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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

It is still September as I write this and I have not long returned from another very enjoyable trip to Switzerland. Roger Ellis had organised a wide variety of visits, with just about every interest was covered (including buses) and the reception afforded us showed how well-regarded is the SRS in Switzerland. This, I am sure, is far more to do with the happy and relaxed manner of the members than any official efforts. As this is the December issue of Swiss Express the magazine envelope includes your subscription renewal form. This is on the front of the address sheet, so you do not even have to fill in your name and address! As usual, the reverse of the address sheet has the Branch Diary. At the end of the year, my thanks go to the many members who devote their time and energy to the benefit of the Society. My thanks, also, to the members of the Management Committee, who have proved how easily a varied group of people can work together, discussing matters objectively and with humour. The biggest vote of thanks goes to all the members of the SRS for your support and encouragement. I am always happy to receive any comments, suggestions, even complaints, from you. My e-mail and postal address is in every issue of "Swiss Express". Finally, may I wish everyone an excellent Christmas and New Year, and we will see what 2012 may bring us – hopefully, a better exchange rate!

John Jesson

JUST A SEC

As Secretary I have recently had cause to correspond with a commercial modeller on the subject of archiving information. I won't go into how this came about except that it was a rebuttal of criticism made about SRS in a public forum. The gentleman did however pose a legitimate question: is there anyone either responsible for or in the process of archiving information for the use of researchers in the future?


Strictly on a personal level I'm not interested in minutiae, I have no desire to pore over train formations from the 70s and 80s, notes about locomotives, etc, etc. Others however may well think differently. The question I am posing is should we be doing this and if we should who wants to volunteer to co-ordinate it, set up a process and run with it? I made an offer to the particular gentleman but his response was so restrictive as to make his proposal, in practical terms, useless. He also did not want to join SRS and see what we were about from the inside.

In conclusion then what do you think about it? Write to me or the Editor, let us know what you think, whether you have any proposals or ideas and we'll see if there is either demand or need.

David Stevenson

SOCIETY WEB FORUM

This is a reminder that the Society has a web forum exclusively for members. It is accessed via the Society website home page.

If you would like access to the forum please email:
forum.admin@swissrailsoc.org.uk 

Portfolio 2

The second volume of our SRS photo book is now in circulation and we are grateful to our Photo Editor Tony Bagwell for the untold number of hours that he has put into preparing it. In turn Tony has asked that we pass on his thanks to all those members who agreed to having their photos used in the book and for their help in providing information for the captions. Tony and the Management Committee also wish to thank Michael Farr for his proof reading skills and Gerald Savine for his production expertise. Without them, and Tony, we would not have another super celebration of the Swiss transport scene.

Subscription time

You will have noticed that this year we have modified the front sheet that now accompanies your magazine to be the subscription renewal form. This saves paper and even saves you having to enter your name and address. As we have made it so easy for you to renew your membership, and at the same subscription rate as last year, why not get the form off to Martin Fisher as soon as you can.

Switzerland Travel Centre

As you will read in Ivan Rodrigues' item in this magazine the Switzerland Travel Centre in 2012 is again offering all SRS members a 5% discount on all travel bookings made through their London Office. This is not just on Swiss Passes and holiday packages to Switzerland but on the majority of the travel services which they provide. Why not contact them to see if they can help you to save on your next trip?

You only have to spend £320 to get your membership subscription back.

Calling all photographers

With the advent of digital cameras we all tend to take too many photographs, especially when we visit Switzerland. Much as the editorial team love to see your images, especially those that accompany the articles that more of you are submitting for inclusion in your magazine, please do not send us too many as our digital storage system is struggling to cope. Be strict with yourselves when submitting photographs and only send the best ten or fifteen that you think are needed to illustrate a topic, or that convey the sense of the place you visited. Please don't stop submitting your best shots, but please try not to overload us.

Swiss Express for the visually impaired

The Management Committee has agreed that members with a serious medically diagnosed sight impairment can apply for a PDF version of this magazine that will enable them to enlarge the text using a computer. PDF versions will only be issued at the Management Committee's discretion to bona fide applicants who should contact the Editor whose details are on P1 of the magazine.

Norfolk and Suffolk Branch

Derek Cate has had to report that despite the best efforts of himself and a few other members in East Anglia the

recently formed branch of the SRS based in Norwich has not proven to be viable and unfortunately it will no longer meet. If there are members in other locations east of the A1 (or East Coast Main Line) corridor, Cambridge for example, who believe that there is scope for another attempt to set-up an eastern outpost of the Society our Secretary will be pleased to hear from you.

