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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

No-one will need reminding that this year has been the 150th Anniversary of the birth of railways in Switzerland. This has, perhaps, not raised quite the fervour in the SRS that could be expected in other enthusiast Societies, and it is interesting to speculate why this should be. I think the answer lies in the attraction that Switzerland has for so many people who like railways and travelling by train. So much can be seen, either from the train or at the end of the journey, that the train is perceived as part of the Swiss scenery, and part of the whole experience.

I make no secret of the fact that I am a railway enthusiast, and a modeller as well, but I am well aware that other members have different degrees of enthusiasm. What has made the Swiss Railways Society so successful is that it is not necessary to be a dyed-in-the-wool gricer to enjoy Switzerland, its railways, or the Society. Therefore, although a number of members have travelled to Switzerland this year to visit the special events organised to celebrate the 150th Anniversary, many more have gone because they like holidays in Switzerland. If their holiday happens to coincide with one of the events, all well and good but, if not, then they will still enjoy their holiday.

One of the results of this is that the special trips

organised by Plus Travel for the members of the Swiss Railways Society were not well patronised. This was a great pity, as a great deal of work was put into organising them. In view of what I have said, however, it was probably inevitable. As I write this, I have just returned from the Plus Travel trip to the Jura. Despite being an enthusiast, it was not my usual style of holiday, but I thoroughly enjoyed it, nevertheless. An account of the trip will appear (Editor permitting!) in a future issue of "Swiss Express".

At the time this issue of the magazine is being delivered, I shall be in Switzerland again, this time with a couple of friends on a trip to see the events of the first of the Ticino weekends. This includes Swiss steam over the Gotthard, steam between Castione and Cama, and steam between the Verkershaus and Kussnacht. We hope. The trip will involve much rushing about by car and quite a lot of footwork - very different from the Jura trip but, again, very enjoyable for me. Very definitely, though, not what many people want from their holiday.

Each of you have your own ideas of what constitutes a good holiday. The important thing is that the holiday should be enjoyed and you come back ready for another stint of grind and toil.

John Jesson

SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Committee met in London on the 6th June, 1997 with a very long agenda, the meeting started at 11.00am and concluded at 16.05pm.

Arrangements are now being made for the 1998 AGM to be held in Stevenage on the 21st March 1998 (more information will appear later). Preliminary arrangements are being made for the 1999 AGM to be held in the Bristol area, date yet to be determined. Members are also to be asked for their views later in the year on a suggestion to hold the 20th Society Anniversary AGM at a venue in Switzerland (you will be able to put forward your views shortly).

The Sales Officer reported business in recent months especially the sale of Swiss Express binders resulting in a new supply being obtained (get yours now). It was also agreed to replenish the rather depleted stock of Society mugs (not the

Committee members?) and beakers.

Membership is very encouraging with a report at the meeting of 972.

In view of recent experiences regarding the membership list it was decided not to publish an amended list in 1997, but that in future should the membership at the AGM request the production of such a list again one will be prepared (is there a need for such a list to be circulated to the membership?) you will get your say at the next AGM as the Committee decided to submit a motion to the 1998 AGM suggesting that any reference to the production of a Membership list be deleted from the Constitution.

There ends my latest epistle of what the Committee members spend a sunny day in June discussing for the benefit of the Society.

Peter Dransfield