

Chairman's notes

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COVER PICTURE:

Two double-deck trains at Spiez.

Why not visit Spiez with the SRS in 2011. See page 37.

PHOTO: Michael R Wild.

EDITORIAL

Malcolm Bulpitt

Another full edition of *Swiss Express* due to all of our members (and others) who spend time writing articles, submitting photographs and sending in items of news. Thank you – and please keep it up. You will read elsewhere that the AGM decided that we should work towards an A4 magazine as this will give us more space to utilize your input and to broaden the scope of what we do. At the AGM I was asked why we did not use maps to make understanding articles easier. Space constraints with our current layout generally preclude this but it should be easier at A4. If you would like a map to accompany the magazine I would recommend acquiring the SBB/VöV/PostAuto “Official Map of Public Transport” published by Kümmerly+Freymann which is available at most larger stations in Switzerland, and at Stamford's Map Shop in London's Long Acre. It is my constant travelling companion when using Swiss trains and on a recent trip it was seized upon eagerly by a Swiss lady who had an interest in rail travel but did not know of its existence. With this issue we welcome Lesley Johnston-Senior who will be joining the magazine team as our proof reader. Thanks too to the other members who responded to our request for a volunteer for this role. Lesley was first to contact me, but your offers are appreciated.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Ian Athey

At the Society's AGM on 20th March, the two proposed changes to the constitution were duly passed and therefore became effective at the end of that meeting. The proposal to allow electronic authorisation of payment from the Society's bank account was passed by a sizeable majority and without query. The other proposed change, concerning the election of Officers and Committee members for three years was also passed, with two minor amendments, by a sizeable majority. However, it seems that some present felt that the Committee were acting simply to secure their own futures. Nothing can be further from the truth. Two years ago we had the situation where the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer all stood down at the one Annual General Meeting. As the incoming Chairman then, I was very concerned at the lack of continuity that would result. Furthermore, over the period 2005 to date we have had four Treasurers. In view of the above, the Committee decided, after long discussions, to take steps to change the constitution to help avoid a repetition of the above situations and provide the continuity that we feel is necessary.

One matter that occupied much of the open forum, after the official business of the AGM had been completed, was a discussion on the format of *Swiss Express*. This subject has been raised on several occasions in the past, and it has always been that the majority of members present expressed a wish that the magazine should remain A5 size. This, however, was not the case on 20th March when most present, having seen the mock-up of an A4 magazine that was on display, expressed the wish to change to A4 format. Over the coming months this possible change will no doubt occupy a substantial amount of time in Committee

meetings. The finances of such a change, including such things as advertising rates as well as the logistics, will all have to be decided well in advance. Any change will probably take effect from a March issue - possibly in 2011 - if all works out well and to the Committee's satisfaction. I will keep you informed of developments later this year.

JUST A SEC

David Stevenson reports on this year's AGM

Another year has passed and this year's AGM in Derby was one of the best yet. Over 142 members attended which may be a record; no doubt someone will let me know.

Roger Ellis and the Bristol and Bath Branch organised the event and they deserve our applause. Traders included Winco, Platform 5, Contikits, NScaleCH, Gerald Savine, Maureen Stainton and Derby Trees. Layouts included Dave Howsam's HOm "Untermutzen", Simon Ellis' "Surava" and Bob Simmonds' fantastic Om "Winterschlaf", as well as others from Paul Hannant, Peter Marriott and Ray Williams. Many thanks to them all for coming along and helping make the day so successful. There was also a fiendish Photo Competition which was won by Nick Freezer and I believe Neil Wheelwright was the runner up. Skills required included cryptic crossword solving, way beyond my simple mind I'm afraid.

As always SRS Sales were busy. The AGM saw the launch of the first in a series of SRS Swiss Travel Guide Books written by Martin Fisher. This volume, about the Bernese Oberland, is reviewed elsewhere in Swiss Express and is available from Glyn Jones now - check the Sales pages. We are trying to introduce new items and the success of Swiss Express Portfolio and the new Guide Book will hopefully lead to many more publications in the future. It's a measure of the Society's strength that we are able to do this, we do however depend on them being sold!

The AGM was chaired by Ian Athey with his usual aplomb and two changes to the constitution were passed; one minor to do with electronic banking, the other to do with the Committee and elections. The latter, although overwhelmingly passed, did engender some controversy. I often detect a feeling that some members believe we join the Committee for our own benefit, whereas nothing could be further from the truth. Don't get me wrong, I really enjoy being a member of it and being able to participate fully in what SRS does but the time and yes, money we give up in order to take part is a huge commitment. It's one that we all take part in willingly but don't do for our own personal benefit other than the satisfaction of getting the job done. We can always do with more help so if you would like to contribute more let me know and I'll find you something to do - I promise. The question of the magazine size was also debated and a move to A4 was endorsed by almost all present.

The evening meal was very good, as was the presentation by Tony Bagwell. Once again a great day was had by all, and we all look forward to Saturday 26th March 2011 when Glyn Jones will once again be organising it.

...and on new branches

One of the Secretary's remits is to promote regional branches and they are now all over the country, although there is always room for more. Recently Yorkshire, Hampshire (taking over the mantle of the former Wessex one) and East Anglia have set themselves up. Of all the things I do in the Society this is far and away the most enjoyable - like-minded members getting together on a regular basis. In the case of the West Midlands it is very much a social event. We are involved in visits, meals, barbecues and in the past have enjoyed day trips to Switzerland. This year it's up Snowdon and mention is made elsewhere about the details. Next year who knows? How your branch develops is up to you; if you would like to organise one in your area get in touch with me and I'll do all I can to help. In the Midlands for example there are three, East Midlands, West Midlands and Birmingham, despite it being a relatively small area. It can be surprising how many members may be close to you. In Kent and E Sussex for example there are about 60 members, which is more than enough to start a group. Just one example of many. Grow the tree and form a branch!