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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

There is a danger of this becoming a cliché, but it is inevitable that I am writing these notes on a sweltering July afternoon, when my mind turns to thoughts of cooler Alpine meadows above Engelberg where I hope to walk next month. By the time this is seen in print, the LSE and the Verkehrshaus, the Titlis and the Trübsee will be but a memory, enhanced, no doubt, by family photographs and video.

Yet the winter months give us the opportunity of enjoying our memories of Switzerland with each other. They are the time when the Society's Branches really come into their own. The true purpose of the Society of enabling like-minded people to discuss Swiss railways, and, no doubt, other aspects of the world's smallest large country, can become a reality.

I have begun the process of visiting Branches. It is very encouraging to meet enthusiasts who want to exchange experiences of Switzerland and ideas for the Society. The question always put before me is "Does the Society have a future?" My reply to that is an unequivocal "YES!" The Society is not made up of a Committee but of Members. The very facts that Members are submitting articles to Swiss Express, that Branches have sent in their programme to the Editor, demonstrate the truth of my response. If I am asked how any member can help then my usual answer is "Submit an article or photographs to Swiss Express," because it is Swiss Express that keeps us together. There is a large number of photographers in the Society and we would all enjoy seeing their work. Slides to be reproduced in black and white require particular selection, but at least six of the illustrations in the last Swiss Express were taken from colour slides.

The membership figures for 1999 reinforce the solidity of the Society. Membership currently stands at 1005 compared with 982 and 989 at the same times in 1997 and 1998. There was a surge of 100 new members in 1997, 59 last year and 60 so far for 1999. Repeat custom is a sign of a sound company. Retention of members is an equally sure sign of a firm Society and an indication that any member encouraging a friend to join will be introducing her or him to a worthwhile organisation.

SECRETARY'S NOTES

This is the first issue of Swiss Express produced by our new Editor and the Committee would like to place on record its thanks to David Stevenson for all the hard work he has put in since his appointment. This has not only involved putting the magazine together, but he has also sought quotations for the printing and as you will see from elsewhere the appointment of an editorial team.

This matter of the magazine printing was considered in detail at the last Committee meeting held in July. Following a decision at the Committee meeting held in April quotations were sought from a number of printers, including our previous printers Systems Print. Adprint (Cheltenham) Ltd., were successful in securing our order. We look forward to this

new relationship, but cannot let this opportunity pass without expressing the Society's gratitude and thanks to our previous printers Systems Print and their predecessors Premier Print.

Swiss Express has been produced for some years on the Editor's own computer using his own programmes, and generally this has worked well. Technology however has moved on with the printing trade adopting the Macintosh computer as its industry standard. The Committee has discussed the question of software to be used, and has agreed to purchase a publisher programme which is of industry standard and compatible with the Editor's own Macintosh computer. The use of it will ensure that the inevitable cost increases in the production of Swiss Express will be kept to a minimum. This programme has now been purchased and registered in the Society's name.

Considerable re-organisation has taken place within the Library, and further to the report by Giles Della Gana at the AGM, the boxes to be distributed to the larger branches have now either been delivered or are awaiting delivery or collection. This scheme is designed to make selected books in the Society Library more readily available to the membership. If any member requires the loan of a particular book from the Library and it is not available through the local branch then initial contact should be made through Giles Della Gana.

Plans for the 2000 Annual General Meeting are beginning to take shape and will be reported in more detail in the next issue of Swiss Express. In the meantime the date is confirmed as Saturday 18th March 2000, and the meeting together with the associated exhibition and dinner will be at the Midland Hotel, Derby. Any offers of layouts or stalls for the Exhibition should be made to either Dave Howsam or Andy Nelson as soon as possible.

EXHIBITIONS REPORT

The summer is nearly over and I hope you have had the chance to visit Switzerland in the summer. I hope to go in the autumn.

If you need me to bring any particular item to an exhibition where the Society stand is present, then let me know, on 01753 534313, or if you cannot wait, then contact our Sales Officer Steve Horobin, who will be happy to help.

I again make the usual plea for details if you have a layout on view at any exhibition in the future so that it can be advised in Swiss Express. It should, however, be borne in mind that the copy date of Swiss Express is some 3 months ahead of publication date

SRS stand attendance

11 Sept Oxford (GRS exhibition). My HOm diorama, "The wrong kind of snow" featured in Continental Modeller (Dec 98) will be on display on the stand

Swiss Layouts on View

"Maloja"	25 Sept	Whitewebbs Museum, Enfield
"Preda"	9-10 Oct	Warley Show, NEC Birmingham
"Via Mala"	16-17 Oct	Connaught Leisure Centre, Aldershot
	30 Oct	Bristol Brunel Exhibition, St. Michaels Primary School, Stoke Gifford (near Bristol Parkway station) Note new venue
	19-21 Nov	Bremen, Germany (near Hauptbahnhof)

Andy Nelson