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Autor: Keyworth, Roger
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LAUNCHING THE m2 AT LAUSANNE

Roger Keyworth

Following on from the news item in the September *Swiss Express* about the official opening of the new **m2** section of the Metro, as I was on holiday in Switzerland I decided to visit Lausanne on Thursday 18th September to try and observe the ceremony.

There was no information available regarding the event at the main SBB Station. However, moving up to Lausanne Flon station I spotted a poster advertising the opening activities. This comprised a formal ceremony (that finally started an hour later than advertised) in Place de la Riponne which was to be followed by some artistic dancers later in the afternoon. These Thursday activities were followed on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday with open-air concerts featuring classical and popular music in the Place de la Riponne, Place de l'Europe and five other locations. There was free travel on the **m2** from 15.30 on the Thursday and over the whole weekend.

The formal opening was attended by over 500 people who were entertained by a Jazz Band and treated to a children's display on the stage. This was followed by the formal ribbon-cutting that took place down below on the platforms of the Place de la Riponne station with the press and invited guests making their way, eventually, up to the surface and into the "arena". Interviews then took place with the individuals who were involved with commissioning, designing



and building the project and after this the "men in-suits" were replaced by the "dancers" whom I had seen rehearsing earlier in the day.

Following the ceremony I made my way down to Flon Station

and rode on **m2** down to the main SBB Station. It is all very smart and, similar to the newer section of the Jubilee Line in London (and many other modern Metro systems), there are doors on the platform edge. The trains start very quickly indeed and this could prove to be a difficulty for some groups of people as was alluded to in the June magazine. On the day I rode they had trouble with the platform indicators where trains "disappeared" but teething troubles happen on most systems. Following the launch events I understand that it was anticipated that the full system would open towards the end of October.

Editors note. I was in Lausanne two weeks earlier than Roger. In the City Tourist Office they claimed to know little about the plans for the opening ceremony and the subsequent celebrations. Swiss efficiency does tend, in my experience, to fall apart when publicising their events. Staff in the office commented that although the railway was operational the work on the stations was known to be so far behind schedule that even the end-October opening looked to be optimistic, and that an end-November date seemed more realistic.

*In practice the **m2** opened on 27th October.*