

An Englishman, an Australian and an American have breakfast in an SBB restaurant car...

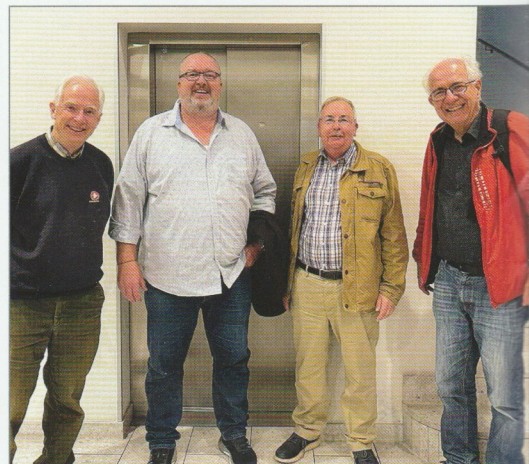
By Bill Salter

NO, THAT IS NOT THE introduction to a corny joke, but what actually happened when your *Swiss Express* Editor, Graeme Henderson, Boyd Misstear and your author met up in Bern over the weekend of 13 and 14 September to attend two enthusiast events, namely the *Gotthard Bahntage* festival at SBB Historic's Erstfeld locomotive depot and *Les Chemins de fer disparus*, a celebration of railways past at the Blonay-Chamby museum to mark the 110th anniversary of the opening of the Leuk-Leukerbad (LLB) line. The star of the latter event was to be LLB ABFe 2/4 No.10. The LLB was

of course the subject of a lengthy article by Graeme in *Swiss Express* 162, so he just had to be there.

The evening before we had all met up at the hotel along with Mario Gavazzi, a regular contributor to *Swiss Express* who lives in Luzern, and enjoyed dinner together. Boyd and I had spent the day with Mario enjoying a cruise on *Blümlisalp* on Lake Thun which included a detailed tour of the paddle-wheel steamer.

But why did we sit down where we did? Well, we had decided to stay overnight at the Hotel am Bahnhof in Bern's



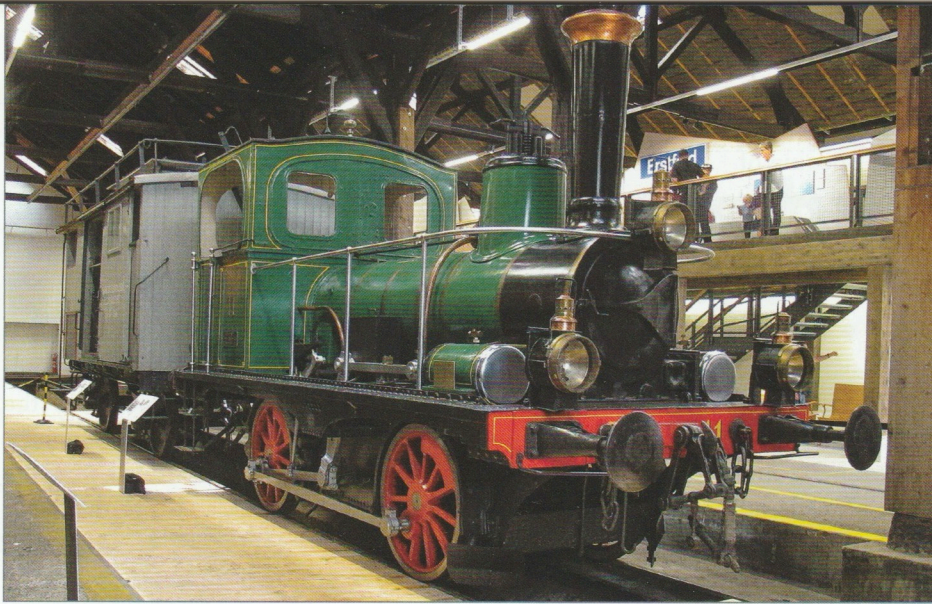
Above: The Friday night meeting up in the hotel reception. From left to right: Boyd Misstear, Graeme Henderson, Bill Salter and Mario Gavazzi.

