

Ticket search 1999

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The main aim of my 1999 holiday was to travel on as many as possible of the independent lines, both standard and metre gauge, in the Lake Geneva area, and I achieved almost all that I had planned except Broc-Village to Broc-Fabrique!

I had anticipated that this year's haul of traditional Edmondson tickets would be far less than 1988, but I was pleased that I did manage to acquire at least one example each day.

The collection began with the MOB specials for the reopening of the BC line and was followed with three tickets given to me by the affable clerk in the MOB ticket office on Montreux station.

On the two days I visited and travelled on the Blonay-Chamby there was no problem as Edmondsons are their normal issue, and my Sunday afternoon visit to Swiss Vapeur Parc produced a solitary example.

Undoubtedly the most successful ticket acquisition day was the one which began with breakfast on the dot at 07.30 and being given six slices of bread; it augured well! I was away at 08.15, looking smarter than my usual holiday garb and even wearing a tie, as I intended to make some special calls.

On my walk the previous night I had checked out the hotels listed in the Swiss Travel Service (of Ware, Hertfordshire) brochure. It stated that STS had a representative at Montreux and I knew from holidays we had booked with the company that the reps usually carry a small stock of Edmondson tickets to sell to guests.

I had decided that the Helvetia Hotel was the most likely base for their rep. A most courteous receptionist confirmed that the STS rep was based there and he had seen her already at breakfast; should he call her? I suggested it was a little early and that I

would return later, but he insisted and in five minutes she arrived, somewhat bemused . . . had an unexpected guest arrived?

I explained the reason for my call and dropped a few names of STS personnel who I know - and she kindly fetched her bag which contained about half a dozen different tickets. Needless to say they were quite expensive but two of them covered journeys I intended to take, the blue and white Vevey to Les Pléiades, Valable selon avis, and the cheese town visitors ticket to Gruyères. All were half price tickets most STS guests have a half fare card covering their journeys to and from the airport and then offering 50% off travel costs for the duration of the holiday. No problem, I replied, and showed her my railway staff international card which entitles me to buy tickets at half price on most European railways.

Her eyes lit up; was that an FIP card? I affirmed this and she explained that the wallet, tickets and FIP card of one of her guests had been stolen on the train - a most unusual occurrence in Switzerland, but it behoved me to be careful in future.

I thanked her and walked down to the bus stop to travel to the most impressive MOB group head office at Clarens. I took with me a letter I had received from the MOB marketing manager and the receptionist called down a member of staff. He spoke no English at all (an unusual occurrence) but I managed to explain that I had brought some colour photocopies of old MOB tickets from my collection for their archives, and I wondered if he could obtain for me one of the special Edmondsons printed for the Breitling Orbiter balloon train. I left him an s.a.e. and within a few days specimens of both the full and half price ticket arrived at my home.