

Zeitschrift: Swiss express : the Swiss Railways Society journal
Herausgeber: Swiss Railways Society
Band: - (2007)
Heft: [2]

Rubrik: Member's letters

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From Chris Matthews – Hixton, Staffordshire.

Swiss Express

As a relatively newcomer to the SRS I recently attended my first AGM, in Bristol on the 24th March. Whilst I am certainly not as knowledgeable regarding the various rolling stock (GE4/4 this, and Ge4/6 that) as many of my fellow members are, what I do share with the majority is a passion for Switzerland, its infrastructure, people and scenery.

I came across the SRS on the internet and liked the way the Society web site was structured. I also liked the idea of receiving a quarterly magazine. Having now had four copies land on my door mat I await each forthcoming copy with great anticipation, which brings me nicely onto the magazine as a whole.

My own feelings are that provided the respective team can produce the magazine on a "Quarterly Basis" (in either 44 page format or larger) as a Society this should and must be done. Regarding the cost, I believe this should be put into prospective. Membership is one third what it costs for three of the magazines I subscribe to, it is half the cost of a piece of goods rolling stock, one tenth of the cost of a locomotive and a fraction of the cost of a holiday in Switzerland, in other words exceptional good value for my money.

I believe the majority of the membership would support a relatively small increase in membership fees to maintain at a minimum the size and quality of our excellent magazine. Let's hope we can keep majority rule and continue to have our magazine quarterly.

Editor's Note: We have no intention of changing the quarterly publication pattern of the magazine. It is only the new postage costs that are of concern as they act to restrict the issue size.

From Dave Howsam – Manchester.

Thanks

I would like to express my official thanks to the Committee and membership of the SRS for the most unexpected, but very much appreciated, presentation at the AGM. I was rather taken aback at the kindness and, what with having to run half way round the hotel to collect the splendid engraved decanter, I am not sure that I expressed my deep gratitude and appreciation fully to the Members present. I deem it an honour and pleasure to have been able to serve the SRS in any way I could over the past 25+ years. Indeed the Society has been a major part of my life over that time sad though that may sound and frustrating at times it may have been! I shall, of course, continue to promote and serve the SRS in any way I can in the future - hopefully for another 25 years!!!

I thank you all once again for your very kind thought.

From Anthony Warrener – by email.

Locos

In Helena Moretti's article in the March *Swiss Express* she claimed that one should look out for the RhB Ge6/6s, as she understood that they had no booked diagrams. Having spent two weeks in Klosters this February a Ge6/6 (No 707, aptly named Scuol) was used on the 9.49 Landquart to Scuol-Tarasp every day throughout my stay. I also noted several others at Filisur whilst they were working passenger turns between Chur and St.Moritz.

Real class! I appreciate that "beauty is in the eye of the beholder" but I strongly disagree with her reference to the wonderful SBB Class 460s as "slabs" I consider they are the finest looking locomotives in Europe (with the possible exception of the OBB "Taurus") which I also find truly remarkable in view of their varied use. The SBB must have paid untold trillions to Pinninfarina for the Class 460 design. Their livery was of course trialled on a Re4/4iv (No 10103) that is now owned by the SOB. Sadly I do not have a digital photo of that locomotive, but there is an excellent photo of her passing St-Maurice in the book entitled "Schweizer Bahnen Heute" by George Wagner. The book was originally published in 1986, and it is still available in decent bookshops.

From Lester Weeks – by email. Scenic Coffee

I liked Rob Morrey's piece in the March issue of *Swiss Express* on the subject of "Scenic Coffee". Curiously, however, the picture shows the station restaurant at Alp Grüm on the RhB Bernina line, but is not mentioned in the text. As many members will be aware, the station occupies a most dramatic location. To the best of my recollection, however, the view from the restaurant windows is rather less than compelling. The constantly changing view that takes a lot of beating is that from the upper deck of one of the stately old paddle steamers that cruise the Vierwaldstättersee (or Lake Lucerne). If it happened to be one of the three ships with an upper deck saloon (namely ds Uri, ds Unterwalden or ds Stadt Luzern) lunch might be a further bonus. Lunch could, of course, also be taken in the lower deck saloons of the other two historic ships.

Editor's Note: Blame me for the photo choice. We had the Hammetschwand (Rob's top choice) in a previous magazine. The view from Alp Grüm is amazing and we had Tony Bagwell's great shot of both restaurant and railway in the photo library.

From Joanne Harris – London Scenic Coffee

As the long suffering wife of an SRS Member of some 12 years I must admit that the quarterly arrival of *Swiss Express* usually passes me by.

However the inclusion in the March edition of scenic coffee places certainly excited some interest. My husband knows from experience that the best way to entice me on to Swiss trains is the promise of coffee at regular intervals so therefore I feel that I must add some places of my own.

Your feature showed a picture of the Alp Grüm station but it was not mentioned in the author's top ten. This is a truly wonderful place with the forbidding Palu Glacier on one side and the steep wooded descent to the Poschiavo valley on the other. Then on reaching Poschiavo a chance for another coffee in the town square – this time accompanied by delicious Italian ice-cream and surrounded by a colourful market full of Italian produce. With so many injections of caffeine in the last 12 years it is difficult to remember all the most scenic places but the restaurant at the top of the Rigi Bahnen was one as was the café just outside Bellinzona Castle. I also agree with Rob Morrey that the trolleys on the SBB serve surprisingly good coffee.

Thank you for an interesting article and I may even be moved to read *Swiss Express* in future!