SRS Swiss Travel Guides

Martin Fisher writes: "I am grateful to those members who have purchased copies of the first two Area Guides published by the Society. By the time you read this, the third book (covering the route of the Glacier Express) will also have been published. We will then be working on the fourth volume that will cover the area around Lake Luzern. However, I am seeking members' support in completing information to go in some of the later Guides in the series. If you have stayed in the Ticino, in North East Switzerland (including Zurich, St Gallen and the Appenzell) or North West Switzerland (including Basel and the Jura) during the last few years, could you let me know the names of the hotels you used – providing that you were happy with them – in order for them to be included in the list of suggested places to stay? Just the name and town will do, I can then look up other details on the internet. Please contact me via the details for the Membership Secretary that appear in *Swiss Express*". ☒

MEMBERS' LETTERS

From Paul Burkhalter – by email.

I have just returned from five most enjoyable days in the company of SRS members on the Spiez/Interlaken 2011 trip. I trust a full report will appear in this magazine, and that many of the highlights will be shared with those who were unable to attend. The organisational efforts of a number of members provided variety, and reached parts of the Swiss Travel system not normally accessible – both above and below ground! I hope in mentioning some names I've not missed anyone out – John Jesson, Neil Wheelwright, Andreas Häslar, Bryan Stone, and especially Roger Ellis who used every trick in the book to relieve us of Francs (aided and abetted by Annette)! As a complete novice at this type of event I was not sure of how it would turn out, but I found it exceeded expectations and that all participants were delightful company. *Thank you all.*

From Margaret Smith – by email.

Following the article in SE 106 about the Pro Patria stamp issue, I bought postcards of the DS Gallia and La Suisse, and applied the appropriate stamps to them, two being needed to cover the rate back to England. The hand stamps were applied at the Purser's office on each vessel, the Purser being only too happy to oblige. The postcards were then posted in the usual way and they had arrived back in the UK before we did!

From Jim Paterson – by email.

Having received SE 107 a few days after returning from our annual visit to Switzerland it was interesting note the

remarks about the Cadenazzo – Luino service on P30. These basically agreed with a printed pocket timetable of Locarno departures, but we found differently on Wednesday 17th August. Having purchased tickets to Luino from a machine we were unsure as to whether our onward connection from Cadenazzo would be by train or bus, however before reaching the platform we encountered a notice advising that the only service to Luino that day was by ship, due to road works in Italy. Deciding to abandon our trip rather than pay double for the ship we had no difficulty obtaining a refund for our train tickets. Also we were able to confirm that the rail replacement bus to Luino was only operating on certain days, but not on Wednesday (as suggested in SE), so it appeared that the roads authority in Lombardia was unconcerned about keeping trade away from a very large and busy market.

On the Arosa line, we found Allegra units powering heavier trains up the 6% gradient than we had seen previously. On several occasions, we noted trains consisting of the Allegra unit, three further passenger coaches, either an open coach or a DZ baggage van and up to four assorted freight vehicles. Such trains are longer than the passing loops, and have to pull in twice at the passing places, adding to the time taken for trains to cross. I was pleased to note that the new trains are fitted with the traditional high pitched whistle, and that "Allegra" is used as a greeting on the trains, both on the public address and the information screens. ☒

MEMBERS' ADVERTISEMENTS

FOR SALE Vintage Swiss National Timetables need a good home: Summer issues: 1962, 1967, 1969 & 1981 in the old format. Summer 1983, 1987-8 whole year. Please contact Alan Snowdon on ++44 (0) 1737 766118 or at alan.snowdon@mypostoffice.co.uk.

FOR SALE. A selection of Swiss Rail and Travel Videos. Also Swiss Express Nos. 1 to 104. Nos. 1, 3, 11, & 12 are photo copies, all others are as printed and in good condition. Swiss Express sold as one lot with buyer to collect (from Preston). Videos £6 each, incl. postage; Swiss Express open to offers. Contact Duncan Perry on ++44 (0) 1772 253 765, or at dunmuperry@virginmedia.com

FOR SALE "Bahn Saga Schweiz". A brand new unopened German language copy of this superb 328-page SBB publication that details in words and hundreds of pictures the development of the Swiss railway network. English language copies in this condition sell for over £70. The book is being sold to raise funds for a project to assist disadvantaged people in Ghana and just £20, or offers, will secure this treasure. The large size of the volume means that an additional £7.62 will be needed to post the book within the UK or it can be collected from Keith in Morayshire. Contact Ron Smith on ++44 (0) 1542 887 235, or at ronald-smith@lineone.net

FOR SALE Bemo RhB Ho 1265 111, Railcar No 501. DCC fitted but currently programmed to run on DC.

