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In 2003 we achieved our highest ever membership. We hope that despite the long wait for this Swiss Express your patience has been rewarded. Some members may have thought about not renewing for 2004 because of the recent delays. Please do renew if you haven't already. For those who have renewed, many thanks for your patience. The only reason that the magazine is as good as it is is because we have such a large membership who contribute to the magazine and Society. Normal service will be resumed this year now that the Editor has recovered from illness and should have the help of a new Deputy Editor. Please see the advert elsewhere in the magazine.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHAIR - Paul Russenberger

The Society is in the middle of the season when we all seem to be preparing for something. December/January are renewals months, a time when I do not in the least envy Dave Howsam with subscriptions coming in with all the processing they require, not that he seems to mind fortunately. The season ends with the AGM in March, which seems to be a very long way away (especially as I am writing this in October!). Before then, at least a first pass will have to have been completed in the selection of images for the first Society Calendar.

What has to happen before the AGM is for those who wish to stand for election to the Committee to get themselves nominated and seconded. That applies to all, including those who are current members. While not being elected is a disappointment for the individual, to have an election is a sign of a healthy society. Some continuity in a committee is a good thing; lack of change in a committee leads to stagnation. I would seriously encourage all members to think about standing for the Committee or to think about what they could do for the Society.

I would very much like to thank all those who have contributed to the life and continuing success of the Society in 2003. Much is unseen, much is un-thought of. The work of the Committee is probably apparent, the staffing of the stand at exhibitions a high profile (and entertaining) matter of hard work, and I am grateful to the members who have unstintingly carried on with these responsibilities. Those who give talks to Branches must not be forgotten, for it is not just a matter of grabbing a box of slides to run through a projector, nor must the Branch organisers who develop programmes for the whole year and cajole speakers to come and share their experiences and expertise. Thank you all.

In conclusion I trust you have all had a fine Christmas and wish you and your loved ones and families success in 2004.

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GLYN JONES