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THE SCHINZNACHER BAUMSCHULBAHN

G3/3 "Sequoia" entering Baumschulsee Station. July 1998.

Photo: Christopher Rosindale

A modern, fully equipped garden centre is the unlikely setting for a steam railway, particularly if the line actually runs through it! Yet this is the case with the Schinznacher Baumschulbahn, one of the least known locations for preservation in Switzerland. Unique in being the only 2ft (60 cm) gauge line on Swiss soil, the SchBB thus features an interesting selection of overseas motive power.

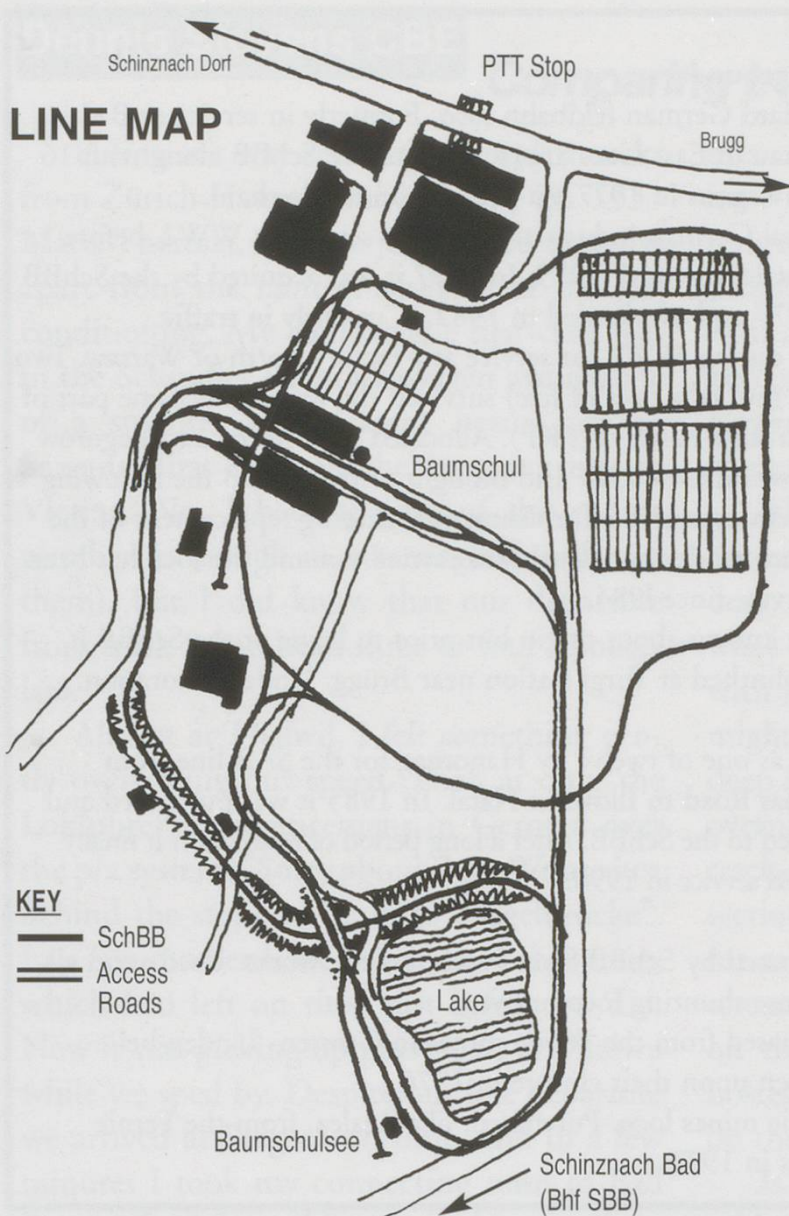
A History of the Line

The Baumschule, or tree nursery, was established in the village of Schinznach Dorf in 1879 by Herman Zulauf and is now a limited company. Due to the site covering a large area, in 1928 a lightweight feldbahn railway system was laid to allow the transport of heavy materials such as fertilisers, soil, plants - sometimes

whole trees - around the site. Muscles provided the motive power until tractors were introduced in the 1950's. In 1976 the idea of running public trains was born, although first the tracks had to be relaid with heavier rail and locomotives and rolling stock acquired. Eventually the first train ran, in 1978.

