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Station to station walking on the BOB

David and Elizabeth Carpenter suggest some more short walks between stations



BOB train near Sandweid, Sept 2015.
All photos: David Carpenter

Following on from our article “Station-to-Station walking on the RhB”, that appeared previously in *Swiss Express*, here are some similar suggestions for walking the Berner Oberland Bahn (BOB). To recap, our ‘Station-to-Station’ walks are not intended for serious hikers, and are generally on the level or downhill. They provide some good opportunities for photographing trains other than at stations.

Grindelwald to Burglauenen

Although it is possible to start the walk by going directly down the steep hill from Grindelwald station to Grund, we would recommend making a detour via the Gletscherschlucht (glacier gorge). A hourly bus saves you a two mile walk, and is

free on the visitor pass if you are staying in Grindelwald. If you have time, the Gletscherschlucht is well worth a visit (it costs a few francs), but allow at least three quarters of an hour to see it all. When you are ready, take the waymarked path that starts across the road from the hotel garden and follow this through the valley. At its end, cross the bridge and follow the road to Grund station. Here, cross the river and follow another road up towards Egg (signposted to Schwendi, among other places). About a mile up here is a waymarked track to the right, heading back down into the valley and under the Männlichen cable cars. As the valley narrows you will come to Schwendi and you can finish the walk here by crossing the bridge to the station. However, it is not that far and fairly easy going to continue alongside the river and railway to Burglauenen, where you will also need to cross a bridge to reach the station. For refreshments, there is a wide choice in Grindelwald and the hotel at the Gletscherschlucht has a terrace garden where you can get hot drinks and cakes. There is also a roof café above Grund station, but Burglauenen has absolutely nothing!

Burglauenen to Zweilütschinen

Much of this walk is on lanes rather than footpaths, but there are good views down into the valley as you approach Lütschental. From the station at Burglauenen go steeply uphill a short way to a T-junction and turn left. This lane runs above the valley for most of the way to Lütschental and then drops steeply downhill to the village. To reach the station cross the river by the main road bridge, but if you are continuing to Zweilütschinen take the lane on the corner, just as the road turns left to cross the river. Keep to the lane a little above the valley, but where a track goes straight on uphill into the woods ignore this and turn left into the valley floor. At the time of writing, the BOB were building a new longer tunnel to replace the existing two short ones, which you can just see across the valley from near here. Eventually you will come to Gündlischwand, a straggling settlement on the outskirts of Zweilütschinen. This is perhaps the least interesting part of the walk, but continue through this semi-residential area until you can see Zweilütschinen station ahead of you.



Unfortunately reaching it is not as simple as you may think as you have to walk past it to reach a point where you can turn left over a river bridge. There is no access to the station from this side of the tracks so you will need to cross the railway by the level crossing. Be aware that the barriers of this crossing stay down for several minutes while trains pass in both directions. The only place we have found for refreshments on this walk is the café adjacent to the station at Lütschental, so it may be well worth a short diversion at this point.

Lauterbrunnen to Zweilütschinen

The walk starts with a steep drop down into the valley, and is undulating for the rest of the way to Zweilütschinen. As you come down the ramp from the platforms, turn right into the station subway, i.e. away from the town. Turn left out of the subway and shortly on the right you will see a footpath leading down from the road. This path drops steeply down to the river, where you turn left to continue the walk. About halfway to Zweilütschinen you will come to Sandweid. Here we were surprised to find an unadvertised request stop on the railway. There is no mention of it in the timetables so we assume it is for the benefit of local residents. It has a short platform and is equipped with the normal push buttons that illuminate white flashing lights to inform the train driver that a stop has been requested. We saw these lights work and a train stopped to pick up a local girl. We have travelled this section many times by train but were totally unaware of this facility. The walk continues mainly alongside the railway until you reach Zweilütschinen. There are several cafes where you can get refreshments in Lauterbrunnen, but we found nowhere at the other end.


Zweilütschinen to Wilderswil

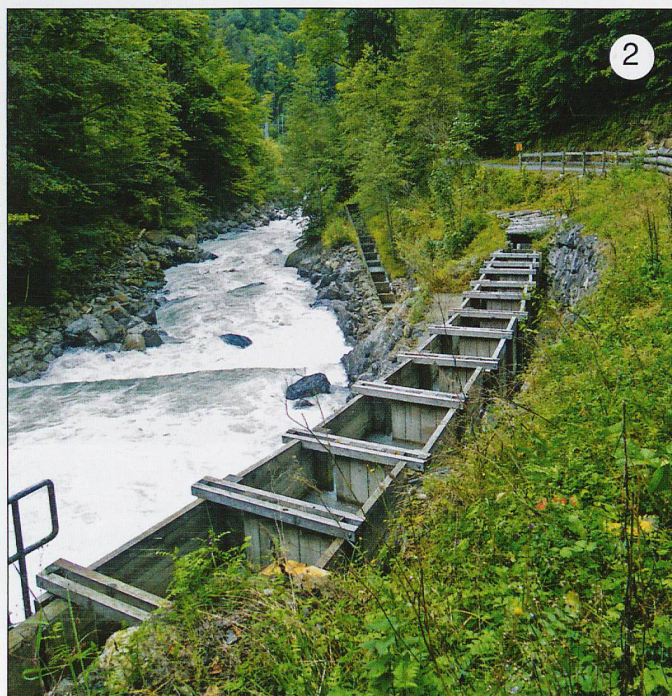
This walk is along tracks and byways mainly above the railway. It also crosses under the Schynige Platte Bahn on its steep climb out of Wilderswil. Turn right out of the station and go over the level crossing. Cross the river bridge and continue by road and tracks to Gsteigwiler. It is possible to end the walk here and take the bus to Wilderswil or Interlaken, but you will miss seeing the older part of Wilderswil if you do so. Continue along the road, passing under the Schynige Platte Bahn, then downhill to the old part of Wilderswil. Turn left here across the old bridge and walk through the village to the station. We have not found anywhere to get refreshments in Zweilütschinen, but some hotels in Wilderswil will provide these.

Wilderswil to Interlaken

We have not found a way to walk from Wilderswil to Interlaken Ost without going along the main road. The Autobahn provides an effective barrier between the two locations with few crossing places. Although not strictly walking the BOB, it is possible to walk to Interlaken West, and this is the route described here. Turn left out of the station, and then right into Kirchgasse. Follow the road through the village to the Hotel Bären at the far end, then turn right onto the hiking path. This will take you along back lanes and

over the Autobahn by a bridge. You will come out in Interlaken near the Heimwehfluh, from where it is a short distance to Interlaken West interchange. You can get refreshments from some of the hotels in Wilderswil, and you are, of course, spoiled for choice in Interlaken.

You can of course combine two or more sections together, but whatever you do we hope you will find these walks enjoyable. 



1. A view of the Lutschental from the path
2. Sandweid 'fischtreppen' (fish staircase)
3. Sandweid request halt.
4. SPB steam loco at Wilderswil