

# 'Swiss dreams are made of this' - with apologies to the Eurythmics!

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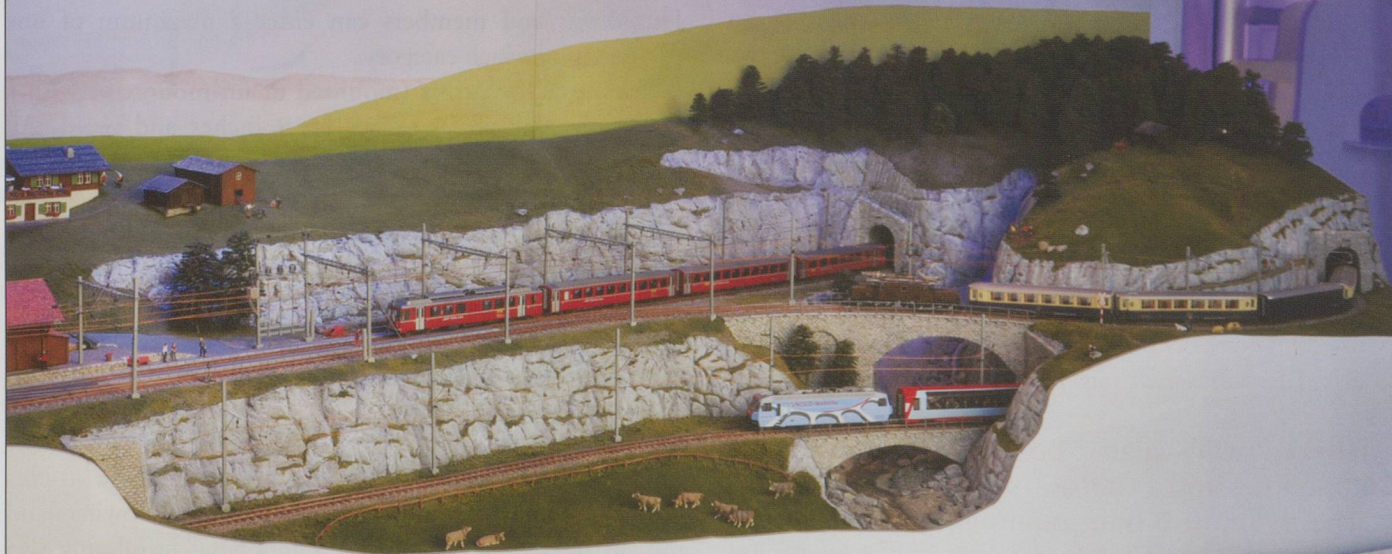
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## 'SWISS DREAMS ARE MADE OF THIS'



– with apologies to the Eurythmics!

**Mike Ausden**

The Layout in Harrods window at Easter 2011. Photo: Tony Bagwell



Many of you will have read the announcement in last September's edition of *Swiss Express* that Margaret Williams had decided to sell 'Bärental', the exceptional Swiss model railway layout built by her late husband Ray. In the spring of 2011 this HOm, RhB-based layout resided for three weeks in Harrods key curved window on the corner of Brompton Road and Hans Crescent in London, adjacent to the entrance to Knightsbridge Underground station. It was a major element in the 'Swiss Event' that had been organised by various Swiss organisations and the store and hence it was seen and admired by tens-of-thousands of people. During its stay in London Ray estimated that one of his BEMO locos travelled a real 40km as the layout ran almost continuously over the period of the event. Few model railway layouts have ever been in such a prominent position and seen by so many potential admirers. (See September 2011 *Swiss Express*.)

