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EDITORIAL Malcolm Bulpitt

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COVER PICTURE:

MOB - The 17.50 commuter train to Zweifelden leaving Churten.

PHOTO: A Warrener.

The topic at the last AGM that seemed to generate the most discussion was the size of this magazine. Not a change from the current A5 format to A4 that had been contemplated, and rejected, in the past but in the number of pages it contains. The last three issues have been just 40 pages thick plus covers – a long way from some of the 60+ page issues of the recent past. As was outlined in the Nuremberg Toy Fair insert in the March magazine this thin version came about as a result of the changes that came into operation last August in the way postage charges are calculated. Magazine sizes come in multiples of 8 pages – simply going to 48 pages would have more than doubled the postage costs and when you are sending out over 1300 copies as we do that is a lot of money. The upside of a smaller magazine is that printing and some other costs are marginally reduced.

The Management Committee realise that *Swiss Express* is the embodiment of the Swiss Railways Society to a majority of our members and that the thin editions were restricting their access to, and enjoyment of, information about the Swiss transport system. They have given the go-ahead for this edition to be much thicker, and they had planned that the two sizes should alternate between issues. However, it became quite clear at the AGM that almost all of those present would prefer to keep to the larger size for all editions despite the implicit higher postage charges and production costs. An outcome of the meeting was that I should go away and through the magazine try and highlight to the membership the implications of such a policy.

Despite some of the “guesstimates” made at Bristol it is hard to put a figure on the additional costs of keeping to the larger size for all editions as postage charges have recently gone up again (and are apparently set to rise substantially in the future). The option of using a distribution system other than the Royal Mail is not open to a small operation such as ours. Bringing in some professional help in producing the magazine has been at a cost, but there have been benefits such as a reduction in the price we were paying for printing, although this is always subject to inflationary changes outwith our control. Corporately we need to try and cost out the options and the implications that have resulted from all of the changes that *Swiss Express* has been faced with in the last 12 months. Watch this space!

Finally, enjoy your summer trips to Switzerland and please come back with interesting photographs and the inspiration to write an article about some aspect of railway operation – possibly something offbeat – for the magazine. Remember – it is your journal and it exists on your input.

If you sent articles for the magazine to Liliana Wood during April would you please re-submit them to her as she has had major computer problems.