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STREETWISE IN THE RAIN

Jason Sargerson visits the Trogener Bahn



ABOVE: Be 4/8 No 35 at Market Place, St Gallen.

LEFT: Be 4/8 No 32 and a bus in front of Bahnhof.


PHOTOS: Jason Sargerson



This article could be titled "What to do when it rains?" as, for some reason, I often visit St Gallen when the weather is poor. I have visited in a snow blizzard in the winter, and twice in the summer when it has poured with rain - as you can see from the photographs.

The Trogener Bahn (TB), now part of the Appenzellerbahnen group of railways, starts its journey to its namesake town from outside the main station at St Gallen. This metre-gauge line is 10 km long, began operations in 1893, is electrified at 1,000 V dc and has its main depot en-route at Speicher. Most of the frequent services use its latest Be 4/8 units, two of which were introduced in 2004, with a further three in 2008. These units, named for local communities, were built by Stadler and originally suffered from major noise problems, resulting from issues with the

interface between the wheel flanges and the track. Two BDe 4/8 units, Nos22 & 23 dating from 1975, are now held in reserve. Similar units Nos21 & 24 were sold to the Italian Rittnerbahn some two years ago, whilst another was scrapped.

St Gallen's main station is a busy junction for trains in the north east of Switzerland and, in addition to the TB services terminating in the street immediately outside, the separate Appenzellbahn terminus is also found there. As has been noted in *Swiss Express*, plans are in-hand to link the two operations. Inconsiderate vehicle users can affect operations here. A car seen parked on the TB tracks in 2009 was apparently in the same spot in 2010! Trains to Trogen traverse the length of the station past the bus stops on a section of double track that continues up Bahnhofstrasse and round to Marketplatz. A train I used had to slow considerably to make sure it passed a 4x4 that stuck out of its parking place on Bahnhofstrasse. Services continue on-street in St Gallen to Schülerhaus, before gaining a roadside reservation and heading uphill on a single track. Good views of St Gallen can be seen on the left when it is not raining, and despite the weather I could just make out Lake Constance in the distance. I must return on a fine day! Speicher, with its depot and passing loop, is the summit of the line, after which it descends and curves around into Trogen. Here the driver walks from the front cab to the back cab and almost immediately begins the return journey. The schedule is tight as the journey from St Gallen to Trogen takes 25 minutes and the basic service frequency is every 30 minutes, although this doubles in the peaks. PostAuto connections from the terminus allow circular trips utilising other parts of the Appenzellerbahn (AB) and other railways around St Gallen. 

Be 4/8 No 32 at Bahnhofstrasse.

