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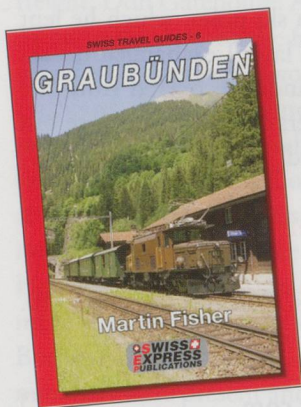
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drifting through rural vistas, along coastlines and across stunning spindly steel bridges. The period covers the end of the “old” company with locomotives in Indian red and through the “Ailsa Era” when his Lordship decreed that green was the right shade for locos. However, the coaches are in the familiar and attractive red and cream. Both these books will enable everyone who was fortunate to visit the Isle of Man during the railways’ heyday to revel in nostalgia for the golden age of the narrow gauge on our islands. MF

Swiss Travel Guides No.6 – Graubünden


Author: Martin Fisher.

Paperback A5 size. 56 pages with numerous colour illustrations. Price £7.00 by mail order from Society Sales. ISBN – 978-0-9563436-9-7.



This latest Swiss Travel Guide is the sixth of the proposed series of eight booklets that will collectively cover the whole of Switzerland. This Area Guide takes us to the south-eastern corner of Switzerland and to physically the largest of the country’s 26 cantons. That said, Graubünden is the least densely populated canton and that in turn corresponds to sizeable areas of

natural outstanding scenic beauty, as well as numerous rural villages that retain a unique community charm of their own. For the transport enthusiast Graubünden is well served by not only the largest of the Swiss narrow gauge systems, the splendid Rhätische Bahn (RhB), but also a PostAuto network and numerous funicular, cable car, gondelbahn and chairlift

systems that provide ready access to, and the chance to explore, a host of more remote locations. The ‘*Glacier Express*’ booklet produced earlier in the series covered a journey from the west and through the heart of Graubünden to St. Moritz and Davos, so the author has produced this Area Guide with the lines previously covered being described in the opposite direction. Having summarized the getting to and travel passes to consider aspects, with a welcome sketch map included, our tour commences at the Italian end of the Bernina Pass. Heading north, we reach St. Moritz before taking the scenic Engadine line down to Scuol Tarasp close to the Austrian border. The Guide describes concisely the dramatic line through the Albula Valley, the journey onwards to Chur, before heading west via Disentis and the Oberalp Pass. An excursion to the resort town of Arosa is described before Filisur to Klosters via Davos and then north along the Prättigau to Landquart completes our travels through Graubünden via the RhB system. This Guide is the largest volume in the series to date and the 56 pages of informative script are enhanced by a varied selection of transport and scenic illustrations. To complete the Guide details of the motive power that has served the RhB over the generations are included, as well as informed general information and a useful bibliography. The dramatic landscape of Alpine scenery, passes, gorges, rural meadows and the unique Graubünden ‘sgraffito’ buildings provide a superb range of sights to be savoured. Graubünden has much to offer, ranging from the UNESCO World Heritage status routes of the Bernina Pass and Albula Valley lines to Arosa’s Eurasian Red Squirrels and the liquid ‘dividend’ of the Monstein Brewery! A recommended booklet that will enhance any travel library. DCG 

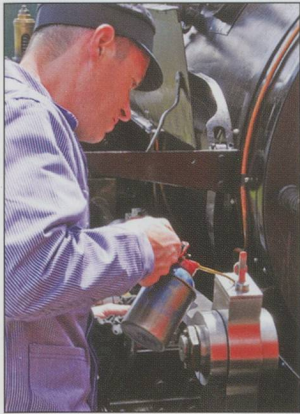
AND FINALLY... Firing into the Clouds

Many railways offer a day-long steam loco firing course, but if you are looking for a day on the footplate with a difference read on. The 7.6km Brienzer-Rothorn Bahn (BRB) runs from the lakeside resort of Brienz in the Berner Oberland to the summit of the Rothorn at 2250 m. It is the only fully steam operated 100% rack adhesion railway in Switzerland, and still runs locos built in 1891 on a daily commercial basis.

