommended.

TB

"Peter's Railway - The Great Train Robbery"

Author & Publisher: Christopher Vine, PO Box 9246, Bridge of Wier, PA11 3WD.

Paperback: 48-pages, 15cm X 14cm.

Well illustrated. £4.99.

ISBN 978-1-9088970-53. Available in good book shops, at many heritage railways, or direct from www.petersrailway.com.

This is the latest paperback in the Peter's Railway series that has now sold well over 100,000 copies. The books are aimed at 6 to 12 year olds, but it appears that quite a few adults seem to like them too! As with all of Chris Vine's books it is a good way to get children interested in how railways work and how they operate. Apart from being bought as sensible 'treats' when taking children to visit your local heritage or speciality railway, any of the 16 books in the range would make excellent presents from parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts, family friends, etc. especially for hard-to-please children. A search of the website above will reveal the complete range of these great publications. At just £4.99 the paperback volumes in the series are at pocket money price, whilst the five £11.99 hardbacks that contain more technical information in their 96 pages are still very competitively priced and good value for money. MB

"My path to building a Swiss model train layout"

Author & Publisher: David Bisno, M.D., Hanover, New Hampshire, USA.

Hardback; 44-pages, 25cm X 25cm.

Lavishly illustrated.

Details of availability from davidbisno@gmail.com

This is an unusual book. Self published by David Bisno this is not just the story of how he spent 50 years, during which he planned a layout, collected locomotives, rolling stock, etc., and the two concentrated years he spent building it (with hours and hours of electrical wiring!), but it is also an abbreviated version of David's journey through life, all the time inspired by Swiss trains. After a successful career as an ophthalmologist, David returned to Harvard University in 1992 where he earned an MA in the history of science. Since then he has presented courses for retirees within institutes for lifelong learning on a myriad of subjects throughout the English-speaking world. Finally in 2011 he put other interests aside to build his long-dreamed-of Swiss model railway in the basement of his home in Hanover, NH, the location of the renowned Dartmouth College. The book is a photo essay, with extended captions, of his life, and how he realised his ambition of building the layout about which most of us can only dream. This is not a volume of detailed plans and the minutiae of scenic design or train operations, but it is a creative and imaginative celebration of how a man brought a dream to fruition. It is unashamedly a coffee-table book to browse and enjoy. MB

"Bernina Railway Line"

Publisher: Nous srl, 1-24040 Stezzano (BG), Italy, www.nous-srl.it

Paperback 21cm x 15 cm,

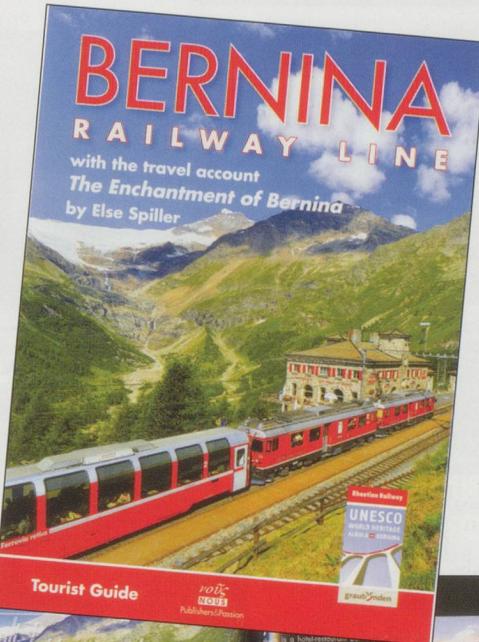
144 full colour, glossy pages: €10 – in Italy:

ISBN 978-88-95781-26-6

Whilst this book may not be easily obtainable from the UK, visitors to Tirano on the RhB should be able to pur-

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) 