

**Zeitschrift:** Swiss express : the Swiss Railways Society journal  
**Herausgeber:** Swiss Railways Society  
**Band:** - (2017)  
**Heft:** 130

**Rubrik:** Modelling news

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## Holzhof

### A compact HO scale layout by Peter Marriott inspired by Switzerland to demonstrate what is possible as a first step from a start set

I have enjoyed building a number of small layouts over the past few years of various locations in Switzerland. This new project is intended to show what is possible as the next step on from a "train set". A train set is probably the best way to start the exciting hobby of model railways and when we start to enjoy operating trains and making scenery we soon find that the hobby has many aspects of challenge and interest. With this in mind I set about building a small layout that is the next step from a train set. I added some additional

track pieces, a couple of buildings, a second train and some nice scenery to turn my train set into a model railway. I used products that are readily available from many model shops and the wish was that the layout could be moved easily around the house by one person, and be transported in a medium sized hatchback car.

I wanted a continuous run layout on a single baseboard with potential for running two trains. The layout would feature a small station, one passing loop and a timber siding. I would use one of the Noch laser cut bridges to cross a wide river. My vision for the layout would be for it to depict somewhere in Switzerland in the summer months. I would aim to use scenery products and techniques that would give good scenic results in the shortest possible time. The layout





measures 1.51 m x 1.08 m on one baseboard.


It took 5 months to build this layout and in total about 120 hours was needed to complete the layout from the bare baseboard to the adding of the final details. This time does not include the drying times for the adhesives and paints. I had the baseboard built for me so I have not included the time for building the baseboard and its legs. The track is Peco Code 100 Setrack that was ballasted using Woodland Scenics fine light grey ballast. The track and ballast were weathered using acrylic paints with a light misting from an aerosol can.

The locomotives used on the layout are by Fleischmann, Mehano, Piko and Roco. The passenger service is provided by one of the popular Piko BLS GTW electric multiple units. The freight services are hauled and shunted by Mehano G1700 locos in BLS and SBB Cargo liveries. In addition a Fleischmann DB Class 212 locomotive bought in a Start Set some years ago is used. The wagons are a selection by Electrotren, Fleischmann, Liliput, Mehano, Piko and Roco. I have weathered some of the wagons using a mixture of glass fibre brush distressing, weathering dyes, aerosol sprays and dry brushing. In some of the open wagons I have added loads of real timber (twigs from the garden).

Holzhof was fun to build and I am pleased how it has turned out. I hope that I have captured a little of the Alpine scene on my layout in Central England! Because I have such varied European railway interests (I like the railways of Austria, France, Germany and Switzerland), from time to time I will change the signs and rolling stock on the layout so it can become an Austrian, French, German or Swiss layout. I still need to add catenary posts and more detailing to the layout.

This layout has been really good to run trains on. It is stored in my garage but it takes me only 5 minutes to position it on its legs, to plug in the controller and the trains are running! It has been reliable to operate and the track does not take much time to keep clean.

I hope that this article has given you some ideas on how to build a simple but attractive layout as somewhere to run your valued locomotives and rolling stock.

This article is based on two that appeared in the February and March 2017 editions of LOKI magazine. 



## Swiss Postbuses in Miniature Fritz Jenni introduces his collection of models of these Swiss icons

PostAuto Schweiz AG (PostBus Switzerland Ltd) is the leading bus operator in Switzerland's public transport network. The original organisation was formed in 1906 with the opening of the first regular scheduled postal omnibus services from the capital Berne to Detligen and Worblaufen (Papiermühle). Today's bright yellow buses of the daughter company of Swiss Post AG are in a manner of speaking also a national trademark like cheese and chocolate. With over 3,900 employees and around 2,300 vehicles, PostAuto AG carries around 145m passengers each year on its network of routes that link communities, carry commuters and give enjoyment

to tourists. Martin Fisher's new book 'Swiss Postbuses' from *Swiss Express Publications* is a very good source of interesting information regarding this key player in the Swiss public transport system.

Until 1995 I was fortunate enough to be the Head of Operations at PostAuto AG and now after twenty two years of retirement I still manage a respectable fleet of 250 Postbuses. However, these are not full size vehicles but vary in length from only 3cm to 97cm; my unique collection of Swiss postbus models that with other interesting exhibits form part of my small, private, postbus museum located at my home. In the world of automobile model collecting replicas of Swiss Postbuses are very popular, not only in Switzerland but also in other countries, especially the UK. The high profile of the yellow buses that is known worldwide make them unique, and





in handling and admiring models of them gives collectors a feeling of riding through a wonderful Swiss landscape – and hearing the famous three-tone warning horn with its “cis-e-a” call that was taken from Rossini’s opera ‘William Tell’.

