

Zeitschrift: Swiss express : the Swiss Railways Society journal
Herausgeber: Swiss Railways Society
Band: - (2006)
Heft: [3]

Rubrik: Thoughts from the chair

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THOUGHTS FROM THE CHAIR - Paul Russenberger

This may prove to be the only time that members receive a missive from the Society every month – unless “Swiss Express” goes monthly, but I doubt that would ever occur in my lifetime and I have not yet retired! (I have to write “may” because, as always these notes are written over a month before they appear and, to plagiarise, a month seems to be a long time in the life of the Society.)

As you read in the Newsletter, David Stevenson has had to relinquish the position of Editor because of a massively increasing professional workload. He has undoubtedly changed the face of “Swiss Express” almost out of recognition and in doing so has ensured the continuing growth in the Society’s membership. He has proved what can be done by a non-professional body of keen minded people. The Society has much to be grateful to him in what he has succeeded in doing. I wish him every success in his continuing professional career.

This has left an immediate problem over the production of the September 2006 “Swiss Express.” With David’s support, the Committee decided to bring in outside, paid production input for this issue only. Precisely who it will have been is not certain at the time I write this. The Society’s financial situation can certainly sustain this and it is important that every effort is made to get the Society’s journal back on schedule.

For the present, Malcolm Bulpitt will take on the work of Editor. We had hoped that he would have had the entire editorial team set up last November to assist him in this, but unfortunately Steve Bratt has chosen not to continue. David has promised the availability of his advice as necessary. Contributions should still be sent to Liliana Wood as before. Do, please, keep sending them in!

In the shorter long term, the intention is to bring the publication month forward to February and so on. The objective is to give members longer notice of the arrangements for the AGM, constitutionally required to be held before the end of March, and to avoid the Membership Secretary receiving the bulk of the renewals at the same time as his/her Christmas cards.

In a group where all the work is done voluntarily, it is inevitable that professional and family concerns have to come first, though it often does not feel like it. In my less sane moments, I wonder if there shouldn’t be a clause in the Constitution that all Society officers must be single and retired! Very understandably, members become frustrated when they do not get a prompt reply from a Committee member to a letter or a returned phone call comes later than expected. Nevertheless, I ask you all to remember that what we do, we all do in our spare time. When you contact us, please bear that in mind.

Have a good autumn, sorting those images taken in the summer, getting on with that modelling project, supporting your local Branch or simply remembering past visits to Switzerland!