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## PRESS RELEASE

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### «Rolling Stock» Picture archive of Gian Brügger 2 March 2014 to 31 August 2014

In the «Rolling Stock» exhibition, Albula Railway Museum is showing part of the comprehensive photographic archive of Gian Brügger. Gian Brügger is a railway historian; for many years he was on the staff of the Rhaetian Railway, and since the 1960s he has been documenting Rhaetian Railway rolling stock. On the one hand, every constructional and technical modification has been meticulously recorded by him in a notebook, and on the other Gian Brügger, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, photographed everything that travelled along RhB rails. These pictures document a kind of golden age in the technical development of rolling stock.

Arranged as a systematic record of RhB rolling stock, Gian Brügger's black and white images transform railway industry property into a sculptural construct. Sorted into the typologies of traction vehicles, railway carriages, goods wagons, service vehicles and trains on the move, individual pictures show the viewer the enormous differences in the sometimes bizarre forms of these machines. Because of the serial processing and the current exhibition the motifs can be compared, and differentiated characteristics develop out of them. On some photos the object almost disappears in the background. Gian Brügger photographs in a matter-of-fact style reminiscent of the photography of Bernd and Hilla Becher. For decades, they have devoted themselves to the task of documenting and archiving the vanishing industrial culture throughout the world.

(Biographical notes)

Gian Brügger's grandfather was a linesman in Spinaz, his father was deputy head of the depot in Samedan, so as a boy, Gian could be found either in the station or at the depot. After serving his station apprenticeship he spent 45 years with the Rhaetian Railway. In the end he was responsible for operational planning and contributed to designing the further development of the line. He has written a number of books about the Albula Railway, and he also collaborated on drawing up the World Heritage dossier for UNESCO.

As a member of the scientific advisory committee of the Railway Museum, Gian Brügger made an important contribution to the establishment of the Albula Railway Museum.

*Gian Brügger remembers:*

*«There used to be far more vehicles distributed right across the network. If they were looking for a coach to be overhauled, coach deployment was given the job of locating it. We at the station noted down every afternoon, which coaches were on site. You had to fill out a form to do this. If the station was empty, you took an A5 slip, noted "Vakat" [blank] and put it into the leather folder with the rest of the official mail. The folder was sent to Chur by the last passenger train. There is still this internal mail for communicating with the administration in Chur today too, even though the RhB rolling stock is equipped with GPS transmitters.*

*Sometimes coach deployment would be looking for a vehicle that was no longer in existence. Then I would write back that this or that coach had been discontinued. But as a young official I had to be very careful how I put it so that the bosses didn't feel offended. It took quite some time before they acknowledged that I knew what I was talking about.*



*In 1962, I started making notes on the rolling stock in a diary. My Dad thought I should in fact make a booklet with all vehicles, also along with details about what kind of buffers and axles they were fitted with, so that the repair team when they were sent out with the relief*

*coach had the right materials with them. The information about the buffers and axles had to be collected on the spot, that was quite a job! Over time, the booklets became every more extensive. Today of course, I record it on the computer, then I print the lists out. I always carry an A6 notebook on me, and note alter-ations to the rolling stock, that's how all my knowledge has been built up. I've recorded all vehicles that came into operation from 1889 up to now, and of course when something was altered too. There's a chronological table of the rolling stock with all the details, and another table, arranged according to coach numbers. If I see a locomotive or a coach, I always look for overhaul data! They give an indication that something was altered. This then requires me to look properly, and note the alterations in my little book – for today as a pensioner I no longer pick up on everything.»*

Further information and opening times are to be found online at [www.bahnmuseum-albula.ch](http://www.bahnmuseum-albula.ch).

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#### **About the Albula Railway Museum**

The Albula Railway Museum represents the unique cultural and historical merits of what is probably Europe's most spectacular Alpine railway. The combination of nature, culture, architecture and the museum itself has enormous potential, which we want to tap into, in a meaningful way with public appeal – directly incorporating the Albula/Bernina landscape (which can be experienced every day and is part of the Rhaetian Railway, a UNESCO World Heritage site) as well as the industrious population and the active tourism. The museum lends another aspect to the Rhaetian Railway as a UNESCO World Heritage site: it tells, and elaborates on, stories and facts which are addressed on the Rhaetian Railway UNESCO World Heritage site's long-distance hike, with presentations of content and local info points, thus creating an additional attraction. The presented railway experience trail between Bergün and Preda virtually constitutes the museum's exterior: topics conveyed in the museum can be experienced at first hand. The educational railway trail and the Rhaetian Railway UNESCO World Heritage site's long-distance hike lead to this place for railway enthusiasts and jointly invite travellers to visit the museum. More information can be found at [www.bahnmuseum-albula.ch](http://www.bahnmuseum-albula.ch).

#### **If you have questions, please contact:**

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