

Spring Meeting and Annual General Meeting

Brian Smith IEng MIET FIRSE

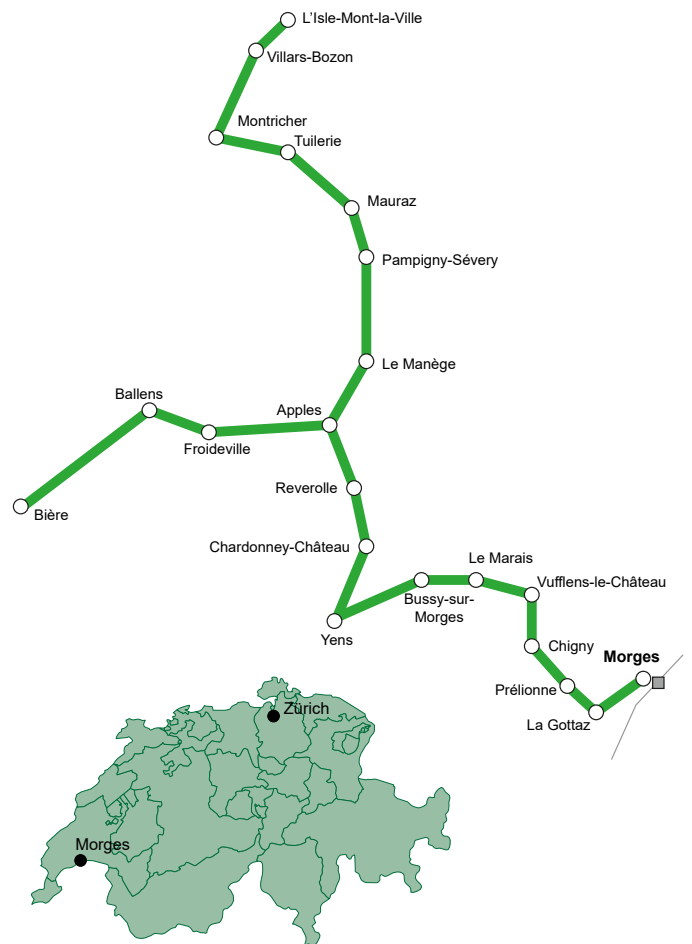
Platform 5 at Morges Station, situated on the North-West shore of Lake Genève, was the meeting point for the twenty-eight IRSE Swiss Section Members and their five Guests at 14:00h on Friday 10 March to attend our Spring Meeting and AGM. Here we were met by Monsieur Alain Valiquer and Monsieur Jean-Remy de la Harpe from the 'Transport de la Région Morges, Bière, Cossonay' company (MBC) who, having dived us into two Groups, guided us through the many regular passengers onto the 14:11h train for La Gottaz and Chigny.

In addition to a network of local bus services, the MBC owns and operates the metre gauge railway connecting Morges, Apples, Bière, and L'Île-Mont-la-Ville in the canton of Vaud. This railway, electrified at 15kv 16.7Hz, not only runs a regular interval passenger service with modern Electrical Multiple Units but also has considerable freight traffic which includes agricultural produce, aggregates and military equipment. This freight traffic generally uses standard gauge wagons carried on 'Trucks Porteurs' (carrier bogies) from the transfer point with the Swiss Federal Railways in Morges.

The majority of the stations on the MBC have Modularised Route Relay Interlockings of Mauerhoffer & Zuber design. The Interlocking at Chigny was provided in 2014 to control an extended passing loop with an Intermediate Crossover and a Level Crossing at the end of the station platforms. This enables a freight train to be stabled while passenger trains from both directions cross in the station platforms. The Track Circuits at this station are separated with diagonally cut Insulated Joints, a feature not previously known to a number of the Members present. We were told that; the diagonal cut minimises wear on the joint and reduces noise from passing wheels. A local maintenance and diagnostic panel is provided at this interlocking which also allows the technician to view the state of the Block Sections along the Railway.

The complete MBC Railway is supervised and controlled by a centralised Traffic Management System, situated in La Gottaz. This was designed and supplied by Kummler & Matter and commissioned in 2016. As well as the usual Signalling Controls and Indications and features such as Train Graphs and Automatic Route Setting the System also incorporates Traction Power Switching and CCTV Supervision of the Stations and Facilities.

Remote control of the Interlockings is achieved using a 'Pilz' vital SPS Data Transmission System. Despite this vital SPS being 'new' the 'Pilz' system is already no longer commercially available. However, the MBC believes they have acquired sufficient spare parts to cover their theoretical requirement for the envisaged life of the System. This information gave rise to some spontaneous discussion among the Members at both Chigny and La Gottaz as examples of the need for early Obsolescence Management are being increasingly seen at IRSE Swiss Section Meetings.



The MBC network extends some 30 km from Morges. Map of Switzerland Free Vector Maps.



IRSE Special Train brings the next Group of Members to Chigny. All photos George Raymond.

