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# PRIVATE RAILWAYS IN SWITZERLAND - 18

Brian Hemming

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The two railways dealt with in this issue complete the series that was started back in June 1995. It was originally thought that it would take about three years to complete, and so that original estimate has been missed by over a year. Nevertheless it has been completed and all 65 private railways in Switzerland have been covered giving an overview on what is a very significant part of the railway scene in Switzerland. All the text has been electronically stored and it is hoped that at some future date it may be possible to bring it together into one volume. Events will certainly mean that changes will have to be made. Railways will disappear as has the Wohlen-Meisterschwanden-Bahn (WM) covered in December 1996, whilst we are already aware of impending groupings and the implications therein for change. Nevertheless the private railway scene is one that will continue to fascinate many who are interested in Swiss railways.

Below is a complete list of the railways dealt with in these articles and the issues of Swiss Express in which they appeared. Back numbers can, of course, be obtained from Steve Horobin, the Sales Officer, whose address appears elsewhere in this issue.

| Volume | Issue        | Railways                            |
|--------|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| 4/6    | June 95      | BAM, RHB, RhW                       |
| 4/7    | September 95 | AL, AOMC, ASD, FW, MG               |
| 4/8    | December 95  | BVB, CJ, DB, STB, WAB               |
| 4/9    | March 96     | ARB, BRB, GGB, JB, MGN, SPB, VRB    |
| 4/10   | June 96      | RhB                                 |
| 4/11   | September 96 | BVZ, FART/SSIF, FLP, FO, MC, MO, WB |
| 4/12   | December 96  | BLM, AB, BD/WM, GFM, CMN            |
| 5/1    | March 97     | BOB, RBS, WSB                       |
| 5/2    | June 97      | BT, OC, OeBB, PBr, RVT, SOB         |
| 5/3    | September 97 | BLS (comprising BLS, BN, GBS, SEZ)  |
| 5/4    | December 97  | RM (comprising EBT, SMB, VHB)       |
| 5/5    | March 98     | CEV, NStCM, YSteC                   |
| 5/6    | Summer 98    | SBB Brünig, LSE, MIB                |
| 5/7    | Autumn 98    | LEB, OSST Group (BTI, RVO, SNB)     |
| 5/8    | December 98  | LO (& LG), MOB, VCh                 |
| 5/9    | March 99     | FB, TB, TSOL                        |
| 5/10   | June 99      | MThB, ST, TTE (formerly SATEB)      |
| 5/11   | September 99 | KLB, SZU                            |

The full names for the above codes can be found in the Platform 5 book "Swiss Railways".

## KLB - Kriens-Luzern-Bahn



*KLB Tm36 waiting to back vans into the Co-op at Rösslimatt. In the background is the Pilatus.*

*Photo: Brian Hemming*

Originally promoted by local businessmen to link the industrial suburb of Kriens with the main station at Luzern, the KLB was opened in 1886. It ran for a distance of 2.3km with mainly street running using two steam tram engines. In 1897 a 1.45km goods only line was opened from Eichof to Rösslimatt from where standard gauge rails were laid either side of the metre gauge Brünig line to the goods depot at Luzern. Traffic from Kriens to Luzern by this new route had to reverse at Kupferhammer. Unfortunately the whole enterprise ran into financial difficulties and control passed to the Stadt Luzern in 1899.

Already in 1897 a concession had been granted and construction of the Luzern Tramways, also under the control of Stadt Luzern, had commenced. The section of the KLB between Kupferhammer and

Obergrund was converted to metre gauge, whilst that between Kupferhammer and Kriens became dual gauge. The through tram route between Luzern and Kriens opened progressively in 1899 and 1900, with ultimately the KLB only operating on the dual gauge section between Kupferhammer and Kriens. Traffic from the KLB then reached Luzern by way of the line to Rösslimatt and the dual gauge section on the Brünig line. Steam traction was utilised, initially with two tram type locomotives later supplemented by an E3/3 tank engine (No.1, now preserved on the OeBB), and lasted until 1926. It was in this year that the line was electrified using the tramway supply between Kriens and Kupferhammer and new catenary from Kupferhammer to Rösslimatt. An electric locomotive was



*KLB Tm 36 at Rösslimatt. The Brünig line is in the background. 25/6/99 Photo. Brian Hemming*

acquired from the Wohlen-Meisterschwanden-Bahn.

Despite the replacement of the tram route by trolleybuses in 1961, the KLB continued to be electrically operated until 1968. In this year the combination of the electric locomotive becoming due for renewal and the need to construct an underpass under a new motorway resulted in a decision to abandon electric traction. A second hand diesel locomotive was purchased in 1968 which was used until 1979 when it was traded in for a more powerful Romanian built machine.

