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THE QUESTION IS?

MICHAEL FARR POSED A QUESTION IN THE LAST ISSUE. WHAT WAS THE CHEMINS DE FER CLARENS-CHAILLY-BLONAY? LOADS OF ANSWERS. MANY THANKS TO ALL THOSE WHO REPLIED. HE ALSO ENQUIRED ABOUT A REFERENCE BOOK GIVING DATES OF OPENING AND CLOSURES (WHERE APPROPRIATE.) SEVERAL SUGGESTIONS WERE MADE, SO READ ON -



From: David Cheeseman

I believe that I can shed some light on the question raised by Michael Farr on page 42 re: C de F Clarens-Chailly-Blonay and at the same time push the date of 1958 back to 1953 as mentioned in Thoughts from the Chair, page 3.

The book, *Tramways & Light Railways of Switzerland & Austria* (see Swiss Express review) by R.J.Buckley, published by the LRTA, 2nd edition (2000) lists all tramways in Switzerland on page 23/24. The Table gives: CCB, Clarens-Chailly-Blonay, Date of opening 23.11.1911e (e = electric traction), date of closing 31.12.1955, Maximum length 5.63km.

The CCB was observed operating in 1953 whilst staying at a hotel above Clarens on a school trip to improve our French. The tramlines were noticed in the centre of the carriageway. The service appeared to be very infrequent with no timetables displayed. The tram was only seen once in over a week but with daily outings it was difficult to judge the frequency. The track up the hill from Clarens was single with just a stub terminal at the lower end and no passing loops in the first one kilometre or so. Unfortunately there was no opportunity to explore further up the line. In Clarens there was no physical connection to the Vevey-Montreux-Chillon-Villeneuve Tramway (VMCV) although the gauge was the same. The latter line closed 19.01.1958 and was replaced by the trolleybuses still running today.

I also discovered another reference about the CCB which may be of interest. Eisenbahn Journal, Special 6/93, is on the MOB. It includes a section on *Die Nachbarbahnen* (neighbouring railways) der MOB page 58+. There are two maps on page 58 showing the whole route of the MOB and an enlargement of the Montreux area. The latter shows the CCB. On page 60 there is a paragraph about the CCB. It is all in German so I will not offer a translation.

From: Nigel Lemon

The following rather limited information may be of use in replying to Michael Farr's query (Swiss Express p42, March 2003) about the Chemin de Fer Clarens-Chailly-Blonay [CCB]. My source is *Chemin de Fer Montreux-Oberland-Bernois: du Leman au pays-d'en haut*, a French-language text by four authors published 1992 by BVA in Lausanne (I bought my expensive copy at quarter-price in a sale!) although there is doubtless more information in the same publishers' *Les Tramways Vaudois* which alas I do not have.

The MOB did in fact meet the CCB at Fontainivent where the CCB reversed en route from Clarens to Blonay: the MOB needed in 1911 to rearrange its approach there from Montreux to accommodate the CCB which could then cross over the MOB as each followed their uphill routes.

The CCB operated as a tramway/railway from 1911 until 1955, closing on 31 December of that year. "Tramway" described it in usual French-language terms, i.e. a light rural railway whether it was by the road or in open countryside. Enclosed tram-type vehicles illustrated in the volume cited appear to be 2-axle and retained bow collectors to the end, perhaps 30 years after the MOB changed to pantographs.

From: Richard Penny

The Chemin de Fer Clarens - Chailly - Blonay (CCB) was opened on 23/11/1911 between Clarens-CFF and Blonay. It was a metre gauge narrow gauge line electrified from opening at 750 - 900 V dc. The only notable engineering feature seems to have been a tunnel, 78m long, at Fontainivent. The line was extended to the lakeside at Clarens-Débarcadère on 4/7/1915, partly sharing the tracks of the Vevey - Montreux - Chillon - Villeneuve tramway. The section from Clarens-Débarcadère to Clarens-Gambetta was closed on

31/10/1943, and the remainder of the line closed on 31/12/1955. The tunnel was subsequently used for growing mushrooms!

