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TRACKS IN THE STREET

Jason Sargerson continues his quest for Swiss street running



Be 4/8 No 24 arriving at Dietikon.

ALL PHOTOS: Jason Sargerson on 04/08/2010

Dietikon, 11km out of Zürich on the main line to Baden, is a starting point of the Bremgarten Dietikon Wohlen Meisterschwanden Bahn (BDWM), Zürich's S17 route. Reached by S-Bahn trains on service S3 the short trip runs through the complex approaches to the Hauptbahnhof where trains of every description can be seen. On my trip our humble double-decker overtook the fastest train in the world, TGV POS 4402, on its way to Basel and Paris!

The BDWM trains leave from Dietikon's Platform 11 out in the Bahnhofplatz and head to 19km to Wohlen via the attractive town of Bremgarten. Leaving the Bahnhofplatz, the route takes the metre-gauge units on-street down Kirchplatz, past the church of St. Agatha,


then running uphill at some 5% (1:20) alongside the road with several passing loops and double track sections. Following a sharp right turn at the top of the hill after Dietikon Stofellbach the line runs into open country following Bernstrasse. At the summit of the line at Berikon-Widen (550m) there is a curved double track section. The line then doubles back through Zufikon Hammergut before dropping down into Bremgarten where the main depot is located with usually a variety of stock to see. A pleasant walk from the main station following the railway brings you to the square of the church of St Nikolaus where Bremgarten Obertor station is situated. The line then crosses the River Reuss carrying on to Bremgarten West. I took an easy stroll

down to the riverside to the pedestrian bridge that takes you across to the opposite bank where one is rewarded with good views of the trains crossing the bridge. Rejoining the train at Obertor I re-crossed the river, passed Bremgarten West and enjoyed the run through woodland to Wohlen where the train stopped outside the SBB station. The 30 minute journey from Dietikon to Bremgarten West runs every 15-minutes with every second train extended to Wohlen, taking another 10-minutes.

The BDWM is electrified at 1200V dc and until very recently its stock was of three generations, all in different liveries.



Be 4/8 No 24 again at Wohlen station

The oldest units were the nine strong BDe 8/8 class (1969) in orange and cream although these are now gradually being scrapped. Five more modern 2-car units, the Be 4/8 class (dating from 1993) in blue or orange and silver, were sold to the WSB (who run similar units) earlier this year. The latest stock is of the ABe 4/8 Stadler 'DIAMANT' design which came into service in 2010 wearing a livery of grey, red and white. The line has a complex history as the original line from Wohlen to Bremgarten West was standard gauge and opened in 1876. However the Dietikon Bremgarten section (opened in 1902) was built to the metre gauge. When, in 1912, the two separate lines were linked with the bridge over the Reuss a third rail was added to the standard gauge section to permit through running. This dual-gauge section is still in place and used by the SBB for freight movements. The SBB also operate over part of the remaining section of the line that once went on from Wohlen to Fahrwangen-Meisterschwanden – the 'M' in the title. Built as an independent railway in 1916 this 8.2km standard-gauge branch, originally electrified at 1200V dc and converted to 15,000V ac in 1966, saw its last passenger train in 1997. Although the majority of the route is now a cycle path the 2km from Wohlen to Villmergen operates as a siding off the Aarau – Luzern main line. 



1. Three generations of stock at Bremgarten depot.
2. A BDe 8/8 crosses the river Reuss at Bremgarten.
3. An ABDe 4/8 also crosses the river at Bremgarten.
4. A Bde 8/8 on the double track section near Berikon Widen.
5. A Bde 8/8 crosses the Kirchplatz by St Agatha's church in Dietikon.