In 1998 serious consideration had been given to closure of the line, but following pressure from industry along the line the company was sold, with the support of its customers, to a private organisation. The section from Kriens to Kupferhammer was closed as traffic had declined to 14 wagon loads annually, and effort was concentrated on the section from Kupferhammer to Rösslimatt on which the major customers, including Eichof Brewery, the Co-op and Swisscom, were located. The diesel locomotive was replaced by a Belloni road-rail vehicle.

The line only operates on working days and provides the means to transfer freight to and from the main network. Each morning

an SBB diesel locomotive, usually an Em3/3, brings freight from Luzern along the dual gauge section of the Brünig line to the exchange sidings on the KLB at Rösslimatt. Here any traffic which has been collected by the KLB in the morning is picked up prior to returning to Luzern. The KLB locomotive distributes the various wagons to the customers along the line and then stables in the siding (formerly the start of the line to Kriens) at Kupferhammer prior to picking up any traffic for the afternoon SBB working from and to Luzern when the morning transfer process is repeated. At the end of each working day the road-rail vehicle travels by road to a local transport company where it is garaged.

Length: 1.7 km

Gauge: 1435 mm

Voltage: -

Maximum gradient: 23%

Depot: a local road transport depot

Works: -

Nearest SBB station: Luzern (via trolleybus route 6)

Kursbuch table: freight only line

Powered Stock (livery: blue & yellow)

| Class | Number Built |
|-------|--------------|
|-------|--------------|

|           |    |      |
|-----------|----|------|
| Tm 14.240 | 36 | 1998 |
|-----------|----|------|

## SZU - Sihltal-Zürich-Uetliberg-Bahn



*SZU 32 prepares to leave Uetliberg for Zürich HB at 1738 on Tuesday 5/5/98. Notice in particular the offset pantographs.*

*Photo: David Stevenson*

The SZU was formed on 1st January 1973 with the amalgamation of two separate companies, the Sihltalbahn (SiTB) and the Bahngesellschaft Zürich - Uetliberg (BZUe). The two companies had been under common management since 1922 when the BZUe was formed on the reorganisation of the Uetlibergbahn (UeB). Although strictly defunct, the names Sihltalban and Uetlibergbahn are still carried in addition to the SZU logo on the stock of the respective lines

The older of the two lines, the Uetlibergbahn, was opened in 1875 to connect the city of Zürich, at Selnau, with the nearby Uetliberg (874m), a distance of 9km

The attractions of the Uetliberg as a viewpoint had long been appreciated and so the building of the railway was a natural development. Despite the steep nature of the terrain the line was built for adhesion operation and in fact has the distinction of being the steepest standard gauge adhesion railway in Europe. Initially a steam operated service of four return journeys was offered in the summer; this being reduced to two in the winter. Steam operation continued until 1920 when the coal shortage created by World War I forced withdrawal of the service. Following the management changes in 1922 an electrification programme was implemented which was completed in June

1923. The line continued very much as a tourist route until the late 1920's when a number of villages in the lower slopes of the Uetliberg became incorporated into the City of Zürich and so began the development of suburban communities which would provide extra traffic for the railway. Gradually, the pattern of use on Uetliberg line changed with the suburban activities becoming more important which is today reflected in the inclusion of the Uetlibergbahn (the name carried on the passenger vehicles) in the overall Zürich S-Bahn network as line S10. In 1990 the line was extended in tunnel from Selnau to new underground platforms at Zürich HB.

The line between Zürich HB and Giesshübel is interesting in that a number of sections are electrified both at 1200 v DC (Uetliberg line) and 15kv 16.7Hz AC (Sihltal line). In order to separate the two

power systems the AC overhead wires are over the centre of the track, whilst the DC ones are set 1.3m to the right (on leaving Zürich). To accommodate this the Uetliberg trains have pantographs mounted to one side of the roof rather than in the conventional centre position. Zürich HB and Selnau both have island platforms which fully wired for AC, but for DC only on the right hand track.

Throughout the day a half hourly service is operated between Zürich HB and Uetliberg; the journey time being 23 minutes up and 22 minutes down. On working days the service is augmented at peak hours with additional trains between Zürich and Triemli. The trains, which are 2nd class only can be made up of more than one unit. In addition one of the original electric units on the line, Ce2/2 2, and a pair of four wheel coaches are retained for special use.

