

Zeitschrift: Swiss express : the Swiss Railways Society journal
Herausgeber: Swiss Railways Society
Band: 4 (1994-1996)
Heft: 6

Artikel: Private railways in Switzerland. Part 1
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-855039>

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Private Railways in Switzerland

by Brian Hemming

Following many requests for more information on the private railways of Switzerland a new series will appear in Swiss Express in which it is hoped to cover all these lines over a period of about three years. Only adhesion and rack railways will be described and a number of closed lines will be included. The general policy will be to deal with at least three railways per issue although this figure may be reduced when dealing with some of the larger companies such as the BLS, EBT and RhB. No particular order will be followed but it is hoped to give a geographical spread in each issue as well as covering railways which are celebrating anniversaries. For example the BAM featured in this issue celebrates its centenary in July. It is not intended that these articles will be anything more than a brief overview of each railway with an indication of the powered stock operated.

For further reference on powered stock the excellent Platform 5 Publishing book Swiss Railways is thoroughly recommended, whilst a number of German language books are available covering the historical and descriptive aspects of the railways. The author will be

pleased to supply details of these and possible sources of supply on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope. Any comments, additions or corrections would be greatly appreciated for use at a future date.

Notes on terms to be used in the series

Kursbuch - the official Swiss Transport timetable is published annually in late May and can be obtained from the various Swiss National Tourist Offices who will advise the price. The table number shown against each railway is that in operation two months before the publication date of Swiss Express.

Rollböckes - bogie units used for carrying standard gauge wagons on narrow gauge lines. One Rollböcke is used to carry each axle of a standard gauge wagon, and either a tow bar is attached to the Rollböcke or the coupling of the wagon used for haulage.

‰ - per thousand as opposed to % which is per hundred. This symbol is used to describe gradients.

Below: Rollböcke as used on the BAM





BAM

Chemin de Fer Bière-Apples-Morges

Centenary year 1995

NEW colourful stripe on the stock declares that it is the BAM's centenary this year.

Photo: Les Heath

This line serves both the local communities between Morges, Bière and L'Isle and a large military base at Bière. The section from Morges to Bière was opened 1st July 1895 whilst that from Apples to L'Isle (originally the AJ) followed on 12th September 1896. The AJ was merged into the BAM on 1st July 1899. The whole system was steam operated until 1943 when, on the 1st July, the Morges-Bière and on the 14th November the Apples-L'Isle lines were electrified at the SBB line voltage. The passenger service is now operated by railcars from Morges to Bière with a single shuttle railcar from Apples to L'Isle. Freight trains are mainly locomotive hauled with the extensive use of Rollböckes for the transfer of standard gauge wagons from and to the SBB. A project for the extension of the line by 2km into the military base at Bière is well advanced.

Length: 29.7km including 10.7km from Apples to L'Isle

Gauge: 1000mm

Voltage: 15kv 16Hz ac

Maximum gradient: 35‰

Depots: Bière, L'Isle

Works: Bière

Nearest SBB station: Morges (shared)

Kursbuch table: 156

Powered Stock (apple green & ivory livery)

Class	Numbers	Built
BDe4/4	1 - 4	1943
Be4/4	5	1949
Be4/4	11,12,14*	1949
Ge4/4	21,22	1994
Tm2/2	41	19??

(*originally numbered 13)



RHB Rorschach-Heiden-Bergbahn

ABDeh 24 at Heiden
Photo: Alan Pike O.B.E.

The initial plan to link the main line at Rorschach with the Appenzell town of Heiden was for a 14km adhesion line. However the cost was too high and an alternative was put forward by the originator of the rack system, Riggenbach, for what was to become the first mixed rack and adhesion line in Europe. Construction commenced in 1874 and the line was opened on 6th September 1875. Until electrification in 1930 the service was operated by a mixture of steam, petrol and diesel railcars.

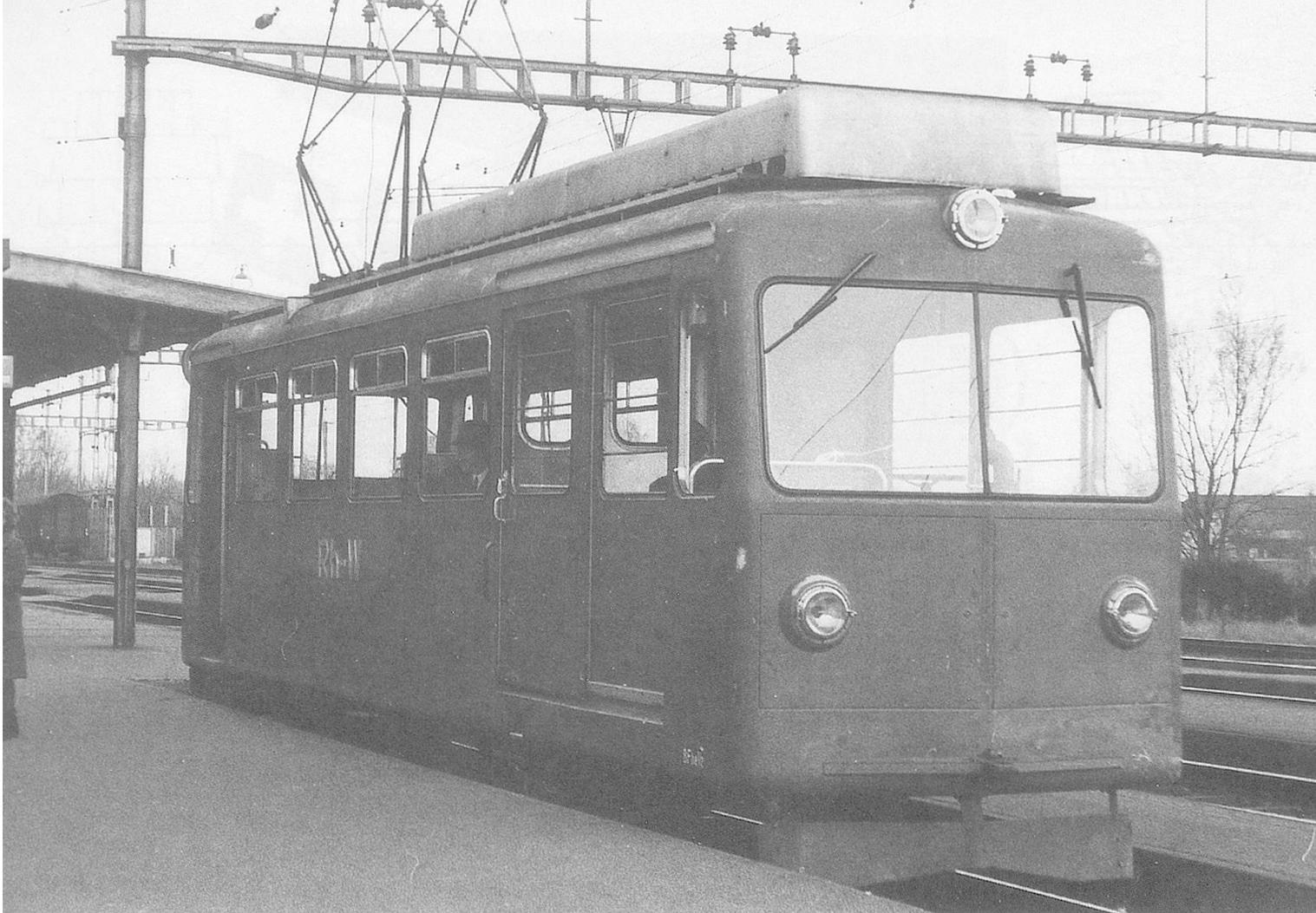
The line is operated by adhesion from Rorschach Hafen to the junction with the SBB south east of Rorschach where the 5.7km rack section to Heiden commences. The hourly service is normally maintained by the two railcars strengthened as appropriate by former BT driving trailers and SBB lightweight coaches. A feature of the summer service is the use of open

coaches (aussichtswagen) and occasionally the original electric locomotives.

Length: 7.1km
Gauge: 1435mm
Rack system: Riggenbach (part)
Voltage: 15kv 16Hz ac
Maximum gradient: 90‰
Depots: Heiden, Rorschach
Works: Heiden
Nearest SBB stations: Rorschach Hafen & Rorschach (both shared)
Kursbuch table: 857

Powered Stock (red livery)

Class	Numbers	Built
Dzeh2/4	21,22	1930
ABDeh2/4	23	1953
ABDeh2/4	24	1967



RhW Bergbahn Rheineck-Waltzenhausen

BDeh 1/2 the only stock
Photo: Alan Pike O.B.E.

The origins of the line date back to a water ballasted funicular line, opened on 27th June 1896, running from Waltzenhausen down to a terminus at Ruderbach adjacent to the Rheineck-St Margretten road 700m from Rheineck main line station. A standard gauge line from this terminus to the main line station was opened on 2nd October 1909 using a petrol railcar until electric operation commenced on 16th January 1910 at 500v 50Hz ac. In the mid 1950's plans were laid to connect the two lines. The funicular gauge of 1200mm was adopted throughout and on 1st December 1958 the RhW was formally opened using a single railcar which is still in service. The railway is administered from the RHB headquarters at Heiden; the RHB also providing major works facilities.

The line runs from Rheineck station using adhesion to Ruderbach where the 1200m rack

incline to Waltzenhausen commences. A basic hourly service is operated, shortening to half hourly at peak times. In the event of the line being closed or the railcar not being available a substitute minibus service is provided.

Length: 1.9km
Gauge: 1200mm
Rack system: Riggerbach (part)
Voltage: 600v dc
Maximum gradient: 252‰
Depot: Ruderbach
Works: Heiden (RHB)
Nearest SBB station: Rheineck (adjacent)
Kursbuch table: 858

Powered Stock (red livery)

Class	Number	Built
BDeh1/2	1	1958