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OBITUARY - John B.C. Mc Cann - May 1996

Whilst the June edition of Swiss Express was being despatched I was to learn of the sudden death, on 25th May 1996, of John McCann.

John had been a member of the Society for over 10 years and was known to many of us for his patience and kindness in explaining the many complexities of the Swiss and European transport systems or perhaps the location of a nice lakeside cafe that he had discovered on his travels around Switzerland.

For almost 50 years, John had put on photographic record many rail and other forms of transport in Britain, Europe and Switzerland, and in particular his much loved railways of the Bernese Oberland. Many of John's photographs have been published in both British and Swiss books and magazines. It was once said by a member of the Bernese Oberland Bahn staff that John knew more about the B.O.B. than they did. For those of us who were privileged enough to have attended one of his slide shows at a branch meeting, this was certainly very true.

Some Society members attended a memorial service at Crich Parish Church on 7th June.

John's remains will be taken back to Switzerland where he can oversee his second home of Grindelwald and his beloved railways of the Berner Oberland.

Our sympathies are extended to his widow Mair, son Andrew, daughter-in-law Lea, and his many friends throughout the Swiss Railways.

William Mc Knight

This is a personal tribute to a remarkable man, John B.C. McCann, B.Sc., C.Eng, M.I.Mech. E.

I shall always regret that I did not meet him earlier. His fame as a speaker was well known to me long before I met him when giving one of his illustrated talks about the Berner Oberland Bahn. If anyone could lay justifiable claim to the title "expert" it was he because his knowledge of railways in the Jungfrau region was prodigious.

Because of his innate modesty, few knew of his achievements as a railway research engineer at Rugby and Derby though, through personal contact, more knew of his interest in tramways especially at Crich and on the Isle of Man.

His sudden and untimely death came as a great shock to me because we seemed to have a habit of meeting by chance at railway technical exhibitions and so it was at Birmingham only three days before he died when we had a quick cup of tea and, as ever, a lively chat.

I said he was remarkable for, unlike so many people of great knowledge who tend to be aloof and keep it to themselves, John was never happier than when sharing his knowledge and experience with others. I shall cherish the memory of watching one of his cine films and talking long into the night when John and his wife, Mair, invited me to stay after a visit to the East Midlands branch.

Willy McKnight, who knew him so much better, was able to attend his funeral on behalf of the Society and has expressed the condolences of our members but may I add my personal regrets to Mair and John's son, Andrew on their great loss.

Alan Pike O.B.E.

EDITOR'S JOTTINGS

This issue is being put together in August, so some of you will already have had your holidays by the time you receive it, if you still plan to go to Switzerland you may be interested in a flight at a sensible price, one of our members phoned me with some details, so I contacted the company, Edelweiss Air. The company operates from Luton Airport, they have a FREE coach connection from Paddington station to the airport, they fly once a day, five days a week to Zürich airport at 18.25, Mon, Wed, Thur, Sun. and at 17.55 on Fridays, returning at 17.10 and 16.40 respectively. The

best part is the fare is only £79 return plus taxes of £18, (maximum stay 1 month, no minimum stay). These fares are until further notice. If you are interested contact them on 01293 553717.

We have a varied mix this magazine, I hope you like it. Please keep putting pen to paper, supplying articles, making comments, passing on information to other members.

Please fill in your Eisenbahn form and send it back, this is a very good offer.

Don't forget to mention the Society when replying to advertisers.