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REVIEWS

ZERMATT: A guide to Zermatt and its culture.

A5, 206pp, perfect bound in card covers.

NEUCHÂTEL: A Portrait of a Canton.

A5, 606pp, perfect bound in card covers.

Author: Elisabeth Upton-Eichenberger. Published by the author. They are available from SRS Sales at a cost of £3.00 per book (including postage).

Both these books give the visitor to Zermatt or the Canton of Neuchâtel an easily readable guide to the attractions of the respective areas. The former goes into much detail and includes chapters ranging from a description of the churches in the village, through to the geology of Zermatt and ends with a number of local recipes.

The book on Neuchâtel concentrates on describing major towns and villages in the Canton as well as on Neuchâtel itself, outlining the attractions for the visitor in those locations. As with the book on Zermatt there is also a chapter on excursions around Neuchâtel and it again concludes with a small number of local recipes!

The pictures in the Zermatt book are all black and white, whereas many in the Neuchâtel book are colour. Both publications have the addition of pen and ink drawings and hand-drawn maps to assist the reader with the walks.

The books represent excellent value for money, even if you are not intending to go to either location in the near future, but think that someday you may. Recommended.

FGW

RIGIBAHNEN

Authors: Ron Smith and Ernst B. Leutwiler

44 pages, 210mm x 148mm. Price £6.95 plus postage. Published by Ron Smith and available from him at "Rhus", Banff Road, Turiff, Scotland AB53 4DT. See p54 for SRS special offer.

This is an attractive little book containing just over 40 full colour pictures all devoted to the railways of the Rigi. The introduction and captions are in both English and German. The colourful photographs (one per page) are mostly clear and taken in both summer and winter weather with the majority of them being taken within the last few years. They cover a wide selection of motive power, including steam, as well as some of the work's rolling stock at various places on the mountain system. If mountain railways appeal to you then this book is a must for your bookshelf

60155

THE AROSA EXPRESS

VHS/PAL. Produced by J S Video, Rutlistrasse 80, CH-8308 Illnau, Switzerland.

email: <jsvideo@swissonline.ch>

I have not seen any previous video of this line and therefore was able to watch the film from a neutral standpoint. We start the journey in Chur with a look at the coaches both externally and internally before commencing the run to Arosa. The film was made in excellent weather with shots from the cab, rear coach and line side. There are views of normal service trains as well as the Arosa Express. The commentary, by the filmmaker James Stapler, is occasional and while he is not commenting the film is accompanied by electronic music to Langwies and typical Swiss music thereafter. The same for the return journey!

The only omission is that the commentary does not tell you enough about the area. When the train reaches Arosa nothing is said about the village or its attractions of which, I assume, there are many. However if you want a video of the Arosa Express going through beautiful scenery on a lovely day, then it is excellent.

FGW

BACK VOLUMES OF SWISS EXPRESS ON CD ROM.

Produced by the Society Archivist (David Baker) and available from SRS Sales at £10 per volume including postage.

David has produced the back volumes of Swiss Express in CD ROM form to enable members to own the back copies – many of which are now out of print. Each volume is on a separate CD with a smart photo on the CD face. Upon exploring the CD, each issue is in a separate folder, which contains the scanned pages in JPEG format.

These can be viewed directly on the PC Monitor or printed off to study at your leisure. As the scans have been taken from un-stapled copies of Swiss Express it means that the pages do not follow on and different files must be loaded to read a multi-page article, this is self evident from the file names and makes it easier for printing the entire issue. This is a convenient and cost effective way for newer members to obtain back-issues up to Volume 6. John Jesson's articles on Swiss Signalling are in Volumes 2 & 3 and this is the way to obtain these long out of print editions. There is also an additional CD covering Swiss Express's forerunner "Swiss Railway News".

Brienzersee

RHAETIAN ELECTROVETERANS

VHS/PAL. Produced by J S Video, Rutlistrasse 80, CH-8308 Illnau, Switzerland.

email: <jsvideo@swissonline.ch>

If, like your reviewer, you always seem to get to Switzerland at the wrong time to see all the special runs by the historic RhB locomotives, then this video will go a long way to filling the gap. The format concentrates on a particular class of surviving electric locomotive and combines old still photographs with recent footage of the locomotives at work. Each class in turn is provided with an interesting and informative potted history with all the key facts and figures and close-ups of surviving locomotives. Crocodiles feature strongly and there is footage of the return of the Bernina crocodile from the La Mure railway.

