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THOUGHTS FROM THE CHAIR - Paul Russenberger

This is a rather truncated issue of "Swiss Express." The Committee has been concerned for longer than it would like to have to admit about the continued late publication of the Society's journal. The matter has taken a significant proportion of the time at recent Committee Meetings and been the subject of serious debate, your Committee being painfully aware that in allowing the situation to continue we are failing the membership. The possibility of replacing the September issue with a newsletter, very much on a once only basis, was suggested and very seriously considered. It was seen as a potential solution, though not without its difficulties.

However, the situation has now arisen where the Editor has received a combination of material suitable for rapid production and recovery of the situation. He has indicated that by taking advantage of this, it should be possible to resume "punctual running" in the publication of "Swiss Express."

You will also have found what is possibly the largest enclosure ever with this "Swiss Express" – a complementary copy of the 25th Anniversary Calendar! Further copies are available from the Sales Officer. They may well solve a few Christmas present problems and advertise the Society in process. Given that all the views were taken by members, it shows what we can produce from our own resources.

Selecting the pictures was an interesting experience. As far as possible, the selection was made "blind" – the selectors did not know who had taken which photograph and hearing the comments about one's own efforts from the others was a salutary experience! We set a limit on the number of photographs from the same member and that did result in a rerun in that one member exceeded the limit, enforcing a reselection. It was also necessary to ensure a reasonable mix of subjects and choose suitable seasons. It was definitely not the same as choosing illustrations for an article and as one selector (not me) said "You have to remember the picture is going to be on the wall for a whole month."

It is by no means certain that another calendar will be produced. The constraint is mainly financial. At present, the Society is sufficiently strong to give all members a copy in celebration of the Silver Jubilee. Future calendars will have to be self-financing. In round terms, that means being certain of selling not less than about 750 and in general about 10% of a society's membership will purchase a calendar. That would require about 600 calendars being sold outside the Society or as duplicate purchases. Let me know what you think.

On a lighter note, I was delighted to receive no brickbats for the tongue-in-both-cheeks-at-the-same-time notes in the June issue and I have had at least one comment in general terms of "I like your idea of a fantasy railway." Now, I do rather fancy the Lima model of a Berlin S-Bahn train and have toyed with the idea of getting one. By combining two railways, there are precedents in Switzerland for third rail and second hand stock, so a unit could arrive for use on the local private railway. It is, of course, the Mittel Zargau Bahn.

JUST A SEC - Roger Ellis

Where the heck is Kingsbury Episcopi?

I know, "what on earth possessed Roger to volunteer to organise the Autumn Social Event in such an out of the way place?"

Having been at previous AGMs when many members said that we should, as a Society meet more often, I thought someone should bite the bullet. I would like to think that members will support the efforts of Bristol & Bath Branch and make the weekend a success. It really is a nice part of Somerset, and as many members have their own transport easily reachable from most areas of the UK via the motorway or trunk road network.

Details of the weekend are on a separate page of this magazine and on the SRS web site. Please let me know as soon as you can if you wish to attend the Saturday evening meal. I need to know potential numbers in order to know if it can go ahead.

"Our roots are our Branches"

This was the slogan of one of the major clearing banks in the 1980's, and it could be applied to the Swiss Railways Society. I always forget that most of our members cannot attend one of our Branches because there is not one in their area. Which leads me on to the point of this article.

I would like to see, as would the Committee, more Branches being opened. There are large population areas unrepresented such as the West Midlands, the South East of England, Yorkshire and the North East.

All a potential Branch Organiser need do, is arrange a venue well in advance, advertise this in the Swiss Express together with an agenda for the meeting and see how many members support the event. Each Branch is financially self-supporting, but it is appreciated that there may be an outlay for room hire for the initial meeting. I am given to understand that the Society would look favourably to reimburse this cost as long as this was not for the hire of an Executive Suite at a Five Star Hotel!

As to speakers, this is the easy part, as most members have slides as well as video excerpts they would be willing to show. Also, many of the other European Railway Societies are able to assist if asked.

You can always come to Somerset on 15/16th October especially to ask how it can be done.

EXHIBITIONS - Paul Hannant

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 emailed to me at:

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

Do you have a Swiss layout – which you are exhibiting this year or next? Then let me know, so we can let all our members know, but bear in mind the copy dates for Swiss Express at the front of the journal. We need to know at least 2-3 months in advance.

If anyone is able to provide further details or feedback from attending these events (opening times, addresses, size and scope) please contact me.

We are frequently asked whether our members have Swiss layouts available for exhibitions. Please let me know if you have a layout, which is exhibitable. I am looking to put together a portfolio of layouts. Please contact me for a form for layout details if you wish to be included on our register.

The SRS stand/diorama, Menziwil, will be attending the following:

SAT. 18TH SEPT. 2004 SUTTON COLDFIELD. GERMAN RAILWAYS SOC. EXHIBITION

Town Hall, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands. 10.00 - 17.00.

Note the new venue: this is the exhibition formally known as GRS-Oxford. Bit like Prince I suppose. Lots of specialist traders, Winco and Gerald Savine Prints for example and many European layouts.

SAT. 16TH OCT. 2004 SRS AUTUMN EVENT AND EXHIBITION. SOMERSET

Wyndham Arms, Kingsbury Episcopi, Somerset. 11.30-17.00.

First outing for "WINTER NACHT". Specialist Traders including Winco and Gerald Savine Prints.

4TH-5TH DEC. 2004 WARLEY NATIONAL MODEL RAILWAY EXHIBITION,

NEC, Birmingham. All weekend.

The model railway show of the year. Lots of continental societies including the SRS, and many specialist traders.

29th, 30th, and 31st October 2004

Dave Howsam's fantastic Perrapswil will be at:

The Merseyside Model Rail Exhibition

Pacific Road Exhibition Centre, Birkenhead.

Get your copies of Continental Modeller autographed by David!