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CHAIRMAN'S THOUGHTS - Paul Russenberger

These notes have to begin with an apology. Last year, about a month before the Society AGM, the family agreed the dates of a holiday to be taken in March 2000. Last October I was looking through the notes of that AGM when I realised to my horror that the holiday coincided with the year 2000 AGM in Derby. Because the holiday dates are driven by my eldest son's school, they could not be changed; the immovable was encountering the irresistible. I began to steel myself to negotiate an early return for the AGM. Before doing so, I placed my situation before senior members of the Society who were unanimously adamant that I should remain away with the family. I think I have more or less squared it with my conscience, but I very much regret not being present at the AGM and ask you all to accept my apologies.

In my absence, Roy Dunglison has kindly agreed to chair the meeting and I am most grateful to him.

Surfing the Internet the other evening, I decided to put Swiss Railways into the search engine. Results came up very quickly and the second entry read Swiss Railways Society. What a relief our Internet site works. Take a look at it, because it is our site about our Society. It includes our logo, which, incidentally, is copyright, and is regularly updated to give a listing of the topics covered in the most recent Swiss Express. For those of you who are web site builders, why not include it as a link? One thing however we, that is the Committee on behalf of the Society, not the Chairman's plural, require that you do not do is to include information about the Society in your web site. This is simply to ensure that no inaccurate data is published which could unintentionally mislead or cause the Society an embarrassment.

Lastly, I wish you all an excellent and fruitful gathering in Derby.

SECRETARY'S NOTES - Brian Hemming

By the time these notes appear in Swiss Express the Annual General Meeting will be only a couple of weeks away and the Committee will be working feverishly to finalise their reports for presentation to the meeting. All of what has happened in the past year will be included in these reports, but there are matters of importance to advise you of now.

Since the December Swiss Express was published, our Sales Officer, Steve Horobin, has indicated that he will not be offering himself for reelection to that post. Nominations for all positions were invited in the last edition of Swiss Express and therefore, unless a nomination or nominations are received for the post of Sales Officer before the closing date (4th March) and one of the candidates is elected at the AGM, the post will remain vacant until it can be filled. In the interim our Exhibitions & Publicity Officer, Andy Nelson, has kindly offered to fulfil the duties of Sales Officer to ensure an uninterrupted service to the membership.

The Society is extremely grateful to Steve Horobin for all the work he has done and the time he has spent on behalf of the Society in promoting our range of sales items. A look at the accounts will show only too readily the contribution that sales make to the income of the Society and the efficient way in which Steve has operated has made this possible. We are delighted that he has indicated that he will continue to support the Society whenever his considerable work commitments permit and look forward to seeing him at functions.

Another departure at the forthcoming AGM is Giles Della Gana who will be standing down from the Management Committee. The Society is greatly indebted to Giles for the many years of service he has given as a member of the Management Committee. His services will not be lost however, as he will continue as Librarian and London Branch Organiser.

The whole nature of the Library has changed over the last year and Giles has put a great deal of work into preparing boxes of selected library books for the branches to loan out to their members. This scheme is in its early stages and its success depends on support from the membership. We have a wide range of books especially related to Swiss railways and it seems a waste of resources that they just sit gathering dust on the shelves of the Library.

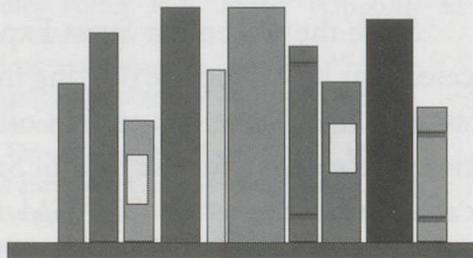
I must draw your attention to the AGM and Spring Meet at the Midland Hotel, Derby on 18th March. We have four model layouts booked for the Spring Meet as well as trade participation. The doors open at 11.00 hrs and guests are welcome on payment of a donation. The AGM, which is for members only, starts at 14.30 hrs and the Spring Meet will continue after the AGM until about 17.00 hrs. Although the closing date for bookings for the dinner has passed, it may be possible to take a few late bookings. In which case please advise the Secretary immediately, enclosing a cheque for £13.50 per person.

On the evening prior to the AGM, 17th March, the East Midlands Branch will be holding at 20.00 hrs their monthly meeting at the Brunswick Hotel, Derby. This is about 5 minutes walk from the Midland Hotel and Railway Station and all members and their guests are welcome. Richard Pinner will be giving a talk entitled "A Holiday in Brig".

The Society web site <http://www.btinternet.com/~srs.uk> now has the contents of the December Swiss Express listed as well as a few dates in the Society calendar. Any information, such as links, which members feel could be added would be gratefully received by the Secretary for consideration. Meanwhile all members preparing their own web sites should be aware that the Society logo is copyright and should not be used in any context. It would also be appreciated if links could be created to the Society's web site rather than individuals writing their own, or paraphrasing the Society's text.

LIBRARY SHELVES - THE SBB LIBRARY - Giles Della Gana

As a result of my appeal in last December's issue of 'Swiss Express' I was sent copies of 'Railway Holiday in Switzerland' and 'Swiss Travel Wonderland' by the archive section of the SBB in Bern. I feel that this is not only a most generous gesture in itself, but shows also that our Society is highly regarded by 'the powers that be'. I am told that 'Swiss Express' is read at the highest levels.



The SBB's library is somewhat larger than ours. It contains some 40,000 books, 1000 periodicals and 600 reports covering technology, economics, social sciences and law from Switzerland and other countries. Recent books and articles have been placed on a database called appropriately 'SWISSBASE'.

Address : Room D87, Mittelstr. 43, CH-3000, Bern 65

Opening times : 08.45-11.15 & 14.00-16.00 Monday to Friday

Website : http://www.sbb.ch/gs/infotek_e.htm - eMail : infotek@sbb.ch.