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EXPRESS POST

THE AGM - a complaint

I feel the need to write an open letter to Swiss Express to express my complete disappointment with the auxiliary offerings at the Annual General Meeting. The December 1989 Swiss Express billed video films (and these were well done), displays of models (so few and hardly representative of the Swiss Railway scene), Trade stands (1 book and 1 map was not quite what I was expecting) and the Society's own stand selling models and books (no books, no models, a few leaflets for which a charge was being made and sweatshirts). Also, two rooms were to have been used. The only comment made on the rooms was 'It's cost quite a lot less'!!! for only one room.

I had arranged to meet some friends, as we rarely see each other living in different parts of the country and made a full afternoon of the event. However we were all so incensed by the apparent lack of organisation and a total blase view taken by the Society's officers that we decided to leave before the AGM started. *In retrospect this was probably wrong as we should have stayed to voice our opinions 'on the day'.* (Editor's italics).

However I feel I may have been less than rational and therefore not able to express my feelings clearly - hence this letter.

I have been in the Society for 7 of its 10 years and have been to quite a number of the special meetings; notably Charing Cross Hotel, London International Hotel and the Viking Hotel, York, all with excellent displays and plenty of inspiration. In comparison 1990 was appalling and I believe a disgrace to the Society.

I have two aims in belonging to the Society:

1. To glean more information on the Railways of Switzerland and their operation.
2. To improve my modelling of these railways.

It would appear that the clique on the committee only want to further their own interests and those, particularly, of the modellers in the Society are just about tolerated. (I believe their argument is 'modelling is covered by a number of magazines'). Each year on renewing my subscription I fill in what my interests are. Why do we not see any results published in Swiss Express? Is it because a majority are modellers and would favour a greater bias towards modelling like the German, French and Italian Societys, all of whom have thriving and active modelling sections.? I know what the answer will probably be - you should have made your views known at the AGM. Perhaps I and a good many other members are not well able to stand up at such a meeting. I also regrettably don't have time to serve on the committee - I have a very demanding job.

It would be a shame for the Society to split or even simply for me not to renew my membership so please Committee start listening to the membership and deliver what a lot of us expect at special meetings.

Trevor R.Bayly

Reply from the Chairman

Mr.Bayly's letter is an interesting one in that it raises again the question of the degree of modelling interest among the members of the Society. It is evident from attending branch meetings in various parts of the country over the years that a sizeable proportion of us have an interest in collecting or making models. In some cases small groups of members meet at houses where there are layouts.

The implication of a part of the letter is that the committee does not share that interest. The fact is that most of them, myself included, either collect models or make them. John Jesson has written more modelling articles for Swiss Express than any

other person and Dave Howsam is a member of a group in Manchester which built a portable layout, at no cost to the Society, to ensure that one was available. It has been shown at several venues.

The, admittedly small, offerings at the 1990 AGM were provided by members of the committee and the London Branch.

There are a limited number of large, portable model layouts which appear at national exhibitions and these are in great demand. Availability of suitable transport, its cost and the location of any exhibition is a problem.

It seems to me that there is a need for a variety of small layouts or portable sections of larger ones which could appear at exhibitions.

I am therefore grateful to Mr. Bayly for two reasons. Firstly, I can ask the membership whether the committee should explore the setting up of a register of members who are prepared to lend models or provide and operate layouts at exhibitions and, secondly, for the opportunity for the desire of successive Editors of our journal to start a correspondence section to be fulfilled. I hope that this has triggered it off and that it will range over a wide selection of topics. All letters should go to the Editor, of course.

Finally, will this now persuade members to write articles about Swiss model railways?

It should be noted that whilst the members present gave the Committee considerable constructive guidance, no-one raised the question of the display or the lack or otherwise of modelling features at the AGM. Democracy depends on a feed-back, and a full discussion of any subject at meetings convened to give members the opportunity to grill the Officers and, if though fit, vote them out of office.

