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EDITORIAL

Malcolm Bulpitt

Having written about personal security on the Swiss transport network in the December 2008 edition I had not thought that I would have to come back to it so soon. An SRS member unfortunately fell victim to pickpockets at Visp station during May. According to the Cantonal Police since the interchange facility with the MGB was established there, following the opening of the Lötschberg Base Tunnel, such thefts occur on a regular basis. As we noted previously travellers with their minds on other things are easy prey for the professional gangs that apparently are often comprised illegal immigrants who have made their way into Switzerland. Be warned.

Hopefully your trips to Switzerland this summer will have been trouble free – or perhaps your visits are still to come. Have you taken lots of transport photographs? Please sort through them and send the best images to us. Why not consider writing something about the local railway/bus/boat/etc operations that you witnessed, or rode upon? *Swiss Express* is your magazine – it needs your input. The editorial team can only use what you supply us with. If you are sending-in photographs they should go to direct to Tony Bagwell.

In this edition we start a series of articles that I have asked Paul Russenberger to write. Switzerland has, pro-rata, what is probably the greatest percentage of electrified track of any national rail system in the world. However there are many different systems using many different voltages, etc, and I wondered why. Having once informally asked Paul, a railway electrical engineer by profession, to set-out the reasons; I realised that his explanations may be of interest to others. Hence the series. If there are any other technical issues about railway operation that you would like explained I am sure we have a member who could enlighten you (and us) so please send in your question.

Finally, the SRS has published a 2010 calendar. Put together by Tony it is fully up to last year's high standard, but a little smaller following comments that our 2009 effort took-up too much wall-space; it will be available from this month. Further details are in the magazine.

COVER PICTURE:

A Be 4/12 of the FLP arrives at Ponte Tresa station. See page 32.

PHOTO:

Jason Sargerson.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Ian Athey

Those of you who were able to attend the Annual General Meeting at Derby in March will be aware that the financial statements presented then were un-audited. I am pleased to advise you that the audit was duly completed with only a couple of minor amendments. On your behalf I would like to thank Giles Baker for the work that he did in completing the audit.

Eisenbahn Amateur

You should receive with this magazine an application/renewal form for subscribing to Eisenbahn Amateur magazine which members can get at a special rate through the Swiss Railways Society. However, the number of our members who subscribe to *Eisenbahn Amateur* has been dropping for a number of years now. The Society's Management Committee are concerned at this and would encourage members to consider taking out a subscription to what is an excellent product that covers both the real thing in Switzerland and railway modelling too.

Scottish Branch Lunch/Meeting

In my notes in the March 2009 edition of *Swiss Express*, I asked members residing in Scotland to let me have suggestions for somewhere to hold a lunch followed by a meeting. Such a meeting would preferably be held somewhere in the Central belt. The response to my request was, to say the least, underwhelming! Undeterred, however, a suitable place in Linlithgow has now been identified and we propose to hold the lunch and meeting there on Saturday 10th October commencing at 11.30. The after-lunch meeting will comprise a speaker and a slide presentation. The cost per head for a two course lunch is expected to be between £10 and £12. For further information please contact either myself, or Willie McKnight, Scottish Branch Organiser as soon as possible – his contact details are on page 51 and mine are on page 3. Wives/partners will be most welcome to join us as will any member from outside of Scotland.

WHY SWITZERLAND?

From the next edition of the magazine we will be running an occasional series where we have asked the above question of various members of the SRS. Their responses will be limited to less than 200 words. I own-up to having taken the title from that of a super book by Jonathan Steinberg first published in 1976 and reprinted many times since. To start-off the idea I have put together in 178 words the background to my interest in everything Swiss.

“It is all down to Miss Saunders. I was eight years old. It was September 1951 and a new school – for all of us; new buildings; new teachers; new pupils. Our new form mistress Miss Saunders suggested that we all talk and write about the summer just passed. She started, telling us all about her holiday to the Swiss Alps. Nice hotels, different food (we still had the end of rationing), alpine chalets, walks in the mountains, cows with bells in the high meadows, and the trains – she always came back to the trains. She was enthused with them and had taken numerous photographs of everything. I recall

that she brought in her camera. It was a Leica. Seemed normal to us children! She must have had her own darkroom too, for she came in with large prints, black and white of course, that we made a big display with. There was a large map, publicity material she had acquired from somewhere, plus masses of postcards from her visit. I was sold on Switzerland – and I still am”.

Malcolm Bulpitt



Re 4/4 No 11299 leaves the tunnel at Wassen.
PHOTO: Phil Weaver