£115.00. SBB Brunig and RhB coaches in older green livery £20ea. Contact: J Hargaden 2 Gobannium Way, Abergavenny NP7 9JA on ++44 (0) 1873 852116 or at hargaden2010@btinternet.com

WANTED Arrival and departure times for SBB and FS local passenger trains at Luino appropriate for Summer 1995 timetable. Please contact Hugh Edgley on ++44 (0) 1206 298415 or at edgleyhs@hotmail.com.

SRS EXHIBITION STAND

Roger Ellis will be manning the Swiss Railways Society Stand at the following exhibitions in the first half of 2012.

- 21st January - Lenham, Kent (SNCF Society Winter Meet)
- 25/26th February - Eurotrack, Eastleigh
- 24th March - SRS AGM Bristol
- 12/13th May - Derby. 🇨🇭

“ANOTHER CRACKING IDEA GROMIT!”

Roger Ellis invites members to join him on a walking tour in June 2012

He writes: “I have had another of my brilliant ideas, which I am glad to say has the blessing of our illustrious – and long-suffering – Chairman, as he is to be involved in a major way.

John Jesson and I go independently to Switzerland every year if we can. During his visit John usually walks on both

the North and South ramps of the Gotthard whilst I try and do the same on both ramps of the Lötschberg. I thought “why not pick a mutually agreed time in 2012 and mention this to Society members in case any would like to join us?” The plan is that I will travel to Spiez on Saturday 9th June, probably staying at the Bellvue Hotel, and walk the BLS ramps on the Sunday and Monday. I will then transfer to Erstfeld on the Tuesday to meet up with John to walk the Gotthard ramps from Wednesday onwards. At Erstfeld the natural hotel would of course be the Frohsinn.

I must emphasise that this is simply a walking and photography trip, with no planned excursion, and a degree of physical fitness is required – although the use of crampons and ropes is not anticipated! We cannot guarantee good weather but have selected June for its longer evenings and the expectation that it may stay fine. It is believed that the chosen week is also after the UK school’s half term holidays so this could mean cheaper flights should you chose to travel that way. The Swiss Pass is also valid on whatever buses we may use in the Gotthard area, as well as on the trains. If you would like to join us then please let me know as soon as possible. My contact details are in the SRS Management Team box on P34, or under ‘Bristol and Bath’ in the Branch Diary listings”.

Please note Although Roger and John are members and officers of the Swiss Railways Society this event is not being organised by the SRS which has no formal involvement with it. Participants will have to organise their own travel and accommodation and join the two facilitators at their own risk. 🇨🇭

CHRISTMAS COMPETITION

Manx member Graeme Easton has come up with an interesting puzzle for members to think about over Christmas using the Kursbuch and their knowledge of Swiss geography. How long it would take to travel by public transport through all of the Swiss Cantons stopping, but not necessarily alighting, in each one. The winner will be the person submitting the shortest elapsed time. The prize (apart from the satisfaction of winning!) will be a £10 Voucher to spend on items listed on the Society Sales page of this magazine plus a ‘Mondaine’ single espresso cup and saucer set featuring the SBB clock-face design.

The rules are as follows:

- Start and finish anywhere in Switzerland. It is not necessary to end where you started.
- Start at any time on any day of the week, but remember that if any of the services used only run on a weekday you cannot then use a Sunday-only train later that day.
- Standard connection times as per the Kursbuch apply.
- Any route and form of transport available on the Swiss Pass is allowed including, if necessary, services requiring supplements.
- The itinerary must include a timetabled stop at a minimum of one station in each of the 26 Cantons / Half Cantons. It is not necessary to get off in each Canton, but you cannot pass through without stopping. The start and finish stations can each count for their respective Canton.
- Either the 2011 or 2012 Kursbuch can be used.
- Entries should consist of the elapsed time together with a written itinerary noting the location/Canton stopping points.

Your entry, by either email or post, should be sent to the Editor (contact details on P3 of this magazine) to arrive no later than the 2nd January 2012. The usual competition conditions apply; editor's decision final; no correspondence entered into; no alternative prizes; etc. If you email please put “Swiss Express Competition” in the Subject Box to avoid the clutches of the spam filter.