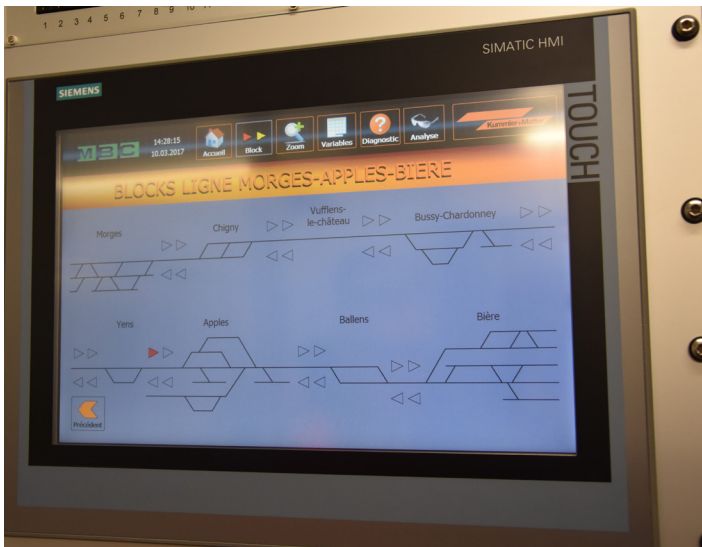
The Members of the two Groups visited Chigny and La Gottaz in turn, being transferred between the locations by a special 'IRSE Train' provided by the MBC. At 15:49h the two Groups were reunited on platform 5 at Morges for a pleasant walk through the historic town centre to admire the shores of Lake Genève and the view of Mont Blanc. Subsequently we met in the conference room of the Hotel Mont Blanc au Lac for the Section's Annual General Meeting.



Chigny Station's extended passing loop.



Chigny's Maintenance Terminal.



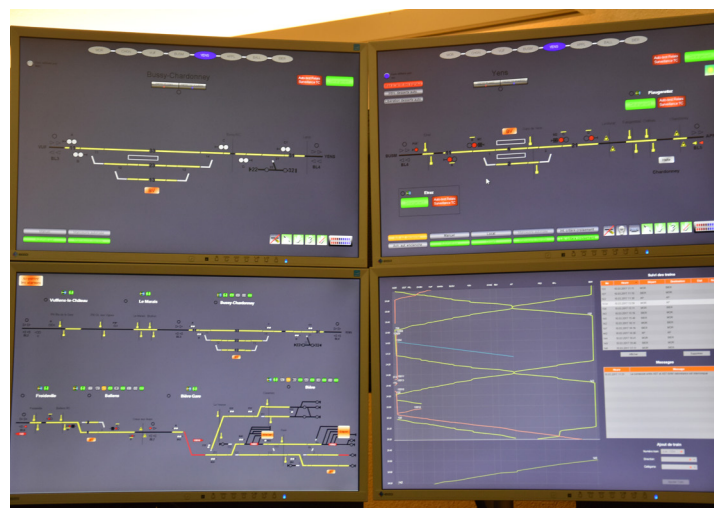
Local Maintenance Terminal, showing the Block Sections.



Diagonally cut Insulated Rail Joint.



Traffic Management Centre at La Gottaz.



Work Station VDUs at La Gottaz.

The formal business of the Annual General Meeting, which should follow the properly prescribed format for a non-profit association officially registered in Switzerland, started punctually as advised at 16:30h. However, as has become tradition in our Section, the Chairman's Report, the Treasurer's Report, the Report of the Auditors and the Motion to Exonerate the Officials were all accepted by a round of unanimous applause, with the Scrutineer not even attempting to insist that we use the voting cards, as, strictly speaking, we are 'legally' obliged to do!

These cards did find use though, for the election of the officials for the coming year.

Daniel Pixley was collectively requested to continue as Section Chairman, which he naturally agreed to do.

Rolf Gutzwiller had previously given notice of his intention to retire as Vice-Chairman, a post he has held since the formal establishment of the Swiss Section. The nomination was for Rolf Seiffert to take on this position as well as to continue as Treasurer.

Patrick Sonderegger was nominated to fill the reactivated position of Event Coordinator and Beatrice Müller and Marco Lüthi nominated to continue as Communications Coordinator and Section Secretary respectively. Adrian Egloff, the Scrutineer, diligently counted the voting cards, only to reveal that all officials were unanimously accepted by the meeting.

The remaining prescribed business being quickly despatched, the Members were given a report of progress with the planning of the 2018 International Convention before Beat Keller reported on the activities of the International Technical Committee. The meeting was brought to a close with a Vote of Thanks and Presentation to Rolf Gutzwiller for his long service as Swiss Vice-Chairman.

To conclude the evening the Members and Guests retired to the Restaurant of the Hotel Mont Blanc au Lac to enjoy the regional cuisine and wine, in a convivial atmosphere.

The next Swiss Section Meeting will be a Technical Paper Session to be held on Friday 16 June 2017, more details will follow on the IRSE Website, nearer the date.



Daniel Pixley opens the AGM.



And closes it with a Presentation to Rolf Gutzwiller.