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Autor:	Smith, Ron
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SURSEE TRIENGEN BAHN

Ron Smith enjoys their Annual Steam Day



ST E3/3 No 5 at Büron

PHOTOS: Ron Smith

The Sursee Triengen Bahn (ST), which was described in an article in the December 2002 Swiss Express, holds an annual steam day and this was on Sunday 24th September in 2006. The line has two steam tank engines. As E3/3 No. 8522 (SLM 1913, ex SBB – this is one of the two locos converted to electric operation in 1942/43) was in the workshop under repair and in pieces, E3/3 No. 5 (SLM 1907 ex SBB 8479) was in operation with a five coach train. This was a mixture of both bogie and 6-wheeled stock, all maintained to a very high standard. The terminus station at Triengen, along with the intermediate ones at Büron and Geuensee, are really charming and Germanic. Triengen was “en fete” with the station buffet open, whilst the forecourt was busy with a North American-style Tepee sheltering the live music performers, a carousel for the children, plus lots of

tables and benches for enjoying the würst, chips and beer! This was very much a family day, with few dedicated “gricers” about.

It is so refreshing to see the loco uncouple after every run, move to the coaling stage (carried out by bucket and hard work) then to the water crane, then run round, with families and whole crowds of people milling about on the track. The ST has restored a 1947 ex SBB Draisine, No. Dm 3652, a machine equipped with a Porsche engine (!) that was last overhauled by the SBB in 1961. In between the steam train runs it gave rides up and down the platform track nearest to the tables and benches, with its happy customers perched in the open back. No one was injured in any way – are we really so hopeless in the UK that we cannot do this? (Editor’s Note – The Swiss simply do not have our claims culture and its risk-adverse consequences.)

The Draisine was also periodically stopped, and then jacked up on its integral turntable, spun round and placed back on the track.

The ST had a sales and ticket tent on the platform, and another one at Sursee on the SBB platform. On board the train, the ST volunteers sold refreshments and souvenirs, and musicians played traditional Swiss music in the saloon coach.

There was quite an intensive service with six return trips being made, the first leaving Triengen at 08.55 and taking 23 minutes to Sursee, inclusive of the two intermediate stops. At Sursee, work was well in hand in the creation of the new fourth platform for the Luzern S-Bahn network. The ST train blasted up a short steep curve onto the main line formation, then ran right through the station on the main line and into the



ST Draisine Dm 3652 jacked up and being turned around

ST E3/3 No 5 and admirers at Triengen





ST E3/3 No 5 passes Otto's warehouse

ST E3/3 No 5 being oiled between trips



goods sidings, where the loco ran round. Meanwhile, mainline trains on the busy Luzern to Basle route whizzed past. Then the ST train ran into the platform, changed passengers, and set off again – all in a twenty minute turn round. This sensible cooperation between the ST enthusiast steam train and the SBB is so good – long may it continue.

At Triengen it was very relaxing to sit in the sunshine with a cold beer and have a steam train run in; the loco fussed around being serviced; ran round its train; crowds of people milled about; it whistled – followed by last minute dashes by families intent on a trip; whistled again; and off it went.

The line itself is fairly level and agricultural, so it is a pleasant amble, with the only steep gradient being at Sursee when the train cuts through the industrial estate (which provides around 30,000 tonnes of freight per annum and keeps the line open) and up onto the main line. Around 700 passengers of all ages had a

great day out, making all the hard work worthwhile.

As a gift to the SRS, Ernst Leutwiler has donated two copies of his video "Sursee Triengen Railway" to be given to two lucky members whose names will be drawn at random. If you would like to win one, just send your name & address on a postcard (or stuck-down envelope) to the Editor at the address in the magazine. The closing date will be 3rd January 2008.

This video (and its DVD version) is reviewed elsewhere in this issue. Incidentally, the article in the December 2002 Swiss Express has been translated into Swiss German and appears in the current DVS (Dampf Verein Surental) News, the supporters association magazine. For more details about the line and the DVS, look at www.sursee-riengen.ch or write to Sursee Triengen Bahn, Bahnhof SBB, CH-6210 Sursee, Switzerland.

ST E3/3 (SBB No 8522) under repair inside Treingen shed

