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THOUGHTS FROM THE CHAIR - Paul Russenberger

One of the problems of writing this column is that you read it in a very different season from the one in which I am writing it. As I type, the leaves are just beginning to turn autumnal and school half term (in London, where it is early) has hardly begun, but the end of term will be in sight and the trees will be bare by the time this *Swiss Express* fall through your letter box, hopefully to be followed by Christmas cards. Perhaps I feel that the Christmas season starts when I settle down with the London Branch to struggle with the impossibly esoteric questions of their annual quiz. "Can you identify the location of this overhead line mast?" "No." "Correct." This year it won't be quite the same for me – I'm setting it and the Branch members usually complain that it is worse when it's me.

Whether the Society's year runs from membership renewal to membership renewal or AGM to AGM, I am not quite sure, but the close of the calendar year is a good time to remember and thank those who have contributed to the Society over the last 12 months. Perhaps to name names is dangerous, not because of those named, but because of those not named who deserve to be. The Society is not a family. However, it has at least one similarity to a family – it is made up of people. Like a family, it functions best when each member fully partakes of their role. So, whether it be running or supporting Branch Meetings, or through an ongoing contribution to *Swiss Express* (and the Editor would like more of those, please) or through quietly getting on with the unseen, and so vital, administrative work which keeps the Society intact, or however you have contributed, on behalf of the Society:

Thank you to all of you who have taken part over the past year.

May the coming holiday season be a time of re-creation for us all and I wish you all a wonderful 2003.

Paul Russenberger

EXHIBITIONS - Paul Hannant

The new SRS Sales stand will be at the following:

22nd/23rd Feb. 2003 Eurotrack, Eastleigh, Fleming Pk Leisure Centre. Just off the M3 at Jct. 14
22nd/23rd Mar. 2003 Festival of Railway Modelling, Alexandra Palace, London
29th Mar. 2003 Society Spring Meet and AGM (members only) at the Midland Hotel, Derby

If you are able to assist in "manning the stand", even if only for a few hours, it would be most appreciated and it can be fun! Offers of assistance can be made to me at:

Exhibitions@SwissRailSoc.org.uk or Tel. 01885 483697 (evenings).

Swiss layouts on show:

At the start of 2003 Mike Polglaze will be exhibiting his wonderful and recently altered layout "San Giacomo" at the following. If you are in the area don't miss it!

Jan. 4/5 - Kidlington, Exeter Hall

Feb. 8 - Newbury, St Bartholomews School

Feb. 15 - Biggleswade, Stratton School

March 8/9 - Crawley, Crawley Leisure Centre

East Neuk Model Railway Club will be exhibiting their Z gauge layout "St Adrian" at The Scottish Exhibition Centre between 21st - 23rd Feb 03

NEW AT THE AGM - SECOND HAND BOOK STALL

There will be a second-hand book-stall at next years AGM and Spring Meet at Derby. This is being run by Brian Hemming and he will be pleased to receive any books that you wish him to sell. There will be the usual Society deduction of 10% from the purchase price. Look out your surplus books and bring them to the AGM and you might just find that rare book you have been looking for as well!

In addition there will be the usual bring-and-buy stall for your models and other memorabilia.