My collection of models comes from many different sources; most are commercial replicas, or toys based upon earlier types of bus; others have been found in second hand shops. Today, besides replicas of ‘old timer’ vehicles, models of modern Postbuses are in great demand. I believe that my collection is very diverse and is unusual for its special and unique items that form “The pearls of the collection”. These include the 1:10 scale, 97cm long, model of a fully Swiss-made 1968 FBW ‘Alpenwagen’, plus three beautiful 1:20 models of the same vehicle. Also there are models of Saurer’s first Swiss-made articulated bus from 1971, and one of a 1973 Mercedes-Benz bus designed for travel voyages, one of a series of Postbuses no longer built in Switzerland. A model-builder friend has produced a series of fourteen models in scales between 1:48, 1:35 and 1:20, as unique specimen replicas of Postbuses put into operation between 1921 and 1939, that is to say between the two world wars. A very interesting item in this series is the 1930/31 FBW six-wheeler known as the ‘Valais’ type, as the originals were made especially for the bad, bumpy, roads running up the small side valleys of that Canton.

Far away, across France, the Channel and England, in North Wales, exists another passionate collector of Swiss Postbus models – who has a much bigger collection than mine. It is no wonder that John Evans and I, together with our long-suffering wives - Rosmarie and Kit, have over many years cultivated together a wonderful friendship based upon this shared interest.

## John Evans continues the story

It is highly likely that when the Swiss Postbus came on the scene in 1906 young boys would have wanted their fathers to make them replicas of the bus for them to play with, or even pull along as children did in those days. Sadly not many of these originals exist today - most that do being in museums. However, it did start a hobby, which has excited collectors, young and old, ever since.

In 1994, shortly after I started collecting, I wrote to the Swiss Post Office enquiring about their Postbuses. The then Head of Postbus Operations, Fritz Jenni, wrote back to me and enclosed a model by Kembel, of a 1979 Mercedes-Benz 0305 Postbus at 1:87 scale. We have been firm friends ever since. On a visit to England in 1996 Fritz brought me a large model of a 1967 Alpenwagen IV-U. This model was one of only six made,

in brass, by the apprentices of FBW as promotional models for the Post Office. Today, three are in private collections and three are in museums. In my collection I have a model depicting an early Postbus, a 1922 FBW ‘Car Alpin’ produced by Roscopf in plastic at 1:87 scale. My most detailed Postbus is by Antique Replicas, a 1:24 scale model of a 1951 Saurer 4C. It was made for Swiss Post to sell to celebrate its 100-years service. Thirteen years prior to this, in 1939, Saurer made a bus similar to the 4C, an LC2 model which, with only 11-seats, was its first minibus. Tek Hobby have made a 1:50 scale model of this. More modern shapes soon came along, one, a 1955 FBW C40U by the Italian maker Mercury was a mistake as the wording in the casting underneath attributes it to Saurer. It is a rare and expensive model to acquire now.

There are models of Swiss Postbuses available today in all scales and all materials, but many of these originals never existed as Postbuses. For example neither of the PTT buses sold by Dinky Toys ever existed. The first actual Swiss Mercedes-Benz Postbus, a 0302, came out in 1971 but models exist showing various M-B types in use as Postbuses going back to 1940! Tekno, a Danish maker, made a 1:43 scale model of the original 1971 bus. In 1975 Swiss Post introduced another minibus, a Mercedes Benz 0309 with only 20 seats. Brekina made a 1:87 scale model of this. To increase passenger capacity on busy routes Postbuses sometimes used passenger trailers, and to achieve more capacity 1971 saw the introduction of articulated Postbuses including the 1:87 scale model of a 1986 Setra SG 221 from Herpa. Double-decker Postbuses soon followed with Siku making a 1:50 scale model of a 1996 Setra. Whilst most Postbuses are used on regularly scheduled routes, in around 1996 Swiss Post began introducing them as luxury coaches for day trips and holidays. One type used for this business is the Neoplan Starliner and Rietze have made a 1:87 scale model of such vehicles.

In 2006, the Postbus service celebrated its 100th anniversary with a big meeting in Bern of old Postbuses and thanks to my good friend Fritz I was fortunate to ride on many of them through the streets of Switzerland’s capital. All these wonderfully preserved models, at 1:1 scale, appropriately congregated outside the Communications Museum. Today my collecting continues, but at a slower pace. New, plastic, 1:87 scale models of many types of Swiss Postbuses are plentiful, but old models are very scarce which brings back the excitement when one is found. Never did I think when I wrote to the Swiss Post Office that some 20 plus years later, I would still be enthused by the country, its buses and its people. They have enriched the lives of my wife and I immeasurably. 