The Swiss do not seem to differentiate between railways and tramways, but I would imagine the CCB would have been a tramway type of operation, and that at least the section in Clarens would probably have involved street running as the VMCV was a tramway.

The information comes from *Schiennennetz Schweiz*, published by the Generalsekretariat SBB in 1980. This is a most useful book, including opening and closing dates for all railways, dates of electrification and double track, funicular railways, urban tramways, traffic over lines of different gauges (usually standard gauge wagons on metre gauge transporters but in one case metre gauge vehicles on standard gauge transporters*), lists of tunnels and bridges, abbreviations of the railway companies and gradient profiles of lines that existed at the time. I do not know if the book has been updated and re-published since 1980.

* Metre gauge wagons were carried on standard gauge transporter wagons between Zweisimmen and Interlaken Ost between 1941 and 1946.

From: Peter Valentine

In response to Michael Farr's query, I offer the following information: (Source - *Schmalspurparadies Schweiz*, Band 1 by Röhr/Schweers/Wall; published by Schweers+Wall, Aachen, 1986; p.110. English translation by Erica Long-Michalke and Matthias Michalke)

"The CCB had existed since 1911 and had been half railway, half tramway. In Clarens it had had a connection to the SBB and, from 1915, to the VMCV [Vevey-Montreux-Chillon-Villeneuve, Switzerland's first electric tramway, opened Vevey-Chillon 1888, extended to Villeneuve 1903] as well. The Fontanivent station was used jointly with the MOB, which also ran the operations of the CCB. In Blonay the line came to an end at the station square; there was no crossover to the CEV [Chemin de fer électriques Veveysans]. Worthy of mention are the three viaducts over the Baye de Clarens and the tunnel near Fontanivent. The rolling stock consisted of three heavy, two-axle railcars which were in service until the closure in 1955."

The German language text provides the following additional details in the table:

Clarens CFF-Blonay	Opened 23.11.1911
Clarens CFF-Débaracadère	Opened 4. 7.1915
Clarens-Débaracadère-Pl.Gambetta	Closed 31.10.1943
Clarens Pl. Gambetta-Blonay	Closed 31.12.1955
Gauge - 1000mm	Length - 5463m
Max. Gradient - 87%	Min. Radius - 40m
Electrical system - 750Vdc	

The principal stations were Clarens-Gambetta, Clarens CFF, Tavel, Baugy, Chailly, Fontanivent, Brent, and Blonay. Through journeys mostly took 24-28 minutes (but 34 minutes in one instance), depending on waiting time at Fontanivent for MOB connections.

From Paul Balcombe - The Garden Layout

I, too, remember Herr Oswald's garden layout. I think Geoffrey Kitchenside visited it at the same time as I did in 1963 as members of one of Ian Allan's rail tours. Are there any other members ancient enough to have been present on these visits? As for the miniature railway, I was in Luzern in 2001 and there was no mention in guidebooks though they managed to list the best gay bars. I suppose that is what you go all the way to Switzerland for, but I doubt it. There is a freebee guide given out which gives a brief description of places to see and the page referring to the Transport and Communication Museum mentions a "Gartendampfbahn" and that's all.

From Steve Horobin

Although not specifically part of The Question Is? Steve Horobin replied to my query about the units used on the local trains in and out of Friedrichshafen.

Services are operated at half-hourly intervals by the Bodensee Oberschwaben Bahn which has a mixture of 2 classes of railcars 4xRS1 built by Adtranz in 1998 as in your photograph and 3xNE81 built in 93&94 by ABB and WU. (who they?) The Swiss Pass and Card are valid on the Ferry service to Romanshorn.

AND HERE WE SEEM TO HAVE COME TO A CRASHING HALT. ANY QUESTIONS? SEND THEM TO 'THE QUESTION IS?' AT THE ADDRESS ON PAGE 1. LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU.