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Neil Wheelwright]
Autor: [s.n.]

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BOOK REVIEW

SWISS TRAM & TROLLEYBUS SYSTEMS – PAST and PRESENT

Martin Fisher & Neil Wheelwright. Swiss Express Publications. ISBN: 978-0-9926812-2-7: 72-pages, 210mm x 210mm. Price £10.00 (including postage) from SRS Sales.

This latest SRS publication provides an illustrated guide to the numerous tram and trolleybus operations in Switzerland, with networks both present and past included. The book summarises information collated from several knowledgeable sources and includes a splendid portfolio of images to illustrate the considerable range of service vehicles that the title embraces. Clearly tapping into a wealth of specialist knowledge, available through the SRS network, the authors provide an informed background to set the scene before commencing a review in alphabetical order of each operational tram network. A concise and informative description is presented, with an overview of the present fleet, details of any planned developments and confirmed orders for new rolling stock, together with a summary of any related preservation activities. Sketch maps are well used to support the text and this is particularly useful when the 39 former tramway networks are summarised, once again supported by a fascinating array of images at each turn of a page. Swiss trolleybus networks present and past are then similarly well covered. Throughout the

book there is much to be enjoyed, for example: the Hornbach Horse Tram, Bern Lufttram, Blind Cows, Swiss Standards, Mirages, the delightful Riffelalp Tramway and there is even mention of a Cargo Tram and a freight-only Trolleybus service (alas, no more!). A trio of Appendices and a detailed List of Contents complete the volume. Production of the book in a 210mm x 210mm format is particularly pleasing, providing ample space for the numerous images to be enjoyed. The compilation and production of this book have clearly 'raised the bar' for future *Swiss Express* publications. Invest in a copy and enjoy!  DCG



On the Piazza Grande in Locarno there are, set in the cobblestones, some 100m of metre-gauge rails. These are a souvenir of the Centovalli, which until 1990 ran through the Piazza, accompanied until 1925 by the Bignasco line. In 1990 a 2,590m long tunnel under the city gave the Centovalli access to an underground terminus beneath Locarno FFS/SBB station in the east of the town. The boy in the picture took his scooter, placed its solid plastic wheels in one of the tramway rails at the top of the piazza, kicked-off and rode it with panache down to the bottom end and then turned round and scooted back up. He knew little of physics,, perhaps, but he knew instinctively where the friction and rolling resistance was least. That means that he knew why railways carry heavier loads faster, with far less energy, than other land modes; rubber tyres, and cobblestones, are not in it! 