

Zeitschrift: Swiss express : the Swiss Railways Society journal
Herausgeber: Swiss Railways Society
Band: 3 (1991-1993)
Heft: 9 [i.e. 10]

Rubrik: Editorial jottings

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Editorial Jottings

The recent AGM was unusual in that we had an election for the office of Treasurer. In my many years as a member of various societies, I can't recall another occasion where two people were willing to take on a major post. Usually it is necessary to head hunt, that this has not been needed with the SRS says something about our members.

The election was caused by the resignation of Peter Over, who had to relinquish the post through pressure of work. It is appropriate to put on record the efforts he has made on your behalf, keeping the Society's finances on an even keel. These duties are now taken over by Willie McKnight, whilst Peter remains a valued member of the Committee. The overall composition of the SRS Committee thus remains unchanged. Whilst this can be taken as a vote of confidence, the fact that membership renewals stand at a record level in these troubled times is very gratifying.

It is sometimes said that serving on the committee of a society is a thankless task, this is not so with the SRS, your letters of praise and offers of support are very welcome. There are of course the occasional brickbats, often from individuals who are under the mistaken impression that Society Officers are their paid servants.

This is an amateur society. The fact that some members of the committee have sufficient knowledge of print to give the Society's publications and ephemera a professional gloss does not alter the fact that *Swiss Express* is prepared and distributed by volunteers, many of whom have other commitments. Therefore, while we aim to get your copies to you on, or even slightly before the 1st of the month, we only guarantee to publish *during* the month of issue. For various reasons the last two issues were sent out later than we would have liked; we regret this but do not feel there is any need to apologise.

This brings me to the question of copy date for *Swiss Express*, which is now set at the 10th of the month after publication, that is to say, the 10th of January, April, July and October for the four quarterly issues. This is the date by which

the general shape and form of the magazine is settled and the last date when we guarantee to be able to include any announcement, requests for information and above all letters for publication. By then, the major articles will have been laid out, and while we will make space for something newsworthy, clearly a general feature will have to wait its turn. After the tenth, it's largely a matter of luck, if there's an odd corner free we can squeeze in a short item, otherwise it will have to wait for the next train - sorry, magazine.

This issue has a very strong Rhätische Bahn bias, this was not planned, it just worked out that way - in other words, there is a distinct shortage of material dealing with other lines. The current 52 page issues have made inroads into the backlog of articles and although I am doing a little discrete arm-twisting there are doubtless many of you who could provide a different viewpoint of that of our small group of regular contributors. Many members will be visiting Switzerland over the next few months and may well see something unusual. Don't assume that the editorial staff will have seen it, or that it will have been spotted by our regular correspondents. Put it down on paper and, if possible, add a photo.

There are also the accounts of one's visit. A travelogue must fulfil two conditions. First, it should deal with items of interest seen, and not be a mere itinerary, let alone an expanded extract from the Kursbuch. Second, and even more important, if it is of any length it must be illustrated with prints. We do not want slides, these are irreplaceable and we do not want the responsibility of looking after them, have prints made from your selection and send us them. To clear up a common misconception, we can use colour prints, even though they will appear in glorious monochrome. The days when half-tones had to be made from high contrast black and white prints are so far in the past that it is doubtful if any active printer has personal experience of these conditions. At the same time, the quality of commercial colour photo printing has also improved out of all recognition.