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layout you would like to bring and I will see how we can fit you in (as an aside, we can help a little towards your expenses). Above all, come along and enjoy the meeting. I look forward to seeing you at the Novotel on the 24th March next year. Full AGM details are on P22 in this magazine."

## SRS Web Forum

This is a reminder that there is now an SRS Web Forum. This is different from other Swiss railway forums, not least because it is exclusively for members of the Society, but also it is the easiest and quickest way for you to ask questions, tell members of events you have discovered in Switzerland and to discuss your

recent or planned visit, and much more. It is up to you how it develops. If you have not yet joined then please send an email to [forum.admin@swissrailsoc.org.uk](mailto:forum.admin@swissrailsoc.org.uk).

## 2012 SRS Calendar

It is time to order your 2012 edition of the SRS Calendar. Last year all of the 200 copies we had printed sold out and we expect this edition to also sell-out so get your order in as soon as possible. The format will be similar to last year's as will be the cost of £11 when sent to UK addresses. Due to a large increase in overseas postage rates the cost when sent abroad will be £14. This year the calendars are being sold through Society Sales. Send your order and payment to Glyn Jones whose contact details are on the inside of the back cover. It is anticipated that the calendars will be posted out in early October.

## 2012 AGM -

### "A women's prerogative!"

Roger Ellis writes: "My Granddaughters Rebecca and Victoria insist that I always wear a "Pink Dress" when I go out on special occasions and so assuming this is true I remember saying that I would never organise another AGM at the Novotel in Bristol. Now for the "U" turn. The Committee was mindful that we have been in Derby at the Hallmark Hotel for a number of years and although a central location it was perhaps time for a change of venue. I recall no rush of persons volunteering to find one so I thought it had better be me. I was however delighted by the reaction of a number of members at the 2011 AGM who welcomed the change of location for 2012, but not necessarily the person organising the event! For those who are thinking of staying at the Novotel, the room rate, even with the car parking charge, is competitive considering the standard of the hotel. Unfortunately, being a modern hotel, there are no single rooms and I know this is a disadvantage. At the time of writing I still need layouts so please let me have details of any

## Birmingham Branch

Steve Buck the Birmingham Branch organiser notes that its meeting night is changing from the third Friday in the month to the second Friday in the months of September to November 2011 and January to May 2012.

## David Skales 1932 - 2011

Michael Farr writes: "West of England members of the SRS were saddened to learn that David Skales, the former branch organiser, had died on 21st May at the age of 79. At his funeral his daughter explained that railways had been an interest from an early age. His father was away at sea for long periods and when his ship called at Newcastle, David and his mother would make the long journey there – by train. In the evening his parents thought that young David was asleep in their hotel room - until they discovered he was sitting at the end of the bed looking down on the operations at Newcastle station. David was a very quiet man but enormously kind – and a great administrator. When Geoff Thompson emigrated to Guernsey David took over as organiser and ran the W of E group efficiently but with a minimum of fuss. When I took over from him I was most grateful for the Skales' simplified form of accounting. His funeral was at St Goran Church near St Austell where David had served as treasurer for many years. He was also responsible for organising the "Friends of Goran" who helped to maintain a hugely expensive and massive village church building with its former schoolrooms. After suffering a serious illness David had recovered sufficiently to spend more holidays visiting Switzerland and other European countries with Phoebe, his wife of 45 years. One of his favourite Swiss locations was Filisur, where the couple were regular visitors to the Grischuna. 

## MEMBER'S LETTER

From Alan Mackie – by email

The excellent article "Gotthard ....Staying" (SE 106) expresses concern that difficulties may be caused due to the signalling by ETCS Level 2 of the section of line between Altdorf and the Gotthard Base Tunnel, which will be "common user" by both tunnel trains and those using the existing route over the mountains. This need not be so, as ETCS Level 2 depends on traditional train detection (track circuits or axle counters) and can be overlaid on existing signalling. Whilst with Level 2 the lineside signals are usually not provided, in an existing installation they can also be retained for non-ETCS fitted trains and are a useful facility in a situation where non-ETCS fitted trains use a fitted line for short distances. It is only with ETCS Level 3 where train detection depends on a continuous data stream sent by the train to a Radio Block Centre [RBC] when the traditional train detection equipment is removed or not installed.

In the medium to long term SBB Historic will have to find a solution to the problem as ETCS becomes more widespread. Whilst diesel and electric traction can be relatively easily retro-fitted, the real problem lies with steam traction as currently no-one has come up with a viable

solution. The UK trial installation on the Cambrian Coast line which is now up and running is already causing problems for the heritage traction operators who regularly use the line. +

## MEMBER'S ADVERTISEMENT

**For Sale.** Bemo HOm 1259 106 RhB Ge4/4iii No 646 Red - vgc - £155 plus postage. Also Bemo 1262 491 SBB Rack HGe 4/4ii Boxed - vgc - little used- £160 plus postage. Contact: John Hargaden on 01 873 852 116 or [hargaden2010@btinternet.com](mailto:hargaden2010@btinternet.com). +

## MINI BOOK REVIEW

A mini review of two mini books. The author of the "Peter's Railway" series of children's books that we have reviewed previously has now produced two small books aimed at 3 to 6 year olds. The titles are "Little Peter's railway – Christmas Steam" and "Little Peter's Railway – Surprise Goods". They are small books for small people at a small price £2.99. Look out for them at bookshops, heritage railways, etc. +

# A SNOWBLOWER FOR THE DFB

Ron Smith

A small but energetic group are working hard to restore Xrotd R12, a metre-gauge rotary snow blower, to operating condition for the DFB (Dampfbahn Furka Bergstrecke) which opened throughout from Realp to Oberwald in 2010. This section of what was once Furka Oberalp Bahn used to be closed every winter as it was just too difficult to keep it open and it was abandoned in 1982 when the base tunnel opened following which the DFB came into being. This large and powerful snow blower was built in 1913 by SLM (Schweizerische Lokomotiv- und Maschinenfabrik) at Winterthur for the RhB (Rhätische Bahn). At 14m length and carried on 740 mm dia. wheels, it weighs 57 tonnes service weight, including 2.5 tonnes of coal and 7.5 m<sup>3</sup> of water and can reach 12 kph. Having worked away faithfully until it was honourably retired in 1970 it was given to the Blonay-Chamby Museum Railway who exchanged it in 1996 with the DFB, who gave the B-C Xrotd 9214 (also ex-RhB). In 2002 it was taken to Goldau, to be worked on by the R 12 Group. Progress has depended on available manpower and cash. To date, the boiler has been repaired and re-tubed, with the cladding going on during summer 2010. The steel framework for the wooden outer body has been shot blasted, primed and installed. The large rotary blades are completed and installed, and it is hoped that the snow blower will be ready for operation by 2013. The photograph by Martin Horath, the leader of the R 12 group, shows the machine in September 2002 posing on the Steffenbachbrücke on its journey to Goldau. This is the famous bridge that has to be dismantled each autumn and rebuilt each spring to avoid avalanche damage. More information about the work of R 12 Group can be found at [www.dampfschleuder.ch](http://www.dampfschleuder.ch). +

An old pre-preservation photograph.

No.1 "Muttbach" in its "clothed" condition with R12. PHOTO: Ron Smith