A Description of the Route

A journey around the line, which is in the form of an irregularly shaped figure of eight, begins from the main station at Baumschul. This is located next to the main public glasshouses and includes the sheds and workshop of the line's supporters group - Verein Schinznacher Baumschulbahn. After departure the train curves round to the left, running through a leafy cutting prior to passing under the viaduct



adjacent to the lake. Beyond the viaduct there is a steep climb up to the level of the lake, before curving round to the right into the line's other station, Baumschulsee. After this the train crosses the aforementioned viaduct - over the line we have just passed along - before running past the starting point at right angles to the station. The track curves round through the centre's main car park and round the back of three large nursery glasshouses, before heading back across the viaduct to Baumschulsee station. This time, the train stops to allow tickets to be inspected, before heading back up to the start at Baumschule station. The round trip of 3.1km takes about twenty five minutes.

Motive Power

Since it's preservation in 1976, the SchBB has become home to a varied collection of locomotives and rolling

Drakensburg waiting at Baumschulsee prior to double-heading a train back to Baumschul. August 1998

Photo: Christopher Rosindale



MOTIVE POWER

Name	Wheel arrangement	Background
Taxus	0-8-0T	Standard German feldbahn loco. Formerly in service at Bad Muskau in East Germany, it came to the SchBB along with 16 good wagons in 1977. At present, under overhaul.
Pinus	0-4-0T	Typical German industrial loco. Saw service in WW2, before industrial use until 1975. In 1997 it was acquired by the SchBB in 1977 and overhauled in 1982. Currently in traffic.
Sequoia	0-6-0T	Built during WW2 for service at a factory north of Warsaw. Two locos (out of a fleet of five) survived the war and became part of Polish state railways (PKP). Allocated to Witaszyce to Zagorow line, withdrawn 1977 and brought to the SchBB the following year. An extensive refurbishment including replacement of the cab and tender bodywork was carried out and the loco has been in service since 1984.
Molly	0-4-0T	Little known about origin but prior to being at the SchBB it was plinthed at Turgi station near Brügg. Under restoration.
Drakensberg	2-6-2+2-6-2	Built as one of twelve by Hanomag for the SAR line from Umlaas Road to Illovo in Natal. In 1985 it was purchased and shipped to the SchBB. After a long period of restoration it finally entered service in 1998.
Diesel locos		
Syringa	0-4-0	Purchased by SchBB from Hochdorf tile works. Used as an all-purpose shunting locomotive.
Azalea	0-4-0	Purchased from the Fernie mines in Grosse- Linden bei Giessen upon their closure in 1976.
Paeonia	0-4-0	Classic mines loco. Purchased, like Azalea, from the Fernie mines in 1977.

stock, all of it from outside Switzerland. A brief list of the locomotive fleet is presented above.

Rolling stock

The majority of the rolling stock came from Bad Muskau, and is made up of bogie open wagons which have been converted into semi-open coaches. At present the one closed carriage on the SchBB ran on the WengenalpBahn from 1907 to 1970. Prior to coming to Schinznach it had been used as a chicken coop and was thus in a poor condition. The rest of the rolling stock roster is comprised of a mixture of wagons, most of which are used on maintenance duties.

How to get there

Schinznach Dorf is located on the PTT bus route between Brügg and Lenzburg (via Wildeggen), and stops right outside the garden centre, which lies on the north side of the village. The nearest SBB station is Schinznach Bad, reached by a twenty-minute walk across the flat Aare valley.

Although largely unknown to most enthusiasts, the SchBB has an atmosphere which is all its own. It is well worth a visit, however, because it is not every day that you find steam trains running through a garden centre!