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EDITORIAL

Malcolm Bulpitt

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COVER PICTURE:

TMR(MC) BDeh 4/4 No.5 to Le Chatelard-Frontiere at Martigny.

PHOTO: Graham Smith.

Another AGM and another discussion about the cost of postage for Swiss Express! Again it was suggested by a few members that we could get better value for the Society if we looked at other ways of sending out the magazine, including emulating the manner in which other magazine publishers seemingly obtain discounted postage rates. I do not wish to calculate how many hours I have already spent in following-up similar suggestions since I became Editor.

Basically we are a small player in a big commercial pool. If we forget the overseas mailings of Swiss Express, which would not normally qualify in any bulk posting deal, we only send out around 1,000 magazines every three months - 4,000/year, the equivalent of 77 letters a week, or 15 mailings a working day. This is nothing to what the commercial publishers send out. I understand that a well known railway publisher apparently sends out some 10,000 magazines/month by post - some 120,000/year, or 30 times our volume of post. They have dedicated facilities where they can easily set-out the 100-plus Mail Bags that they have to sort their magazines into in order to get part of their discount - the rest comes from the sheer volume of postings. Our dispatch is done from a private house in Scotland - a somewhat different proposition! If we were to have to use the similar 100-plus bags these would fill a normal garage several times over and many would only have one magazine in them - something that would not go down too well with the local sorting office.

We will always try to reduce costs but I do wish some members would remember the scale of our operation. The SRS is a small organisation that is run by a dedicated group of people in their spare time from their homes. The Society simply does not have the resources, or the volume of postings, to be able to benefit from the money-saving initiatives that the big players have. Next time anyone has a bright idea to save the Society money please fully research all the implications before you suggest it to the Committee.

In response to frequent suggestions that the SRS should issue a calendar we have put together a super series of photographs for a 2009 one. To avoid wasted printing it will only be available on a pre-order basis. Details are on the Society News page.

JUST A SEC

David Stevenson

Many of you will be surprised to see my name reappear on the Committee as the new Secretary and probably many of you will ask why? The short answer is that I missed the involvement in the Society and following yet another huge upheaval where I work I am able to make the time. For me just being a member and paying one's subs is not enough and I feel the need to contribute more so being able to return to the Management Committee is my answer. My two main interests are Swiss and Spanish railways and I am fortunate to now enjoy a role in both and I love it and them!

I must now mention Roger Ellis, fortunately still a member of the Committee, and offer my thanks and yours for the sterling service he has given over the years he has been Secretary. Thanks Roger for a job well done. I am looking forward to working with the new Chairman, Treasurer and the other existing committee members over the next few years. I hope to hear from as many of you as possible with your ideas and suggestions for the future of the Society. At present the age range of the membership is inevitably skewed towards those like myself who are over 50 - not over the hill, just over 50. I very much want to see more younger members and since Swiss railways are unique in their success we should be able to encourage those who would like to know more about how railways should be run. After all, if we are able to attract the younger age groups who then go on to work in the industry in the UK who knows, the railways at home may improve as well. Remember therefore that it is your civic duty to encourage the younger age groups to become members.

The Society has a number of events planned (see the AGM Report) including an Autumn Meeting on 4th October at a new venue, Letchworth in Hertfordshire. Details are on the Society News page of the magazine so there is plenty of time to reserve the date in your diary.

That's it for now. All of us on the Committee want to hear from you, so please get in touch.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Ian Athey

At the AGM on 8th March Paul Russenberger duly stepped down as the Society's Chairman after a commendable nine years in office. Whilst at the end of the meeting Alan Pike, one of our Joint Presidents, eloquently thanked Paul for his sterling efforts for the Society I nevertheless feel that I should also offer Paul thanks on your behalf for the amount of work that he did during his term in office. Having served as Treasurer for seven of those nine years I recall that, on occasions, life for the Chairman was anything but easy. I know that you would want me to wish Paul all the best for the future and to hope that he will now have more time to devote to his family and other interests.

John Fisher, the Treasurer, stepped down at the year end and he also is due thanks for his work for the Society – I understand that he has instigated systems that should keep the Society on the right tracks! Although Roger Ellis did not chose to stand again as Secretary I am delighted to say that he has agreed to be co-opted onto the Committee in the interests of continuity. Roger carried out the secretary's duties with efficiency, flair and humour and I am delighted that he will continue to be involved. On behalf of you all I would like to thank him for all the work he has done for the SRS firstly as an ordinary Committee member and subsequently as Secretary.

So the Society has three "new" faces in the positions of Secretary, Treasurer and Chairman. All three of us have previously served on the Committee in other capacities and whilst it may take us a short while to get back into the swing of things it is nevertheless "business as usual".

Special Trains in 2008

Notice has been received of the following planned special trains:

28 June	Preserved	Brig – DFB – Chur
29 June	Preserved	Chur – DFB - Brig
5 July	A 3/5	Olten – Brugg – Zürich – Winterthur – Arbon and return
10 July	Preserved	Brig – DFB – Chur
11 July	Preserved	Chur – DFB - Brig
23/24 July	Alpine Classic Pullman Express	– Route of the Glacier Express
4 August	Preserved	Brig – DFB – Chur
5 August	Preserved	Chur – DFB - Brig
16 August	Eb 3/5	Olten – Bern – Interlaken and return

*Further information can be obtained from the RailAway internet site at www.railaway.ch/erlebnisfahrten
While this information is given in good faith, no responsibility can be taken for inaccuracies.*