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Brien Rothorn Bahn - News

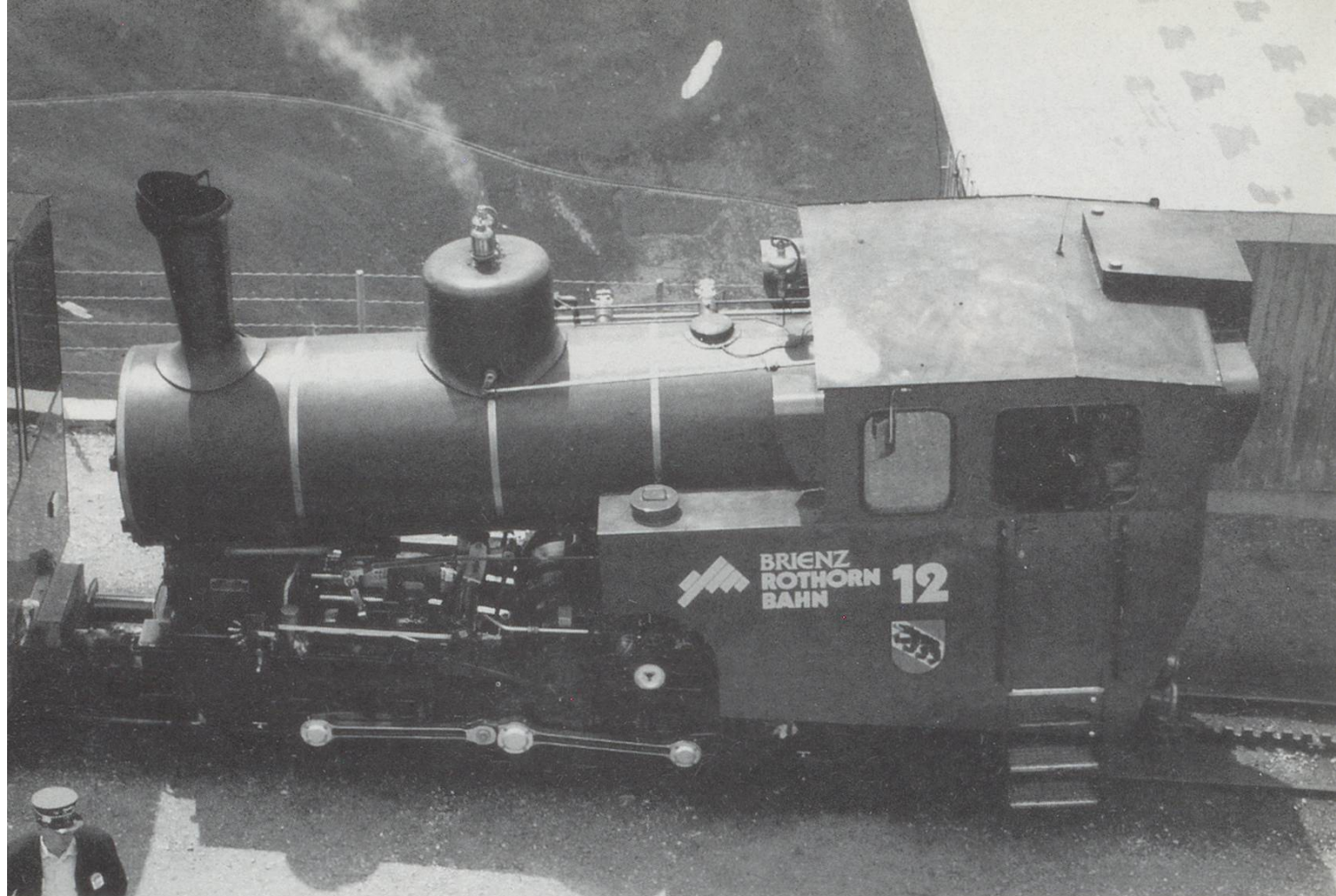
by Peter Arnold. Photographs by the Author

Most readers will probably be aware that the Brien Rothorn Bahn (BRB) purchased a completely new design of oil fired, one man operated, steam rack locomotive at a cost of 1.8m Sfr. from SLM, Winthurth in May 1992. This machine (SLM Works No. 5456) is No. 12 in the BRB fleet and has proved to be extremely successful in service.

During a visit in July 1995 I picked up a couple of attractive glossy colour booklets which were available at the BRB's Brien terminus. Although printed in German one, entitled "Rothorn Zytig", was obviously a publicity magazine issued by the Company whilst the other appeared to be the prospectus for a share issue. However my interest was immediately taken by the fact that both leaflets contained a drawing showing steam locomotive No. 15! Eventually, after returning home, I managed to translate both publications which have provided me with information for the rest of this article.

Subject to the success of No.12 it was always

intended that one, or possibly two, further locos should be ordered. The Board of Directors, presumably having discussed how such further acquisitions should be financed, decided to seek agreement for an increase in the share capital. At the BRB's Annual General Meeting on 25th June 1994, shareholders voted in favour of an increase in the Company's authorised share capital of 2.5m Sfr. to a new total of 12.15m Sfr. Accordingly in November 1994 the Board of Directors offered for sale at par 3,678 new preference shares of 500Sfr. each. This offer was fully subscribed, providing an increase in capital of 1.839mSfr, and ensured that funds were available to purchase No.14. Following this success the Directors offered the remaining 1,322 shares for sale on 15th April 1995 with a closing date of 15th November 1995 - hence the share prospectus which I picked up. This prospectus states that this latest share issue will allow purchase of No.15 which will cost approx. 2.1m Sfr. based on June 1994 prices.



Previous page: No.12 seen here at Brienz on 16 JULY 1995.

Above: Another view of No. 12 seen here at Rothorn Kulm.

BRB have stated that these two new steam locomotives will guarantee steam operations on the line for the next decade. In fact the Company's long term aim is that steam will replace their four diesel hydrostatic locos which were constructed between 1973 and 1987. Thus two more new steam locomotives will enter service in 1996 and the date of the official handing over ceremony at Brienz has already been advertised for Thursday 13th June. This date may be surprising in view of the fact that the BRB has never used the number 13 for any of its locos or carriages!

Another BRB innovation in May 1995 was their first "Dampf Workshop" at a cost of 1,200 Sfr and run in response to demand from enthusiasts wishing to learn the art of firing. These courses, which started on a Tuesday and finished on a Friday during the weeks prior to the start of regular public services, included BRB history, steam loco operation, daily maintenance, brake testing, route knowledge, lighting up procedure culminating in firing one of the 1891/2 built locos between Brienz and Planalp. Another course is planned for May

1996 and, if you are seriously interestd, details can be obtained from Brienz Rothorn Bahn, CH-3855 Brienz. Tel: 00 41 36 51 12 32 or Fax: 00 41 36 51 37 95.

Finally, as I shall not be going to Switzerland in 1996, if any members attend either of the above events then please let our editor have a report for a future issue.

Hebden Bridge -

Swiss weeks - 1st-15th June 1996

The Society has benn invited to put on a display at the Information Centre in Hebden Bridge, its is hoped to have a manned stand and possibly a layout on the three weekends and a static display, (posters etc.) during the week, would any members who can come along and man the stand, or have a small layout they could bring along for one of the weekend dates contact Peter Dransfield.

Please support the Society if you can.