

Book & DVD reviews

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Swiss Narrow Gauge, Volume One: West.

Author: Jason Sargerson.

Published by: Charaxes Publications, 17 Muirfield Park, Hull, East Yorkshire HU5 3JF.

Softback, 36-pages. A4. Fully illustrated in colour. ISBN: 978-0-9575048-1-3.

£10, including postage, direct from the publisher.



Jason Sargerson's new book introduces the reader to the narrow gauge lines, which play such an important part in the public transport system of Switzerland. Although titled as Volume One: West, it does in fact stretch across the south of the country to include lines such as the Matterhorn Gotthard Bahn, Mont Blanc

Express into France, and the Centovalli providing cross border services from Locarno to Domodossola in Italy. In most cases a full page is allocated to each line, (listed in alphabetical order), with the longer ones stretching to a double-page spread. The gauge and electrical system are described with details of the depots. Details are given of the normal rolling stock used and a description of the route highlighting interesting or important places along the way and notable scenic features. Finally the journey times and service frequency are outlined. Jason's book gives a good overall view of the lines and will serve as an introduction for newcomers to Switzerland, or to seasoned travellers wishing to explore these particular regions. There is a glossary of useful websites and the Swiss Travel System map is reproduced inside the back cover to relate the various lines to the main Swiss transport networks. The book is printed in full colour throughout on a very good quality paper and my only criticism of the production comes while wearing my fourth-generation printer's hat. We know the high quality of Jason's photographs which are often published in *Swiss Express* and at the start he explains that he tries to photograph the 'Railway in the Landscape', including significant buildings or stunning scenery. However during the reproduction stage the pictures seem to have taken on a very soft definition. This may have been his aim but I, for one, prefer my photographs to be sharp, something that should be easy to achieve at no extra expense with modern print reproduction techniques. As an introduction to Swiss metre gauge railways I am sure this book will encourage its readers to explore areas away from the standard gauge main lines by using the multi-coloured trains which provide efficient,

comfortable, fast and usually frequent services. They are an excellent way to see the true Switzerland away from busy towns or tourist hot-spots. **MF**

SRS Swiss Travel Guides – 7 - Zürich and North-East Switzerland

Author: Martin Fisher.

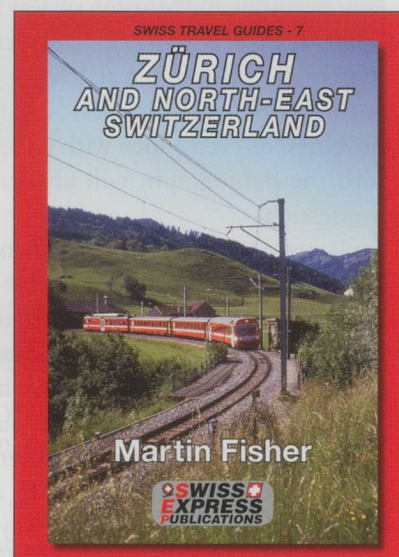
Paperback A5. 56 pages with numerous colour illustrations.

ISBN 978-9926812-0-3

Price £7.00 by mail order from Society Sales.

This is the penultimate booklet in the series of eight SRS Swiss Travel Guides that will cover the whole of Switzerland. Guide No.7 provides an insight into Zürich and the surrounding area, before extending through the predominantly rural area known as Ostschweiz that includes the Appenzell and Toggenburg regions and the Swiss shore of the Bodensee (Lake Con-

stance). Having summarised the various options for travel to and from Switzerland, guidance is provided on the various passes that are available to make best use of the splendid and varied public transport options. With the benefit of a sketch map of the area, the author starts the tour of the defined area with a summary of the highlights of Zürich, that includes a useful reference to the extensive tram network that can be used. Coverage of the area then radiates out in each direction with more detailed information on specific locations that can be visited as well as possible lake cruising options. The reader is then taken through the key features of the Toggenburg, Appenzell, St Gallen and Bodensee area, before venturing along the Rhein Valley to Liechtenstein. The Guide is completed with a section on general information, possible hotels to consider, a Bibliography and finally, brief notes on Swiss locomotives and multiple units. The text is most informative and supported by a good range of illustrations. It represents good value, being well researched and presented in an easy to follow style. Invest in a copy and enjoy. **DCG**



Swiss Classic Train "Herbstfahrt mit Dampf nach Lugano"

Produced by Baumann Media.

Running time 52 minutes.


No commentary but German and English captions. Available from Society Sales. Price.£20.00 including postage.

This is the documentary record of possibly one of the last steam journeys over the entire Gotthard route, which took place on 21st and 22nd October 2012. It is a professional

and finally ... A LONG WAY FROM HOME Bryan Stone



Lingen in Emsland - a district of Germany's Niedersachsen - is on the former Royal Hanoverian Westbahn to the North Sea port of Emden. The town is peaceful and prosperous (they even have a daily traffic jam) and there is a BP-refinery nearby which generates trainloads of rail freight. Here SBB Cargo has obviously got in on the act. Lingen is also the location of the restored locomotive workshops at which up to 1975 the last DB steam locomotives (many on the Emden - Rheine line through Lingen, with Pacifics on the expresses, and 2 huge 2-10-0s on double-headed iron ore trains) were overhauled. Unlike my unhappy British experience in the early 1960s, the DB kept their engines in safe working order until they were withdrawn. The Lingen locomotive workshops, where a local friend's father had worked, were then used to house the new University and are architecturally distinguished. The iron ore trains died with the steel industry. So on a wet Tuesday (such as Lingen knows well!), as one does at such times, the friend and I visited the station and an apparition of SBB Cargo's 482 003 turned up. Along way from home it appeared to have retreated here for the afternoon, before leaving in the evening with an oil train for industrial parts somewhere distant. My pictures show 482 003, unmistakably Swiss, in a station environment which can only be DB with the former Loco facilities in the background.

The beautiful old semaphores betray perhaps the DB's lack of excitement about renewals in these parts. If things work, why change them? This was probably the philosophy that kept main line German steam running into the 1970s. 



production filmed with multiple cameras featuring the Swiss Classic rolling stock and former SNCF loco 141 R568. The DVD begins with the start of the journey at Zürich HB. All locations are either clearly visible or captioned and the weather is good with autumn sunshine beyond Brunnen. There are plenty of in-cab shots and any budding steam engine driver would find the DVD useful for this alone. The train splits at Erstfeld where re-coaling takes place in an ingenious way and part of the consist becomes a "photo train" pulled by Ae 6/6 11421. There are shots on the Wassen spirals of both trains taken from good vantage points. At Göschenen the train becomes one again and continues its journey to Lugano. There are again good shots on the southern Gotthard spirals with the Ae 6/6 acting as banker. The Sunday sees the

journey to Luino to take part in the 20th anniversary "Associazione Verbano Express" where we are joined by Dampflok 50 3673. The DVD continues with sequences featuring both locos which culminates in a parallel run from Bellinzona to Biasca with both on train and track side cameras. Again on the northbound journey a photo train precedes R568 with the passing at Faido. Refuelling is shown at Airolo as dusk is setting before the return journey commences, again with the Ae 6/6 acting as banker. The rest of the return to Zürich HB is in darkness but we do get a glimpse of the train's owner at the very end, sort of "a la Hitchcock". I thoroughly enjoyed watching this DVD more than once to write this review. You will enjoy watching it as well.

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