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From the Chairman

I have been Chairman since the spring of 1983, a long time - too long some might say. Before the "seventh age of man" comes fully upon me, I have decided it is time for me to retire.

Too many societies have had difficulties because chairmen and other senior officers have carried on too long. I am a strong believer in the principle that younger people should gain experience as soon as possible.

The Society has grown from some 200 members to over 800 in these years and has established thriving branches in the USA and Australasia. It is believed to be the largest UK society to study the rail - and other - transport systems of another country and has won an enviable reputation with various Swiss authorities.

None of this could be achieved without the hard work of members of the committee, past and present with whom I have had the privilege to work. Most hold down taxing full time jobs and it is to them that we owe the success of this Society.

I hope to be able to continue to serve the Society as long as I am able.

Alan Pike

Editor's Jottings

With this issue of *Swiss Express* we start our fourth volume. You may notice a few small changes in the layout, primarily on the heading on the title page, which now echoes the cover, whilst the article headings are ranged on the left instead of being centred.

We shall be saying goodbye to Alan Pike as Chairman at the forthcoming AGM. I am sure all members will join me in thanking him for the efforts he has made on our behalf and will be pleased to learn that he has no intention of scaling down his involvement with *Swiss Express*. Alan's belief that the affairs of the Society should be placed in younger hands is one I share, which brings me to my principal point.

I too am not getting any younger, this year will see my 70th birthday. Although I certainly

don't feel my years, I am aware that I no longer have an indefinite time ahead of me and the question of my successor has to be considered. Up to now the Editorship has been handed over in something of a rush, this I feel is not a good tradition and one that should be broken. Even an experienced editor faces difficulties under such circumstances, for an amateur to be asked to do so is unreasonable. So, while I do not anticipate handing over in the immediate future, I would like to be able to ease my successor into the editorial chair and, hopefully, pass on to him (or her) most of the relevant tricks and dodges I have learned over the past forty years so that when the time comes for me to hand over, *Swiss Express* can continue to serve the Society and its members without a perceptible hiccup.

Obituary

Arthur Crane

It is with regret that we have to report the death of Arthur Crane, a founder member of the Manchester Branch of the SRS, who, after recovering from previous illnesses, succumbed to a heart attack at the age of 78 on Friday 3 December 1993.

Arthur presented a slide show at the very first meeting of the Manchester Branch on 26 November 1981. From that first Manchester meeting, through the organisation of five AGMs, the Convention Manchester hosted in 1984 (and the SRS At-Home) to the building of the Manchester HOm layout exhibited widely in the late 1980s, his contributions to both Branch and Society has been enormous.

Always generous and kind in spirit, his ready wit and humour were appreciated by all. He was always there with a friendly welcome for members and visitors. He will be greatly missed, but thanks to his many endearing qualities (including the ability to comment succinctly on any situation), we will all have our abiding memories of him to treasure.

Arthur was a true gentleman and a father figure to the Manchester Branch. Our heartfelt sympathies are extended to his wife Jo and his son Mark.

Dave Howsam