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CHAIRMAN'S THOUGHTS - Paul Russenberger

Welcome to the first issue of *Swiss Express* in the alternate format with some colour! Your Committee, not least the Editor, hope you like it.

Swiss Express is known in Switzerland and goes a long way to giving the Society its reputation. We need to be careful to maintain the reputation of the Society as a responsible body for the good of us all. That is one of the reasons why the Society is concerned that its name should not be used for the personal gain of a member. Occasionally, a member may be approached from outside the Society with an offer arising from their membership. If this should happen to you, contact a Committee Member, ideally the Secretary or Chairman for guidance before responding, unless you decide to decline the offer immediately. Similarly, no organisation should be approached using the name of the Society unless the prior approval of the Committee has been given.

March seems to be the time of year for holding AGMs and, inevitably, the Swiss Railways Society is no exception to this rule! AGMs have an understandable reputation for being boring. Some business has to be dealt with and it is the responsibility of the Chairman to do all she/he can to make it all as easy as possible. I have every intention of being there and I will do my very best to keep things as light as I can. However, when agendas have been lost and officers' reports studied, the fact remains that a Society's AGM is the opportunity for the members (who, after all, are the Society and it is their AGM) to make their representations over how the Society should be run. Come to Manchester, make your points, listen to the points of others, enjoy the layouts and stalls, and, if you can, stay for the dinner. See you there, I hope!

In the last issue of *Swiss Express* I promised to keep you all posted on the visit to the Verkehrshaus. At this moment, there is little further to report except that I have written to the Director letting him know that we have fixed the date as 22nd August, meeting at midday. While I am still aiming to keep the visit as informal and flexible as possible, it will help if members intending to be there were to let me know. That will not be taken as a firm commitment to being there, nor by the same token is it a requirement as a sort of booking, but it will give an indication of likely numbers. Of course the visit is open to families and friends, though Judith has been quite firm that being Chairman's wife does not extend to running a Society crèche! See you there as well, I hope.

SECRETARY'S NOTES - Brian Hemming

Apologies are due before proceeding any further, and I hold my hand up as the guilty one. When I sent the Editor the formal notice for the 2001 AGM I thought I had fully checked it over, so I was horrified when the December *Swiss Express* came and there barely half way down the first column of page 2 it was! I had advised that Steve Horobin was seeking re-election as Sales Officer, despite reporting in the previous issue that Glyn Jones had been co-opted to the post. Steve had not, of course, sought re-election at the last AGM and it is Glyn who is seeking election to the post of Sales Officer. My apologies for this error were sent post-haste to both Glyn and Steve.

I reported to the Committee at its most recent meeting, on 20th January, there had been no new nominations for the Committee, as well as no motions for the AGM. However the closing dates were still six and three weeks away respectively. If there are any new nominations, a list of nominees will be displayed prior to the AGM, whilst any motions received for the meeting will be on the agenda.

Those of you who have access to the Internet and have looked at our website will have seen that it is gradually being expanded. The Committee is very encouraged by the number of visits to the site which amounted to just over 1500 in the period April to December 2000. We are anxious to use this site for two main purposes: to provide basic information for our members by way of a diary of Society Branch meetings and exhibition participation as well as links to Swiss related websites and also as a means of publicity to help us recruit new members. Despite a number of requests it is not our intention to put on the site anything that could appear in or with *Swiss Express* which will always be the official mouthpiece of the Society.