The BRB introduced fireman’s appreciation courses some years ago in the local Swiss-German dialect. These have been such a success that the railway is considering introducing limited courses for English-speaking groups of 6-8 people (men or women), during its 2013 operating season. A summary of the unique highlights of what the BRB is offering to their English speaking guests is: your day on the railway starts at 07:30 and ends around 17:00; you will have




a tour of the workshops as your loco is raising steam; you will be welcomed with Coffee and Gipfeli, and a mid-day meal will be provided; you will learn the basics of your engine and the very significant differences between a rack adhesion loco and a standard design; your driver will explain the method of firing these ‘old girls’. You will fire your engine up the mountain once, and also ride down once, rotating with the other members of the group who ride up-front in the coach;




you will be responsible for taking your engine out of service at the end of the day, and cleaning her down to the satisfaction of the driver. Dirty hands are a promise; your day will conclude with an Aperol at the station buffet, or in the workshops, where Course Certificates are awarded to successful candidates. All-in-all you will have a day working on

a commercial steam railway, firing a 120-year-old loco on a Swiss Alp. Now how many people do you know that have done that? Partners may accompany the participants in the coach all day if they wish. This is included in the CHF400.00 fee. A trial course in English is planned for 7th October 2013. If you are interested individually (or as a group) please contact Mike Ellis at the BRB. Email:

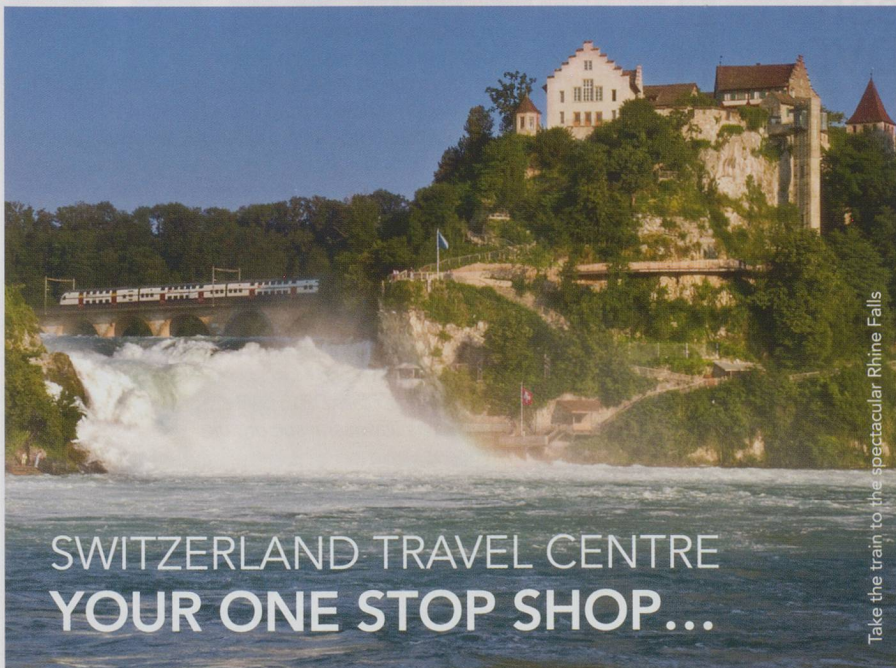
michael.ellis@brb.ch
or Tel: +41 (0) 79 724 05 35. 



Ivan Rodrigues - News from Switzerland Travel Centre

It was a great opportunity for Diana and myself to meet SRS members who braved the arctic conditions to attend the SRS AGM in Worcester. We are always happy to share with you the latest product news in Switzerland as well as listen to feedback, which we can pass on to our Swiss partners. This annual event provides the perfect platform to exchange good ideas and develop the collaboration between STC and SRS and we look forward to meeting some of you again in Derby next year. Anyone purchasing a valid Schilthorn ticket this summer will receive a free mountain excursion to Mount Allmendhubel and tea/coffee, courtesy of STC. You will need to exchange a voucher, so be sure to claim yours if you are interested. The Schilthorn-Piz Gloria not only offers the best views of the Eiger, Monch and Jungfrau, but from 29th June will open the 'BOND WORLD 007', a new attraction providing interactive access to the setting of the movie "On Her Majesty's Secret Service." Covering an area of 400sq.m, this indoor attraction at the 'Touristorama' guides you through the story of the movie, incorporating interactive features that invite visitors to test their own James Bond skills. STC is keen to work with our Swiss partners to look at ways we can offer SRS members special experiences including Brienzer Rothorn's Fireman's Course (details in the previous article) and VIP access to depots and locomotives. Diana and I are working on an itinerary, which we hope we can offer you for 2014 as we realize that many of you have already planned your Swiss holidays for 2013. So watch this space... 

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