SOCIETY PAGES

INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR AGM

This will be held at the NOVOTEL, Victoria Street, Bristol, BS1 6HY on Saturday 24th March 2012 from 11.00-16.30.
The formal AGM will commence at 14.00.

Non members of the Society are welcome to attend the Spring Meet
but a donation of £2.00 per person would be appreciated.

The event is organised by the Bristol & Bath Branch with the support of the Management Committee.

CONFIRMED SALES STANDS

Contikits, Gerald Savine Railway Prints, Platform 5 Books, Hornby International, NScaleCH, WINCO,
and Derby Trees. The Society Stand together with the Bring & Buy Stall will also be there.
There will be the photo competition with the usual three categories.

LAYOUTS AND DISPLAYS

Layouts confirmed to date are "St Nichlaus" Roger Ellis, "Radeberg Ost" Alan Wardman,
"Sans Souci" Harry Harper, "Beckenvick" Simon Ellis,
"Lusigny-sur-le-Loir" Philip Worsfold, "Blackdown" Culm Valley MRC.
The day's events will be followed by a formal dinner at 19.00 for 19.30.

MENU

Leaves of Galia Melon (with a compote of Mixed Berries)
Pavé of Salmon (with a Tomato, Dill and Vermouth Sauce), served with a selection of Vegetables and Potatoes.
Chilled Lemon Tart (with Kumquat Sauce)
Freshly Brewed Coffee and Chocolate Mints

The cost is £24.00 per person including service and VAT, but excluding wine.
Please send your cheques made out to the Swiss Railways Society and send them to
Roger Ellis, Alf-N-Alf Cottage, Kingsbury Episcopi, MARTOCK, Somerset, TA12 6AZ.
I must receive the monies by 1st March 2012 at the latest.

HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

A special rate has been negotiated with the Novotel and including full English Breakfast is £79.00 per room for
the Friday and £75.00 per room for the Saturday. If you book for the two nights the rate will be £75.00 for each
night. In common with most City Centre Hotels there is now a car parking levy which is, for example, £10.00 for
24 hours. When booking on 0117 9769988 please tell the Hotel this is for the Swiss Railways Society AGM.

THE FRIDAY EVENING ENTERTAINMENT

At 20.00 in one of the Victoria Rooms Mr Alan Wardman, Mr John Jesson and Mr Roger Ellis will present
a delightful colour picture show entitled "Spiez 2011" for the pleasure of the assembled audience.
The Hotel can provide us with a "Hot & Cold" 3 course buffet for £18.00 per person (including tea and Coffee),
but need a minimum number of say 25 to take advantage of this offer.
I need to know by 1st March if you do wish to dine so that I can advise the Hotel.

Roger Ellis (REllis@alfnalf.fsnet.co.uk) ++44 (0) 1935 824428.

SWISS RAILWAYS SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2012

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Railways Society will be held in
the Novotel Hotel, Bristol on Saturday 24th March 2012 and will start at 1400.

NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICERS

Nominations are invited for the following posts: Secretary, Treasurer, Editor, Membership Secretary,
Sales Officer and two other elected members of the Management Committee. Nomination forms are
available from the Secretary: David Stevenson, 3 Aldersey Road, Worcester, WR5 3BG or by email at
Secretary@SwissRailSoc.org.uk Completed forms must reach him by post or by hand, but not by email,
no later than Saturday 10th March 2012.

It is important to note that all nominees AND their proposers and seconders MUST have paid their
subscriptions for 2012 PRIOR to signing the nomination form. Failure to do so will render the nomination
form invalid. Members are advised that a list of nominees and a copy of any accompanying statement they
may have made to support their nomination, will be supplied by the Secretary on receipt of an application
by post with an SAE or by email at the above addresses. Any application for a postal vote must be
accompanied by an SAE and will be sent out by post only to the named addressee who must be a
member of the Society at the time of application. The application must reach the Secretary by Saturday
17th March 2012. Completed ballot papers must reach the Secretary no later than the start of the AGM
meeting on Saturday 24th March 2012.

MOTIONS FOR THE AGM

Motions for the meeting, proposed and seconded by members who have paid their 2012 subscriptions,
must reach the Secretary by Saturday 25th February 2012. This will ensure that they can be included on
the Agenda together with any motions put forward by the Committee.