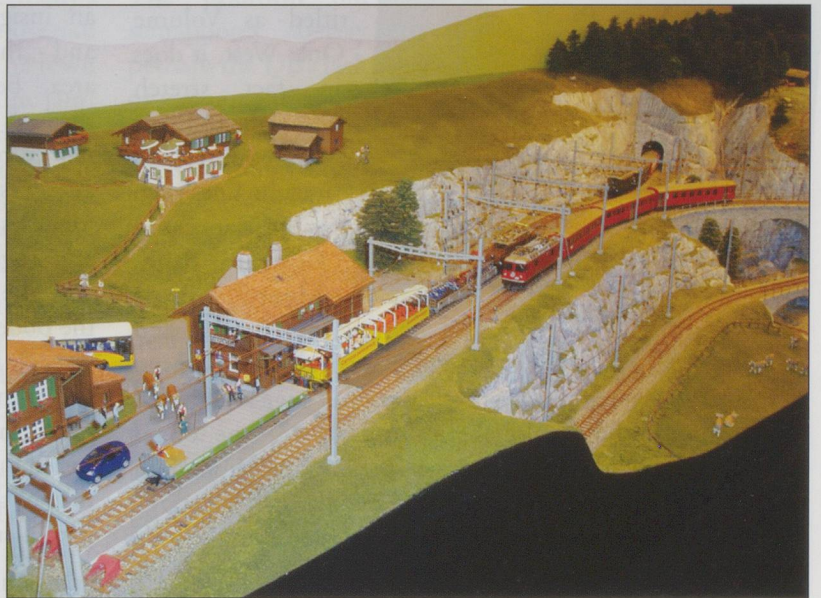
For me, 'Bärental' represents the best in railway modelling and in my mind it is a dream layout. This view was reinforced when I had a close encounter with 'Bärental' at Warley, when my son Steve and I spent a long time talking with Ray about the layout. He even allowed us to look through his construction journal together with his photograph album showing the life history of the layout in pictures, from the time the first pieces of plywood were cut, through to its completion. The opportunity to own 'Bärental' was too good to miss and even though I considered my chances of success to be negligible, I put in a bid. No one will ever know the sheer excitement I felt when the email came to say that Margaret had accepted my

offer! The bank transfer was made and I became the new owner of 'Bärental'.

So my wife Pam, Steve and myself travelled up from Leverstock Green in Hertfordshire to Belper, Derbyshire, where we met Margaret together with Ray's colleague Richard, who had worked with him on the development of 'Bärental'. Margaret welcomed us with coffee and carrot cake before Richard gave us a demonstration of the layout plus the 'Bärental Dorf' extension with its working Swiss Post buses. As a surprise bonus, Margaret generously included some of Ray's model railway items, some of which he had especially adapted for 'Bärental'. His unique style of customising stock with people or bicycles, or his mechanical novelties, or even a loco with a flashing LED built into the pantograph, will always leave a lasting impression.

It was fortunate we had taken two cars as we found that when folded up, the layout was two inches too tall to fit into my estate car, so we had to put one half of the layout into each car and place the other parts around them. We have now started work on building a new power supply box and a new stand, as the originals had been sold previously with one of Ray's other layouts, and we are also exploring whether there is any way of reducing the height of the folded layout so it will fit into my car. We are enormously grateful to Margaret for allowing us to be the new owners of 'Bärental' and to Richard for his promise of technical advice now and in the future, and hope that there may be an opportunity to exhibit the layout again as circumstances permit.

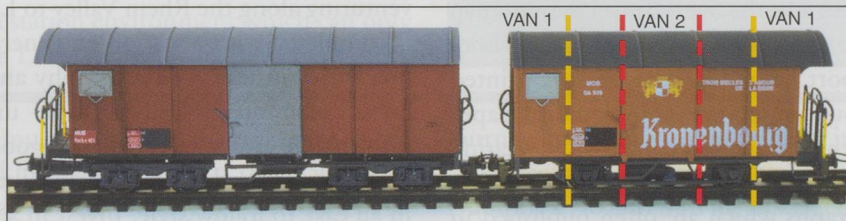
*So for this Swiss Railways Society member – my Swiss dream has come true!* 🇨🇭



## What to do with two spare wagons!

Gerald Savine

**O**ver the years of collecting Bemo MOB models I have landed up with two of the same model goods



vans. Going through one of my 'MOB, DU LEMAN AU PAYS-D'ENHAUT' books, I found a photograph and line drawing of the bogie van, Hack v 401. I could see it wouldn't take too much, with a small saw, to commit surgery on the two spare models to produce a new addition for my future layout.

After breaking the models down into their component parts, I used model paint stripper to take them back to the original plastic. Removing the two ends of model one, leaving the door section with two panels and removing the door section of model two, I was able to glue the pieces

together to make a long-bodied bogie van. Respraying the body, roof, vents and doors. Carefully cutting the sub frames

I glued them to the body, and the same with the roof.

Now, as an artist, I am used to taking *artistic licence* and assumed the engineers at the MOB Chernex Works replaced the original bogies with more modern ones purchased from the RhB. I couldn't get hold of model older style bogies of the original prototype van, so used RhB ones supplied by WINCO. I also made modifications to the framework. Finishing off the model by making the numbers etc. on the computer and printing off.

*The purists might complain but it doesn't look too bad on a train going round the test track!* 🇨🇭