The lack of Trade stands was due, first to the sudden illness of Robert Spark, who was advised not to attend by his doctor and second the fact that Metremodels, another stalwart, were unable to be present due to a professional engagement. In view of this the smaller room was cancelled, saving some £75 of Society funds.

Swiss Signals

(Letter sent to John Jesson)

I welcome your article on Swiss Signals, since this is a subject of particular interest to me. I would like to make a comment concerning *Fahrbegriff 6*. This is used mainly where there are short sections on the outskirts of or in a station. There could be some confusion between 6 and 2, and as I read it, 2 implies continue at speed up to 40 while 6 implies pass at up to 40 but be prepared to stop at next Hauptsignal. Then there is the Besetzsinal, which implies be prepared to stop at an obstruction within the section.

The above is, I am sure, well known to you, but it may be a useful clarification for readers of Swiss Express.

I am looking forward to your article covering combination signals since my knowledge of these is not more up-to-date than the information in Butz's fine book.

SBB PTT Vehicles

I believe that you have been concerned with these and may have some data. I have been studying these and would appreciate some more information. In particular, I am wondering if you have a list of numbers giving dimensions etc.

My own studies are limited to infrequent visits to Switzerland and as a result I have collected some puzzling data (maybe incorrectly noted) I list the doubtful areas below and would appreciate any comments you make.

1. In 1988 I noted bogie 51 85 00-33 565-2 with length 22.70 m (The number agrees with the computer check number). However in 1989 I noted 50 85 00-33 565-0 as part of series 549 - 567 with length 19.30 m.

2. In 1981 I noted bogies 50 85 00-33 811-8 and 824-1 with length 20.20 m. In 1989 I noted bogies with similar door arrangements in series 00-33 812 to 859 but with length 21.20 m. Both the 1981 and 1989 vehicles have load length $\rightarrow 14.27 \text{ m} \leftarrow$. Is this a case of rebuilding, possibly to modify the end gangway connections?

3. In 1981 I noted Z2 50 85 00-33 344-6 and 349-5 but did not accurately note details. They may be part of the 1989 series 327 - 332 or the different 358 - 389.

Also, could you confirm that 358 - 389 are similar to 255 - 289?

As a matter of interest the series 120 - 134, 141 - 239, 255 - 289, 422 - 486, 516 - 539, 619 - 649, 904 - 960 appear to have been unchanged over this period apart from livery and markings.

J.E.Daboo

No Snow is Good News

I have just returned from a 'skiing' week end in Wengen but, due to the total lack of snow, conditions were far from right. However, the WAB and Jungfraubahn were charging half fares between Wengen and Grindelwald and Jungfraugoch and also on the Wengen-Männlichen cable car. The Harderbahn was open in Interlaken and the Briener Rothorn Bahn was open during winter as far as Planalp for the first time in its history. The nearby Ballenberg Museum was also open.

On the Sunday, very high winds caused the suspension of Jungfraubahn operations and the only service above Wengen was an hourly train to Kleine Scheidegg using the new double motor cars, presumably due to their heavier weight.

Glyn Jones

Krokodil In O Gauge

In their 1990 catalogue the German firm of Volkner are offering the ex RaiMo/Biller Bahn O gauge Be6/8 'Krokodil' kit for Dm 79.95. A pair of pantographs (Sommerfeld?) cost as much again! However anyone who wants this as a static display model can probably produce something from wire.

I have dealt with this firm on a number of occasions with the purchase of their HO signal kits which offer good value for money, but are of DB design.

