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IF IT'S WEDNESDAY IT MUST BE GENÈVE

David Stevenson



From left to right, the author, Derek Cate, Paul Hannant, Gus Basso, Steve Hobbs and Phil Blackman pictured at Apples. 24.06.09.

ALL PHOTO: David Stevenson.

I can't pretend any originality in the title (*the Editor came up with it*) but it does encapsulate the day. As regular readers and members will recall the SRS West Midlands Group had a great one-day jaunt to Zürich last year. I did think long and hard about doing something similar again and having checked flights it seemed that Genève had become a possibility from Luton on *easyjet*. I took a deep breath and mentioned it to one or two Group members and we were on. My fare was just £41.93 return – cheaper than a day return by train from Worcester to London.

The 06.30 ex-Luton would get us into Genève at 09.00 local time. Paul Hannant, Phil Blackman and myself stayed the previous night (well to 04.30 anyway) in the Toddington Travelodge for just £19. Having checked in on-line, and with no luggage, we went straight through security, meeting with Derek Cate on the plane. We were away on time, landed a few minutes early and on arrival at Genève's aéroport we were joined by Gus Basso and Steve Hobbs who had travelled overnight from Rome on the sleeper. We, or rather I, chose the BAM as our first destination and we

headed for Morges on the CFF main line to Lausanne. Here the first picture of the day was a BAM Ge4/4 resting after arrival on a freight. We headed up the BAM to Bière, then came back to Apples where we needed to hang around for about an hour for the L'Isle branch train departure at 12.33. At about 11.51 an up train ex-Morges disgorged loads of children who got on the waiting L'Isle branch unit. The driver appeared and when I asked him when he was going I was surprised to learn it was "Immédiatement pour les petits autant que Pampigny-Sévery". This was too good to miss, so we jumped on - he didn't seem to mind - and off we went. A few minutes later the children were off and we returned to Apples. Rather than making the children wait 40-minutes for the scheduled service this is apparently normal practice – a local company offering a user-orientated service, unfortunately not something that is common in the UK! At 12.33 we headed off all the way to L'Isle along this wonderful and bucolic branch line with its picture postcard perfect terminus. The driver showed us the preserved unit in the shed there and we came

back with him at 12.59. What a nice bloke.

At Morges we line-sided for a bit and then had lunch in a café in the square outside. A truly dreadful omelette and frites - but with fantastic coffee. My gut (!) feeling was now to head for Nyon so we said goodbye to Gus and Steve at Morges (not too many tears as they were off to Montreux for the MOB to Zweisimmen) and took the next train west. After a coffee/beer/milk in Nyon's station café we walked through this beautiful little town to the lake and watched CGN's ps *Simplon* come in and depart - with Derek who chose to return to Geneva on it. We headed back uphill to the station via the castle and town square (and a spectacularly good local ice cream) and took the train to Genève arriving at 18.30. Paul and I line-sided again for a while then headed for the airport at about 19.30, where our plane was due to leave at 21.45. We forced ourselves into the Migros, stocked up with coffee, chocolate and other goodies then walked through security at about 20.30. The plane took off on time landing at Luton 30 minutes early. I was back home by 00.30, about 20 hours after I got up.

So was it worth it? Yes, no problems this time. Luton Airport, especially the Immigration people, seemed better able to cope. As there are fewer flights in Europe at the moment, this has improved time keeping according to my friends in the airline world. I was disappointed not to get any freight pictures, bad luck on my part as there are on average about two an hour in each direction along the Genève-Lausanne main line, but I did get a very nice picture of the ps *Simplon* on Lac Léman. Am I going to do it again, yes, so watch this space for next year's jolly.



TOP: BAM Be 11 turns at Pampigny-Sévery having dropped off a load of children. This run does not appear in the timetable. 24.06.09

MIDDLE: The BAM Ge4/4 21 which brought down some military equipment to the main line. Morges 24.06.09

BOTTOM: SBB Re 460 080-5 blasts into Morges with an IR from Brig to Genève Aéroport, it's currently liveried up to advertise the Verkehrshaus. 24.06.09

