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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

As incoming Chairman, I must first thank Alan Pike and Roy Duglison for acting as Joint Chairmen for the past year. With the Committee, they have certainly kept the Society going and the members are surely grateful to them for this. Secondly, I must thank you, the members for doing me the honour of accepting me as Chairman.

Yes, it was with more than a little trepidation that I decided to put my name forward, but, with the new Committee, I hope to be able to serve the Society to the benefit of the members. The 1999/2000 Committee is a combination of experienced members and "new blood" with most corners of the country represented. This mixture is extremely healthy, particularly as the key position of secretary was contested at the recent Annual General Meeting. It clearly demonstrates that the Committee is not limited to a narrow self-sustaining group and bodes well for the future development and growth of the Society.

I am painfully aware that I do not know as much of the Society as I should. The London Branch I know well, but not the others. I am therefore aiming to visit as many of the Branches as I can within the next year or so in order to meet as many members as possible and to understand the character of each Branch. Branch Organisers should already have heard from me and, if arrangements work, I should have visited one Branch before this appears.

Attending the London Branch has been, and is, most enjoyable; it continues to remind me how much more I have to learn about Switzerland and its railways. As a High Street Bank once said "our roots are our branches" and it applies just as much to the Swiss Railways Society. If there is a Branch near you, give it your support, you will surely find it a worthwhile activity.

Lastly, many of us will no doubt be visiting Switzerland this summer. I hope those of you that are, have better trips than I did in February!

Paul Russenberger

AGM REPORT AND SECRETARY'S NOTES

The Annual General Meeting of the Society and the associated exhibition took place at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza, Bristol on Saturday 20th March 1999. Over 100 members and their guests attended the exhibition, whilst in excess of 80 attended the AGM.

The weekend proceedings started on the previous evening when the Bristol & Bath Branch held their monthly meeting at the hotel rather than their usual venue in Bath. A well attended meeting was entertained by Sue Knight and Chris Harnett of MITV who showed a selection of out-takes and "tricks of the trade" from their video productions. Of particular note were the problems experienced in positioning mirrors outside the panoramic coaches of the Glacier Express, and Sue complete with camera and tripod perched on the front platform of a Furka Oberalp HGe4/4 I passing through Disentis. They also showed footage of a recent trip to Switzerland when too much snow and the resultant lack of trains prevented any serious filming. After a break for buffet refreshments the meeting continued with a quiz set by Sue and Chris. The evening was thoroughly enjoyed by all present who demonstrated their appreciation, as well as that of the Branch and the Society, for both the presentation and continuing support given so generously by MITV.

Saturday started early for those participating in the exhibition and all was ready for the opening at 11.30. A steady flow of members and their guests came through the doors where a number of trade stands, the Bristol & Bath Branch second hand stall and the Society sales stand plied their wares. Thanks go to Michael Farr, Great Little Trains, Philip Kelley, MITV, Trevor Ridley Publications, Gerald Savine and Winco for their trade participation as well as to all those members of the Bristol & Bath Branch who contributed both with stewarding the event and manning the second hand stall. Special