It is very well thought out and presented and the footage is generally of excellent quality, although some parts are not quite up to the standard of the rest. Weather was mostly good during filming except where a particular run may have been made on an overcast day.

There are quite a few sections where locomotives have been followed by a video camera in a car on a parallel roadway, all well done, but once they do not remember to put the car aerial down.

The commentary is in English with a strong Swiss accent, which is sublime. The music at the start and end of the video is very lively but during the main programme is fairly typical.

The thing that I really missed is that there are no historic moving pictures at all. All the video has been taken in the last few years (and is therefore up-to-date) but all the historic pictures are stills. There is no steam on this video, it is all-electric, but if you are an enthusiast of RhB history and historic locomotives, this is definitely for you. If you like your RhB videos a bit different from the usual 'red trains in the mountains' this is also for you. If there is a gap in your RhB video collection as far as historic trains are concerned you do no better than to add this to your collection.

It is not known whether it is available on DVD. Also, the price is not known to the reviewer, but at one hour and forty-five minutes long there is a lot of video for your money.

Hafenmund

SRS Sales will shortly be adding JS Videos to the sales list.

Watch the website for details or see the advert in the next Swiss Express

REVIEWS

THE MONT CENIS FELL RAILWAY

P.J.G. Ransom, published by Twelveheads Press, PO Box 59, Chacewater, Truro, RT4 8ZJ.

ISBN 0-906294-41. Hard back, casebound. A4 size, 92 pages.

See below for the SRS special offer.

As the second paragraph of this book reminds the reader, the Mont Cenis massif is not in Switzerland, but lies on the French-Italian border north west of Turin. This book describes the British conception, construction, operation and ultimate intentional demise of a railway built across the pass to provide a rail connection before the completion of the Mont Cenis Tunnel. More space than usual is devoted to the background need for such a railway, though in the reviewer's opinion this enhances the work, as it is clearly a fascinating, and by today's standards politically incorrect, case of Victorian Britain ensuring that the needs of the Empire were met!

The Swiss purist will find items of interest. Mention is made of Niklaus Riggenbach and a description of travel over the pass is quoted from Edward Whymper of Matterhorn fame. More importantly, on closure much of the rolling stock passed to the Lausanne-Echallens-Bercher railway (at least one coach still exists for special use) and a picture of Lausanne-Chauderon station in the 1880s graces a half page and proves that it changed but little during its life!

An informative technical description and history of the Fell System and its associated Mont Cenis locomotives is given, together with plan and elevation sectional drawings. However, the dimensional data has to be drawn out of the description and tabulation might have made rapid reference easier. That said, the style of writing makes for very easy reading and there are enough illustrations for what is essentially a descriptive work rather than a technical treatise.

Schleitheim

The normal price of this book is £16.00. Twelveheads have a special offer available for SRS Members. £9.50 including postage. A real bargain.

Send a cheque to Twelveheads, at the address above, mentioning the Swiss Railways Society and the book will be on its way in a trice.

• • • • • : **SWISS RAILWAYS SOCIETY - AUTUMN EVENT** : • **FRIDAY/SATURDAY 15/16TH OCTOBER 2004** •

• *At the last two AGM's members have suggested that there should be more opportunities to meet one another, but up until now nobody has offered to organise anything. They have now!*

• *Bristol & Bath Branch, on behalf of the Society, is hosting an event in the Function Room of the Wyndham Arms, Kingsbury dates. On the Friday evening at 20.00*

• *Bagley on Switzerland, and on Saturday visitors will be able to see two layouts*

• *Switzerland' (HOM), and trade stands*

• *SRS Sales Stand.*



Episcopi, Somerset on the above there will be an illustrated talk by Tony from 11.30 onwards members and namely 'Lilikon' (HO) and 'A Taste of from WINCO and MITV as well as the

• *If there is enough interest we may be able to organise a hot meal on the Saturday evening, 'Rosti' has been requested, and some form of entertainment. The object of the weekend is for members to meet one another, and although the location is not ideal, if it is successful then another Branch or member may be prepared to organise a similar event in future years. Full details of the event will be published in the September 'Swiss Express' and I hope that this information will be on the SRS web site by the end of June. I have prepared a newsletter which includes details of accommodation etc, and I would be happy to let members have a copy on receipt of an S.A.E.*

• *Please support this event if you can. Somerset and my village are lovely!*

Roger (Ellis)