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Switzerland Travel Centre - 2011 Discount Offer

The Swiss Railways Society has for many years been pleased to enjoy a good relationship with the Switzerland Travel Centre (STC) who have recently re-confirmed their membership of the SRS and their willingness to assist the Society and its members. Look out for more STC information in both *Swiss Express* and in other Swiss Railways Society publications.

As was announced at the AGM, in recognition of the 30-plus years that the SRS has been "flying-the-flag" for Switzerland, the STC will be offering SRS members 5% discount on their brochure packages (hotels/rail pass & hotels). Members purchasing Swiss Travel System rail passes will also benefit from the 5% discount. This offer applies to all bookings made before 31st December 2011. As well as booking train travel to Switzerland using Eurostar and SNCF via Paris, the STC now offers the alternative of travelling via Bruxelles and using daytime DB services through Germany. They can also get you to Switzerland overnight using the City Night Line service.

Diana Slavova at the STC is the point of contact for SRS members wishing to book by telephone on 020 7420 4908, or by email on railtrade@stc.co.uk. The STC website is www.stc.co.uk if you wish to make on-line bookings. STC is also offering a personal appointment service at their Covent Garden office in London. Contact Diana, or one of her colleagues, and SRS members can call in to plan their Swiss trip over a cup of coffee or tea. In order to benefit from the 2011 discount scheme when contacting the STC, either in person or by phone, members must quote their SRS membership number. With on-line bookings the membership number must be entered in the appropriate "Promotional Codes and Notes" section of the booking in order for the discount to be calculated.

For the future the STC is keen to put together specialist packages for SRS members on a group or individual basis, and they invite members to contact them with ideas about things and events that they would be interested to have included in any potential trips.

(Note. This is based upon information supplied to the Society by the STC. All details should be checked with the STC before making any booking, as the terms and conditions implied in the promotion may change due to unforeseen circumstances.)

Wanted – a new Membership Secretary

This is a rewarding role in the sense that you will be helping to represent the Society and raise its profile. For further information please contact the Chairman, John Jesson, or the present Membership Secretary, Martin Fisher. Contact details on P1 of this magazine. Martin will of course provide detailed training to his successor and will happily answer any queries he or she may have once they have taken up the reins. It is suggested that candidates will need the following qualities.

- **Energy.**
- **Enthusiasm.**
- **Time.** At least 300 hours a year of which probably 200 are spent in December to February. Included in the figures are four Saturdays a year which you will need to devote to

Committee meetings - including travelling time.

● **Organisation.** This is not a task for someone who prefers to put off to the week after next, something that can be done today.

● **A methodical approach** with the minimum of errors.

● **Use of email,** Microsoft Word and, especially, Microsoft Excel (including simple formulae) is essential. Knowledge of Microsoft Access (or a willingness to learn) would be an advantage in case the system is converted at a later date.

● **Written & oral work.** You will be in correspondence with members, potential members, fellow Committee members and some external organisations. You will not need to disclose your home telephone number widely if you do not wish to do so.

● **Maths.** Nothing too demanding but you will need to feel comfortable with basic calculations.

● **Fairly regular access** to a High Street Bank and a Post Office. This need not be the post holder if someone else is prepared to stand in queues on their behalf!

● **Patience.** Fortunately the vast majority of members present no problem whatsoever but inevitably there are some who manage to do the wrong thing in some way. These can require a disproportionate amount of time to resolve - and one or two can test the patience of a saint!

SRS Web Forum

Glyn Jones writes: "At the 2010 AGM Open Forum there was debate about the Society having its own web forum. I took this idea away and built a trial forum for the committee to look at. It was agreed to go ahead with this, initially hosted on one of my web sites, and it was launched at this year's AGM. It is there for you to use, it is a way of quickly passing information about events in Switzerland, asking for information or passing on tips and experiences. Please join and help to make it a success. It is accessed via the Society website home page and to apply for access simply send an email to: forum.admin@swissrailsoc.org.uk and I will send you your password which will remain active as long as you are a member of the Society. You asked for it, you've now got it, so please use it".

Gauge O Exhibition

This year the Winchester O Gauge meet, which concentrates on European and American O gauge modelling, is celebrating its 25th anniversary. There is a growing interest in O-Gauge with many lower priced models coming on the market, including Swiss Crocodile and Traxx locos. If any SRS members do have a suitable layout the organisers would love to hear from you, or alternatively why not just go along with the possibility of seeing your favourite trains at a larger scale. There will be many layouts along with dealers stands, etc. The exhibition takes place on the 8th October at Kings School, Romsey Road, Winchester, SO22 5PN, from 10.00 to 16.30. Further details are available from Patrick Leahy on 01935 840502 or at www.winchesterogaugemeet.co.uk.

George Hoekstra

We are sad to report that George, a frequent contributor to *Swiss Express* over many years, died in Kandersteg on the 25th April. ☠