

# Travel, sex and chocolate : the perfect combination

Autor(en): **Farr, Michael**

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MOB Ge4/4 8004 in the Cailler livery at Broc on the day of the inauguration, 6th June 2003.

Photo: Peter Federmann

An invitation to attend the unveiling of a new livery for an MOB locomotive at the Nestlé-Cailler factory at Broc brought together two of my great loves - railways and chocolate. The lure of the naming being carried out by Miss Suisse added an extra dimension to the appeal of the event!

Although aimed primarily at invited guests of Nestlé-Cailler and MOB, the excursion was advertised to the general public as part of the celebrations for the centenary of the opening in 1903 of the line between Les Avants and Montbovon; paying guests paid SFr 100, with a SFr 20 supplement for first class.

I was staying in Bern, researching for my next *Swiss Diary*; so it would have been a very early start to reach Montreux at 08.46 in time to board the special train to Broc-Fabrique.

However, a check of the timetable showed I could easily reach Bulle in time to meet the train there at 09.45 - and I had a choice of two routes, the express bus from Fribourg or the train via Romont.

The Transports Publics Fribourgeois (TPF) service from Romont to Bulle does not, surprisingly, run every hour, so I plumped to take the bus on the outward journey when timely arrival was essential and to return by the train.

Thus I was on the platforms of Bulle station, camera poised, in good time to see a rake of Golden Pass line coaches and the two vintage Pullman cars normally rostered for the weekly Chocolate Express from Montreux arrive behind a 6000 series GDe4/4.

I had been asked to report to the *bleu foncé* coach so, while the loco ran around the train,





The newly outshopped Cailler locomotive.

Photo© Golden Pass Services

I was welcomed by Hans-Jürg Spirgl and his colleagues from MOB. I was given my ticket for the day, sadly not a traditional Edmondson card but none-the-less most collectable, and served coffee and croissants.

Once the regular train had cleared the section, we set out along the quiet branch to Broc-Fabrique which, I was told, had opened in June 1912. Those who have read my *Swiss Diary*

concerning my very first visit to the branch may recall that then I alighted at the Village station, forgetting that the train continued to the Nestlé-Cailler factory and so I had to return the following year to complete my coverage of the whole line. (That Christmas one of my regular correspondents, Klaus Matzka of Vienna, sent me a special card of Broc-Fabrique in the snow!) Today I was to achieve something better, for our

Miss Suisse after unveiling the new livery.

Photo© Golden Pass Services



train was drawn ahead of the passenger station onto the rails immediately in front of the Nestlé-Cailler factory.

Here we all alighted and were ushered into the visitor centre of the original Cailler factory, which was founded on this site as long ago as 1898. Alexandre Cailler, grandson of the man who founded the firm in 1819, decided to move his factory from Vevey to be nearer the milk supplies he



required and to bring much needed employment to a rural area.

The station pilot at Broc, Te 4/4<sup>1</sup> 13 propelled the coaches further into the factory rail system, some of them actually being inside the sheds. The press release told us that these buildings normally receive one or two wagons of raw materials each day and despatch on average three or four wagons containing the familiar packs of chocolate. The outward traffic can at busy times consist of as many as 10 wagons, all of which are destined for a logistics centre at Spreitenbach near Zürich.

I watched a demonstration video, walked swiftly past the demonstration machinery stirring the luscious brown liquid and into the sampling room, where we were invited to try the whole range of chocolate. Remembering that I was nominally on a diet I tasted only a few samples and found my way back outside in time to see new loco arrive, the sides shrouded in white curtains.

By now the VIPs were gathering and protecting Miss Suisse from the rest of the crowd. At about 11.15 the usual speeches began, highlighting the long collaboration between the company and the railway and the importance of both the factory and its visitors to the local economy. We were told that the Chocolate Express which runs from Montreux every Wednesday in the summer (and on Mondays as well in the height of the season) had been operating for 15 years and had so far carried more than 20,000 passengers.

When all the VIPs had had their say, Miss Suisse was invited to pull the cords so that the white curtains dropped from the locomotive to reveal the very colourful design underneath. The illustrations show a large range of Nestlé-Cailler chocolate packaging and pictures of popular tourist destinations, all on either a red or gold background.

I had actually seen the loco, Ge4/4 8004, as I passed Chernex on my Golden Pass journey on Tuesday. Finished without lettering or

designs but (presumably) sprayed half gold and half red, it was backing into the works, ready to receive the vinyls.

As an army of photographers, professional and amateur, lined up, Miss Suisse was handed a stationmaster's baton and an MOB uniform hat, which she evidently declined to wear! As they did not fancy breaking a bottle of champagne against their newly liveried locomotive, I gather the idea was for her to use the baton to break a huge model of a milk churn made of chocolate; in the event the churn remained intact and in the heat of the day was probably beginning to melt!

It had been brought to the ceremony by a miniature pony and cart accompanied by traditionally clad attendants to add to the photographic appeal - and then three Alpenhorn players began to serenade us with their deep melodic tones.

After drinks and nibbles at Broc the invited guests were due to board the train to return as far as Gruyères for an afternoon buffet at the Maison de Gruyère but due to a misdemeanour earlier in the week (I had left my camera on the train) I needed to return to Bern in time to collect it before the lost property office closed for the Pfingsten holiday weekend.

I therefore walked to the station and boarded TPF BDe4/4<sup>1</sup> 141, still in the familiar orange and grey GFM livery. At Bulle I changed to the Romont standard gauge TPF train, two coaches propelled by ex-Db Ae 417 192.

Thus ended my moment of glory, being in the presence of Miss Suisse - and of course being present at the loco christening ceremony and visiting the chocolate factory.

Now that I am a collector of Swiss outline HOM models (since buying the special van on sale at the Ferrovia Mesolcinese shop at Cama two years ago) I shall wait avidly for Bemo to produce this MOB loco in its new livery.



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CJ Class BDe 4/4 no. 633 at Glovelier 24th June 2003. One of the new low-floor Stadler units on the Jura system.

Photo: David Edwards

The new Südostbahn livery has now been applied to a former RM Re4/4 on long term hire to the SOB. The livery was unveiled at a recent presentation held on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2003. It is a huge improvement over the overall advert liveries, but which bring in much needed revenue.

Photo@SOB

