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'Weschtfäscht'

Neil Wheelwright

Preserved SBB diesel Bm4/4II No.18451 in SBB platform 1 at Wohlen. Photos: Neil Wheelwright



Preserved SBB diesel Bm4/4II No. 18451 at Bremgarten West.

One of the many unusual features of Swiss railways was the dual gauge section of the Bremgarten Dietikon Bahn (which was the BD, but is now the BDWM Transport AG) between Bremgarten West and Wohlen. This existed as a result of the metre gauge Bremgarten Dietikon Bahn taking over the (by then) SBB owned, standard gauge Wohlen to Bremgarten line. SBB operated freight continued to serve Bremgarten and kept the standard gauge access avoiding the need to transfer goods at Wohlen or to transport the standard gauge wagons on metre-gauge transporters (although the railway did have a number of these at one time). Regular passenger traffic on the 'third rail' ceased when the BD took over and provided a metre gauge through service (although very occasional excursion traffic was recorded). Regular freight traffic on the standard gauge, third rail ceased a while ago.

BDWM are currently re-signalling the line west of Bremgarten and have taken the opportunity to remove the third rail and connection at Wohlen and so simplify the system. Prior to this on 26-28th June, before the work was undertaken during a blockade in July, they held a celebratory 'wake' at Bremgarten West, entitled 'Weschtfäscht'. Much of this involved various local bands playing, as well as the obligatory



Preserved ex-SBB 2-6-2T Eb3/5 No. 5810 at Bremgarten West.

beer tent and local produce stalls. However, of interest to railway enthusiasts were a number of free excursions over the line using standard gauge rolling stock. Of course, being Switzerland, this was while the regular half-hourly service was still running. One set was diesel loco Bm4/4II No.18451 plus 2-coaches, all from SBB Historic, running four round trips on the Saturday. On both days a steam hauled set was to be provided by DVZO. Unfortunately, their chosen loco was unable to attend and Dampfbahn Bern provided a stand-in 2-6-2T, Eb3/5 No.5810. This made four round trips on both days. The five DVZO 4-wheel coaches had been delivered to Wohlen using their preserved ex-BT electric locomotive Be4/4 No.15 which was stabled at Wohlen over the weekend. Additionally, ex-Wohlen-Meisterschwanden Bahn BDe4/4 No.2 and reconstructed 2-axle 'Sommerwagen' C 11 were present. One novelty for 'track bashers' was that the trains had to use the standard gauge only connection into Platform 1 at Wohlen, an otherwise freight only spur. An interesting exhibit was a large plan showing both the works being done along the line, and the new station building to be built at Bremgarten West. This looks to be a much larger station than is currently in place, befitting the significant usage the station now has following nearby house building. 