Volkner have a number of shops in German cities (one is in Köln), mail order is from their Braunschweig address:

Volkner electronic GmbH & Co KG

Postfach 5320.3300 Braunschweig

West Germany

Peter Jiggins

Observations '90

Members may be interested in the following comments and observations following from a short visit to Switzerland on 19th-22nd February 1990

The Swiss Flexi Pass (from 1-1-90)

As you are probably aware the 4-day Swiss Pass has been replaced by a '3-days out of 15' Swiss Flexi pass. The cost is the same as the 1989 price for a 4-day pass, £64 or Fr160. It seems to me to be a retrograde step in this 3-day form. Many people

will probably use two days of the three getting to and from an airport leaving only one day's travel. A 4-days in 8 days or 8 days in 15 days would be much more useful. One could argue that there has been a 25% price rise - compensated only by the flexibility. So my advice is either to travel to one's Swiss destination separately or buy an 8-day pass. They only cost £14 more

(Editor's note. This pass is probably aimed at people who travel to Switzerland on a coach tour but prefer to skip the optional trips in favour of a few journeys on the railways. As there are some very cheap trips advertised, it's a thought - providing the main base is actually on a railway.)

Zurich S Bahn

I was very fortunate on Thursday 22nd February to travel on a train composed of the new double deck stock. I had travelled to Zurich with the express aim of photographing some of the stock which is stabled at numerous locations in the area. There were considerable numbers of new coaches stabled in the sidings between Zurich Hbf and Hardbrücke; some in the depot opposite and some in the sidings which are north of the divergence of the line to Weidikon and Enge (At Zurich Enge the bay platform has been removed, filled in and landscaped, enabling the main platforms to be lengthened)

As my train, the 10:21 Hbf-Hinwil via Flughafen, Effretikon and Pfaffikon ZH departed, I noticed a train of the new double-deck stock about 4 or 5 platforms away and I was at first rather annoyed - having missed it creep into the station and not being able to photograph it properly. There were lots of staff around the driving trailer (bT) so I presumed it to be on crew familiarization trips. Not to worry...

I left my train at Wetzikon, which is where the line from Effretikon joins the Uster line and where the Hinwil line diverges. I did not continue to Hinwil because of the long layover time and I was anxious to move on.

To my surprise, I pulled a train of double-deck stock, forming the 10:37 Zurich Hbf to Rapperswil (via Uster). I of course went upstairs.

The interior seemed very spacious and the ride was smooth and quiet. I was travelling on the leading Bt. The entrance vestibules and the end adjacent to the cab are yellow and the floor has a dark grey smooth rubber covering. Upholstery is blue with fine red stripes. Lighting is from diffuse strips which are built into the luggage racks along each side. The spaces between the strip lights are blue in the non-smoker and red in the smoker. Public address speakers are also built into these strips. The smoker/non-smoker areas are separated by glass partitions and door whilst the ceiling is in a pale duck egg blue. Sun blinds are, of course, fitted and these follow the curvature of the upper roof and window line. First class is carpeted but retains 2+2 seating.

Seemingly incongruous, but inevitably, the stock is fitted with the standard Swiss warning whistle! Judging by the number of staff who emerged from the cab at Rapperswil the train was obviously a live staff familiarization trip. It worked back as the 11:33 Rapperswil - Hbf (via Uster). It was seemingly a one-off for that day because I saw no more of it by the time I had returned to Zurich via Meilen.

Of further interest is the fact that double-deck stock was also being used in conventional train formations. Earlier that morning I had noted an Ab and two Bs attached to the rear of the stock in Gleis 23, stabled awaiting the 12:00 working to Rapperswil (via Meilen). This was a weekday only loco-hauled working which is shown in table 730 as a Schnellzug, but only shown in the timetable as operating from Stadelhofen. I passed this train at Meilen and passengers were using the stock.

RBD 4/4 2100 (noted Geneva 22.2.9) is now in conventional livery - formerly two tone green

RBD 4/4 2162 was also noted on Geneva-Lausanne locals

Am 61 85 19-70700-7 noted at Zurich Hbf on 20.2.90 in Chiasso-Winterthur IC train, painted Eurocity two tone grey, Fiat bogies built 1977 in France?

Stephen Barnes