

Zeitschrift: Swiss express : the Swiss Railways Society journal
Herausgeber: Swiss Railways Society
Band: 5 (1997-1999)
Heft: 8

Rubrik: Secretary's report

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SECRETARY'S REPORT

With this issue of Swiss Express you will find enclosed a subscription renewal form. The Committee is pleased to report that once again the subscription for UK members has been held and hopes you will agree with the sentiment expressed in a recent letter to one of the Committee - "we feel that the £10-subscription to the Society is the best £10 we have ever spent". Unfortunately, due largely to increases in postal costs and changes in exchange rates it has been necessary to increase subscription rates for our overseas members. We hope they will understand our reasons for having to make these adjustments.

The Committee has held one meeting since the last issue of Swiss Express appeared. As well as the ongoing issues of AGM procedures, accounting procedures and providing credit card facilities, a number of other issues were addressed. The question of holding the 2001 Annual General Meeting (and Spring Meet) in Switzerland was carefully considered but in the light of the response to the questionnaire which appeared in Swiss Express and an evaluation of the likely support it was decided not to proceed.

A major restructuring of the Society Library is being considered. Borrowings by members are negligible, but the Library does contain a significant core of quality reference books. Thought is therefore being given to ways of making better use of the sources of information the Society has within the Library and/or having a system of "Library Boxes" for certain of the larger branches. No major decisions have been taken, but the Committee has agreed in principle that some of the less important items can be disposed of to the benefit of Society funds. More details will appear in due course and members can be assured that they will be kept informed of all developments.

Our stocks of the Society Prospectus are running low and the opportunity is being taken to have a redesign. This is well underway and new stock should be ready during the early part of next

year. The Committee is aware that the Prospectus is the first, and sometimes the only link potential new members have with the Society and it is therefore very important that it presents the right image.

On the sales front the Line Diagram produced by our member, Alan Snowdon, is being re-launched and updated under the title of "Swiss Rail Map Supplement". Also from Alan Snowdon, and only available from the Society, is the video "Swiss Railways in the Sixties Vol.1" which is advertised on our Sales page.

Some concern has been expressed about the publication dates of Swiss Express, and the apparent change to seasonal issues. The Committee has re-affirmed that the cover dates of Swiss Express are March, June, September and December. Our Editorial team are making every effort to try and avoid late publication, and are particularly aware of the importance of the December issue being despatched before the Christmas postal rush, and the March issue (together with the AGM Agenda) being in the hands of members at least two weeks before the AGM. In order to achieve editorial targets, it is vitally important that members adhere strictly to the press dates given in Swiss Express.

When these notes are being written in October, Christmas and the New Year seem a long time away, but by the time this issue of Swiss Express drops through letter boxes throughout the world 1998 will be drawing to a close. On behalf of the Management Committee it is therefore my pleasure as the festive season approaches to wish all our members a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. We look forward to the continuing success of the Society, thank you for your support this year and hope you will join us for another year in sharing our common interest - the wonderful railways of Switzerland.

Brian Hemming