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Hüntwangen-Wil station lies on the north bank of the River Rhine on the route between Zürich and Schaffhausen. This link was completed by the old NOB on the opening on 1 June 1897 of the section between Eglisau and Neuhausen. Electrified in 1928, this section remains single track and is now the principal Zürich-Schaffhausen route, handling through passenger and freight trains from SE Germany to Italy via the Gotthard. A peculiarity of the route is that it actually runs in part through Germany with three stations in that country run by the SBB and completely detached from the rest of the German railways system. There are no border formalities however and the hourly stopping local service is not delayed. The principal engineering work on the line is the viaduct over the Rhine, immediately south of Hüntwangen-Wil station; this is some 440 metres in length and the 90 metre centre girder span is approached by 10 stone arches on either side with a sharp curve to the east on the southern part. The difficulty in rebuilding this viaduct has no doubt precluded the doubling of the track (so far) but the density of the traffic will probably lead to action having to be taken in due course.

The Hüntwangen-Wil station locality is very picturesque and decidedly rural; the station is only a kilometre from Eglisau village but the station of that name south of the river serves this. Hüntwangen and Wil villages lie 2-3 kilometres to the northwest and a good half-hour walk from the station. I found this out on my first visit in 1988 when a large Swiss lady insisted on giving me a lift to the village whilst I was looking for the gravel loader. At the time I put this down to a communications breakdown!

Apart from its picturesque location and the through traffic on offer; Hüntwangen-Wil has one other incentive for a visit. It appears to originate more stone and gravel traffic than Peak Forest does in this country! I think at the time of my last visit this was probably inflated by stone for the Zürich-Thalwil line improvements but in an hours observation 3 trains departed, 1 train and 2 light engines arrived. A further locomotive and a tractor were shunting. In the midst of this activity 2 southbound freight, an express each way, an RBe 540 Bülach-Schaffhausen local each way and an Re 450 Zürich-Rafz local each way passed through. 14 trains and

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remember this is on a single line route. Most classes of locomotives appear, the stone trains were mostly Ae6/6 although a double headed Re4/4 combination was seen. Re4/4 are used on the expresses and Re6/6 appear on the through freights. An Em3/3 usually drops off local goods traffic, comprising mainly cement wagons, and the station tractor in 1999 was 343. This tractor also pops over the viaduct to shunt wagons for the Pepsi plant at Eglisau. This plant has its own diesel shunter painted an attractive Pepsi blue and living in an elevated shed by the southern end of the viaduct.

The stone trains are mainly comprised of large bogie hoppers and lower sided hoppers both formerly available as models from Liliput; the high-sided variety is now available from Bachman. Whilst the majority of wagons used are in the Hüntwangen-Wil Co. livery other wagons from gravel companies in the locality i.e. Weiacher Kies appear in the rakes. The smaller hoppers appear to need the use of a "reach" wagon at the loader and spare small hoppers are used for this purpose, being kept in track 1 by the loading dock (see diagram). These are picked up and detached as required by the train loco and then replaced in the dock by the station tractor. The station trackage is quite compact for the traffic handled, the only improvement over the years being the addition of the modern island platform for the passenger traffic. Trains can be propelled to or from the loader, the woods around the site restricting photography of the latter. Gravel pits cover this area of the country and a trip along the line from Eglisau to Zurzach will reveal better views of other loaders, huge working pits adjacent to the track and further rail activity.

There are several areas from which to photograph the viaduct although close up shots are restricted by trees and I would always recommend the purchase of a good map so that you can search out all the different footpaths etc., 1:50000 Map no. 5010 Zürich-Schaffhausen covers this area and several other good locations as well. You will save money by buying this in Switzerland, the larger station kiosks nation-wide and all the smaller kiosks in the locality will stock it.

Photos on opposite page by Ernie Brack.

Upper: SBB Tem¹ 343 shunts "Reach" wagon into track 1, April 1999. **Lower:** Ae6/6 11434 arrives with empties. Note the Holderbank hoppers.