Upper left: Mallet G 2 x 2/2 No.105 makes itself known as it climbs the grade out of Blonay station on Sunday 14 September. Graeme Henderson

Lower left: On Saturday 13 September 2025, SBB C 5/6 Elefant No.2978 departs Erstfeld 09:35 with the first steam trip of the day to Göschenen. Graeme Henderson

Below: Boyd and Bill enjoy breakfast on the 06:31 IC1 from Bern to Zürich. (We recommend the restaurant car!). Graeme Henderson





Above: Built in 1881 by SLM, E 2/2 No.11 of the Gotthardbahn in the museum at Erstfeld on Saturday 13 September. *Bill Salter*

Upper right: More SRS members than you can point a stick at! From left to right: Boyd Misstear (Connecticut, US), John Richie (California, US), Bill Salter (UK), David Baird (California, US) and Graeme Henderson (Australia) at Erstfeld on Saturday 13 September 2025. *Graeme Henderson*

Right: What more could you ask for – alpenhorns with trains in the background! *Bill Salter*



Blonay-Chamby

On the Sunday a more civilised departure time of 08:04 was possible on an IR15 heading for Geneva. Unusually, we had to change at Palézieux rather than Puidoux-Chexbres for the run down the *Linge des Vins* to Vevey. Because of engineering work on the coastal route all Lausanne–Brig trains were being diverted with a reversal at Palézieux and our connecting train was a Geneva–Brig IR90 formed of a single Class 511 four-car unit (511 102) that was totally overloaded.

At Vevey we had a quick change on to a TMR train for the 16-minute ride to Blonay. When we arrived there was a steam train about to depart for the museum at Chaulin. We had not yet bought tickets but were happy to let the steam train go because it was only 20 minutes to the next service which would be provided by LLB No.10, for Graeme the whole reason for going to the museum.

Soon we set off groaning and creaking up the hillside in our 110-year-old chariot. I immediately noticed that every panel



LLB ABFe 2/4 No.10 shunting at Blonay on Sunday 14 September 2025. *Graeme Henderson*



Above: Fe 4/4 No.151 of the Compagnie Genevoise des Tramways Electriques shunts within the museum's grounds at Blonay-Chamby on Sunday 14 September 2025. Bill Salter



Above right: Ce 2/3 of the Tramways Lausannois with C 57 of the Vevey Montreux Chillon Villeneuve at the Blonay-Chamby Museum on Sunday 14 September 2025. Bill Salter



Right: Sernftalbahnen BCFe 2/2 No.4 under restoration at the museum. Bill Salter

inside was moving independently and suddenly understood why staff were making the sign of the cross and wishing us *bon courage* rather than *bon voyage*. This railcar is going to need significant work at some stage in the near future. After the customary reversal at Chamby we dropped back down to the museum.

As already mentioned, the theme of the weekend was to mark the 110th anniversary of the opening of the LLB with vehicles from the BC collection that originated from railways that no longer exist.

Some of the highlights are described below.

The steam locomotive we let go at Blonay was Mallet G 2 x 2/2 No.105, a First World War field locomotive ordered by the German military in 1918 just before the armistice (so it

never saw active service). It spent most of its life on the Zell-Todtnau railway close to Basel until the line closed in 1967 whereupon it became the museum's first steam locomotive.

Tramway postal car Ze 2/2 No.31 of the Rheintalische Strassenbahn was unique in Switzerland. It was financed by the Swiss postal authorities and was dedicated solely to the carriage of mail in and around Altstätten. It was one of the museum's first acquisitions.

Fe 4/4 No.151 of the Compagnie Genevoise des Tramways Electriques, one of six 'tractors' built in 1910 and used to haul standard gauge wagons on skates around the city. The only surviving member of the six, No.151 was acquired by the museum in 1972.

Inside the depot, the museum was keen to show off the progress made with



LLB ABFe 2/4 No.10 has run from Blonay and is passing in front of the museum on Sunday 14 September 2025. The train will continue to Chamby and then reverse into the museum. Graeme Henderson

the restoration of former Sernftalbahnen BCFe 2/2 No.4. This vehicle has been at the museum since 1969. The Sernftalbahnen was described in *Swiss Express* 161. Progress on the Mallet G 2 x 3/3 No.104, also from the Zell-Todtnau railway was also visible.

Two other interesting exhibitions were a collection of vintage uniforms supplied by a costume hire firm and a display of agricultural machinery working in the field below the café looking out toward the line from Blonay and Lake Geneva.

We left mid-afternoon, loaded down with books from their second-hand book stall to head back to Bern. A quick consultation of timetables showed that we could do so via Montreux and Zweisimmen on the *Belle Époque* train of the MOB, so that is what we did. A marvellous weekend was then finished off with a visit to a restaurant in the Bärenplatz to partake of their finest Röschi. +



LLB M51.



LLB K41.



LLB Lo 60.



AB4 No. 22. This car is still being restored to traffic.