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THE END OF THE KLB

s'Murmeli

The point where the standard gauge track from Luzern goods yard insinuates itself discreetly into the main line metre-gauge alignment from the passenger station.

RIGHT: KLB No 1 when in the service of the Oensingen-Balsthal-Bahn. This is sometime after 1982.

From January 1st 2010 the dual gauge track (both standard and metre gauge) of the Kriens-Luzern-Bahn from Luzern-Eichwald to Horw will pass into the authority of the Zentralbahn (ZB). The Federal Transport Department (BAV) has also directed that the concession of the KLB for this section be transferred to the ZB, and the KLB branch Eichwald – Kupferhammer be closed. The ZB has also requested that "Switch-3" controlling access to the Kupferhammer branch should be clamped out of use. With these measures the Kriens-Luzern-Bahn is no longer operational, and it will be wound up.

Up to 2013, when the underground connection, of the ZB into Luzern Bhf now under construction comes into use, the existing former KLB line will be used from Luzern to Horw (Ennethorw) for (standard gauge) cement traffic. When the ZB underground connection comes into use, a standard gauge connection will be built to serve the Ennethorw private siding. This private siding is not suitable for passenger traffic, and no run-round facility will exist. The locomotive from an incoming cement train will be detached, run forward to remove the waiting outgoing wagons, and then the incoming wagons, up to a maximum length of 60m, will drop by gravity into their siding. Since cement traffic for Obwalden and Nidwalden (the adjacent Cantons to Luzern) will also be concentrated on Ennethorw it is probable that the facilities will not suffice for the potential volume of traffic to be worked.

The KLB has a tangled history. It was opened from a junction with the Olten line at Luzern Obergrund, via Eichhof and Kupferhammer, to Kriens (south of Luzern)

running along the street as a standard gauge freight and passenger line. However, the first section of the new direct line from Luzern to Meiringen was opened by the Jura-Bern-Luzern as far as Alpnachstad as a single track metre gauge line on June 1 1889. This permitted, from April 27th 1897, an alternative standard gauge access, using dual gauge track, from Luzern Güterbahnhof. From Luzern to Rösslimatt it ran on the alignment of the Alpnachstadt line (that had become the Brünig line of the Jura-Simplon-Bahn) as a 4-rail single track, branching off as standard gauge to Eichhof. This is the section referred to above that is still in use. In 1899 to 1900 the old line from Obergrund was given to the Luzern Tramways and converted to metre gauge, and the Tramways then ran the passenger service. A third rail was installed on the tram track from Kupferhammer, to maintain the standard gauge access to Kriens. After the Kupferhammer – Kriens section was closed the KLB continued to operate its 2.8km of standard gauge railway.

From its opening the KLB had two small 0-4-0T locomotives built by Krauss in München. These were sold in 1906. A new Maffei 0-6-0T was bought in 1909 as KLB No.1, and a small Brown patent engine was bought from the Sudostbahn (SOB) in 1912. Another second-hand 0-6-0T, SLM No.8 of the Seetalbahn (STB), became KLB No 2. Both KLB Nos.1 & 2 survived to pass to the SBB in 1926. No 1 was subsequently sold in 1933. It ended up as the No.1 of the Oensingen Balsthal Bahn, and still exists.

Editor's Note: s'Murmeli (The Marmot) is the pseudonym of a Swiss railwayman.