*SZU Re 4/4 No 47 awaits departure at Sihlbrugg for Zürich HB heading a typical SZU rake complete with double deck coach and non matching trailers. Whoever said Swiss Railway trains were uniform? 2/4/1994*

*Photo: Brian Hemming*



The Sihltalbahn (SiTB) was originally envisaged as a main route from Luzern to Zürich, but the opening of the route through Affoltern am Albis in 1874 and the granting of a concession for the Thalwil - Zug line (completed in 1897) put paid to such plans. The line therefore was built from Zürich Selnau to Sihlwald and was opened in 1892 mainly for transporting timber from the Sihltal.. Later in the same year a 1.03 km line was opened from Giesshübel to Wiedikon and thus connection was made with rest of the Swiss railway system. It had been expected that the Thalwil to Zug line would run from Oberreiden to Sihlwald, but it was finally authorised to be constructed through Horgen Oberdorf and Sihlbrugg. Therefore the SiTB was extended the 4.16km to Sihlbrugg and opened on the same day as the Thalwil - Zug line, 1st July 1897.

As a result of the difficulties in coal supply during and after World War I The line was electrified in 1924 between Selnau and Sihlbrugg at the Federal Railways line voltage. The connection between Giesshübel and Wiedikon underwent major reconstruction at this time and was electrified and reopened in 1927.

Following World War II, the line began to develop as a suburban passenger route. Significant modernisation of the infrastructure took place including a complete reconstruction of the section between Langnau-Gattikon and Sihlwald and the rebuilding of a number of stations. The final major modernisation was the extension of both the Sihltalbahn and the Uetlibergbahn from Selnau to Zürich HB in 1990.

The Sihltalbahn is now incorporated into the Zürich S-Bahn network as Line S4. A 20 minute, 2nd class only service operates throughout the day between Zürich HB and Langnau-Gattikon which is extended hourly to Sihlbrugg. Most of the trains are worked push-pull by the Re4/4 locomotives (at the

Zürich end) and usually incorporate a single double deck coach in the consist of 3 or 4 coaches. At peak periods the older multiple units are pressed into service. In addition to the passenger service the Sihltalbahn, freight originating from a number of factories along the lower part of the line contributes to the prosperity of the SZU. The line is also used from time to time as a diversionary route.

Recent developments have seen a considerable increase in freight activity on the line with the opening of the Allmend-Brunau construction site close to Brunau station. This site has been set up to service not only the tunnelling operations for the Zürich - Thalwil and Alp Transit rail tunnels but also motorway tunnels in the vicinity. The site is connected to the SZU Sihltal line and rail is used to bring in supplies as well as to carry away processed spoil from the two on site shafts to the Zürich - Thalwil rail tunnel. The motive power, usually Ae6/6 locomotives, is provided by the SBB whilst a heavy diesel locomotive provided by Sersa works the site.

The SZU maintains one of its original electric railcars, FCe2/4 84, for special use, whilst the Zürcher Museum-Bahn has premises at Sihlwald from which it operates a timetabled service with one of the original SiTB steam locomotives (E3/3 5).

Lengths: 19.45km (Zürich HB - Sihlbrugg and Giesshübel - Wiedikon),  
10.17km (Zürich HB - Uetliberg)

Gauge: 1435 mm

Voltages: 15kv 16.7Hz AC (Sihltal line)  
1200v DC (Uetliberg line)

Maximum gradients: 28‰ (Sihltal line),  
70‰ (Uetliberg line)

Depot: Zürich Giesshübel

Works: Zürich Giesshübel

Nearest SBB stations: Zürich HB,  
Sihlbrugg (shared). . . . .  
(continued page 21)



Part of the yard, transit sidings and spoil from the Zürich-Thalwill tunnel excavations. Two SBB Ae 6-6s can be seen in the distance. 30/6/99

Photo: B Hemming

*(continued from page 19) Private Railways - SZU*

Powered Stock (liveries: locomotives: red, railcars: red or red & orange, tractors: red or orange)

| Class | New Nos.      | Old Nos. | Built  |
|-------|---------------|----------|--------|
| Ce    | (556 502)     | 2*†      | 1923   |
| Em    | 836 506       | 6        | 1962   |
| Em    | 826 507       | 7        | 1961   |
| Tm    | 236 508       | 8        | 1994   |
| BDe   | 576 513, 514  | 13, 14†  | 1960   |
| Be    | 556 521 - 528 | 21 - 28† | 1992-3 |
| Be    | 556 531, 532  | 31 - 32† | 1978   |
| Re    | 456 542 - 545 | 42 - 45  | 1992-3 |
| Re    | 456 546, 547  | 46, 47   | 1987   |
| FCe   | (026 584)     | 84*      | 1924   |
| BDe   | 576 592, 593  | 92, 93   | 1968   |
| BDe   | 576 594 - 596 | 94 - 96  | 1971   |

New numbers are carried, but only in an abbreviated form. (e.g. Re 456 542 carries Re 542 and Be 556 521 carries Be 521)

Notes:

† 1200v DC.

\* Ce2/2 2 and FCe2/4 84 are historic railcars