

Zeitschrift: Swiss express : the Swiss Railways Society journal
Herausgeber: Swiss Railways Society
Band: - (2008)
Heft: 93

Artikel: Vapeur mania 08 : 40 ans de musée vivant
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-854603>

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VAPEUR MANIA 08

40 ans de musée vivant

Le Vaudois



G 3/3 6 ex C de F Bière-Apples-Morges (SLM 1901, to BC 1967) waits at Blonay ready to return to Chamby, May 2006

PHOTOS: Le Vaudois

The enthusiasts promoting the Blonay-Chamby Museum Railway (BC) were granted a concession to operate the line on 1st May 1968, less than two years after the last public train of the Chemins de fer électriques veveysans (CEV) had run. By 20th July of that year they began running their tourist trains, which have continued to attract visitors ever since. Hence the dedicated band of volunteers who operate trains every weekend from Easter to the end of October are celebrating the railway's fortieth anniversary in 2008. During this period they have been able to acquire metre gauge stock from most parts of Switzerland, as well as some from further afield, and the volunteers have built up an enviable reputation for the high standard to which their historic vehicles are restored.

For those who have not taken a ride I

must explain that the track runs along a narrow ledge high above the waters of Lac Léman with magnificent views to the snow-capped French mountains on the far side of the lake. Connections are made at Chamby with the Montreux-Oberland bernois (MOB) and at Blonay with the former CEV trains from Vevey to Les Pleiades. Since CEV has become part of the MOB Group, the line has offered a useful route for transferring stock from Vevey to the works at Chernex for maintenance.

Thanks to the cooperation of the Blonay-Chamby supporters, *Swiss Express* has been given advance information about the plans for celebrating this milestone. Proposed dates, where known, are given but as we go to press the programme is still being finalised and so you are recommended to check on the railway's

web-site, www.blonay-chamby.ch before making arrangements to visit Switzerland to join-in the fun.

Although a Festival of Vehicles in service will be held over the Easter Holiday (21st – 24th March), with MOB De 4/4 28 visiting, the planned *Vapeur Mania* programme begins with the actual 40th anniversary day on Thursday 1st May when official trains will run through from Vevey to Chaulin Dépôt via Blonay. There will also be a line up of steam locos saluting the official party with synchronised whistling (perhaps an idea for a new Olympic sport!). The following two Saturdays (3rd and 10th May) will see a frequent service of electric trains during the mornings, with steam taking over most trips in the afternoons. The days will be rounded-off with a spectacular *Son et Lumière* presentation in the evening, beginning at 19.45 and lasting for about one and a half hours.

On the Sundays of these weekends (4th and 11th May) frequent services (largely steam-hauled) will operate throughout the day, with motive power being allocated in rotation. The anniversary fortnight



G2 x 2/2 105 (Karlsruhe 1918, to BC 1968) ex German Zell-Todnau line near the coaling stage at Chaulin Dépôt, May 2006.

will finish on Monday 12th May (Pentecost – Swiss Public Holiday) with a multi-headed steam train -hopefully consisting of five locomotives - posing on the line's principal engineering

With fuelling of BFD HG 3/4 3 (SLM 1914) almost completed, the baskets of coal are stacked neatly at the coaling stage by the bifurcation at Chaulin Dépôt, September 2007.





Lausanne-Echallens-Bercher G 3/3 8 Echallens, one of the guest locomotives invited to the BC's 40th anniversary, arrives at Bercher, September 2007.

G 3/3 _6 ex C de F Bière-Apples-Morges (SLM 1901, to BC 1967) arrives at Chamby to connect with MOB trains to Montreux and Zweisimmen, May 2006.



feature, the lofty viaduct across the Bay of Clarens and Chamby. The railway will also be taking part in *La nuit des musées* on 17th May, and will have a day of music on the trains on 21st June, with an evening concert by *l'Harmonie lausannoise* staged in the BC Dépôt.

For the annual *Journées du patrimoine* on Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th September the Blonay-Chamby supporters will be staging a "Bernina Weekend", during which the large RhB Ge 4/4 electric locomotive No. 181 will haul two coaches from its original line serving delicious (and hugely calorific) gateaux which are a speciality of the caterers at Chaulin. At the museum itself they plan to demonstrate the RhB snowplough Xrot 9214, originally built for the Bernina line in 1913. The last special event for the 40th anniversary year will be the weekend called *En famille au musée* (1st and 2nd November). Supported by the museums of the Vaud Riviera, it is an opportunity to welcome the local people

to try out a variety of railway-related activities, such as rides for the children on the small maintenance vehicles.

In addition to its own four serviceable steam locomotives, the railway is planning to play host to three other Swiss metre gauge steam locomotives for at least a part of the season. The well-known (in model and prototype form) RhB locomotive No.1 *Rhätia* (SLM 1889) will move right across Switzerland to steam along the BC's attractive route. She had been in use on the BC for many years until being returned to Graübunden for the RhB centenary in 1989. At Chaulin *Rhätia* will have a reunion with the RhB snowplough Xrot 9214 and 181. The DFB HG 2/3 No.6 *Weisshorn* (SLM 1902) is due to be reunited with her sister No. 3, already a valuable member of the BC's regular fleet. Finally, from the nearby Lausanne-Echallens-Bercher line the G 3/3 No. 8 *Echallens* (SLM, 1910) will join her sister No.5 *Bercher* (SACM 1890), which has been based at the BC sheds since 1973, although sadly she is awaiting an overhaul and will not be able to be steamed during 2008.

As you can see, there is much to tempt SRS members to travel to the shores of Lac Léman during 2008 and the editorial team hopes you will inundate them with photographs of the various events on the *Chemin de fer-musée Blonay-Chamby* for possible publication.



BFD HG 3/4 3 (SLM 1914), a regular performer on the Blonay-Chamby line since 1970, stands by the Chaulin Dépôt coaling stage, May 2006.

...and so the sun sinks slowly in the west. Seen from Chernex, September 2007.

