

Zeitschrift: Swiss express : the Swiss Railways Society journal
Band: 4 (1994-1996)
Heft: 12

Artikel: Glarus
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-855111>

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Glarus by Steve Horobin

Above: The station at Elm.
28/6/95 by Steve Horobin

Heading towards Chur from Zurich along the main railway line in eager anticipation of the delights of the Rhaetian Railway it is easy not to notice as you pass briefly through the northern extremity of the Canton of Glarus.

Glarus is an isolated Mountain locked area of Switzerland, the Canton is situated along two major valleys the Linth and the Senf with part of the Walensee on its northern border there are only two main routes into Glarus and one of these the Klausen Pass is closed in the winter.

To reach Glarus by rail you must change at Ziegelbrücke, a busy junction station and terminus for the Zurich S-Bahn services, there is much activity and variety of trains to watch and the Tem shunter is kept constantly busy.

The Cantonal line climbs up the Linthal passing Nafels where once a former branch line ran to Weesen the trackbed is still in place and can be walked, the lower part of the Linthal is very industrial with a cement works, paper mill and many engineering plants, most of which are rail connected.

The station building at Glarus is quite grand, appropriately so, for the Cantonal Capital, opposite the station is a timber built shed that is

home to steam locomotive Eb3/5 5811 dating from 1911, looking very sad in an ugly green primer painted coat.

Most passenger services on the line are operated by NPZ units with the exception of commuter trains to Zurich which are worked by Re4/4's. Freight trains are worked by Re4/4's or the Bm 18424 based at Ziegelbrücke.

Continuing up the valley Schwanden is reached from where a former tramway ran up the Senthal to the resort of Elm. The tramway was closed in the 1960's and replaced by the Autobus Schwanden Company, the former terminus station at Elm is still in use as a bus station and depot.

Further on the Cantonal line is a stop for Braunwald Funicular that climbs 650 metres to the car free village of Braunwald set on a sunny plateau giving endless walking and in winter skiing opportunities.

The 'Glaner Line' terminates at the village of Linthal where a Post Bus connection can be made over the Klausen Pass at 1948 metres before dropping down to Fluelen on lake Luzern a spectacular way of leaving one of Switzerland's lesser known Cantons.