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2013 AGM – The Secretary's Report

David Stevenson, principal organizer of the event, has placed a report of our AGM on the SRS website. This is an abridged version of it for members who do not have access to the Internet.

"This year for the first time the AGM was held in Worcester. It all started out very promisingly, good hotel, good location, great bookings but then the bad weather intervened. Worcester itself was not as badly hit by snow as some areas but there was a lot of disruption close by. In the event all went to plan and considering the conditions the attendance (about 70% of normal) held up well.

Friday night was the traditional picture show, this year presented by ace photographer and all round expert on Swiss freight, Don Gatehouse. As expected it was well worth seeing. As Saturday dawned the full extent of our problems began to manifest themselves. Two traders did not make it, one from the South East, whilst Andrew Dyson of Platform 5 had been unable to extricate himself from his Sheffield home. We were however amazed when Contikits from Newcastle turned up at about 08.30 having battled through the blizzards. Winco made it from Hampshire after a relatively easy journey, and Hornby International made it in from Herefordshire, a far more difficult trip than it sounded. The hotel organized a Bratwurst lunch for us, but it became apparent that fewer members were present and they stayed for less time than they would normally. The AGM reported on a successful 2012 and the committee was grateful to hear the general level of satisfaction was high. Nothing earth shattering came out of the open forum, but we do hear on the grapevine that a new SRS Branch may be set up based around the western home counties; watch this space. To ensure that the traders had a safe journey home the afternoon terminated earlier than usual. The evening dinner went brilliantly. The food, service and room were impeccable and Helena Moretti entertained us all with a review of preserved locomotives in Switzerland, followed by a 'thought provoking' quiz set by Martin Fisher.

In the circumstances the AGM went very well and we managed to contain any losses. Thanks for this must go to Malcolm Job, Martin and Sue Fisher and Paul Hannant who worked on the organization. On the day particular thanks to Rupert Chambers for a brilliant job on the Bring-and-Buy stand, also to Phil Blackman, Guy Harrison, Richard Shaw (the WM Branch Organiser), for all their background help. Finally, special praise to Paul Hannant. He had struggled to get home to rural Herefordshire in the snow on Friday, then on Saturday morning the half-mile long access lane he shares with a farm had 4 to 8 foot snow drifts. Even his neighbour was unable to get his tractors to the main road, which was frustratingly clear. Sadly, Paul couldn't get to the event he had helped to create, but typically he managed to organize a JCB to clear a path so he and Heather could make it to the dinner. If any member would like a copy of the AGM Booklet that includes the audited accounts please contact me at the address in Swiss Express. Sun in Bristol, snow in Worcester – who knows what the weather will be in Derby in 2014."

No Ticket, No Travel

As you can read in an article (P9) in this edition from the 1st January the SBB has introduced strict enforcement of the policy that travellers must have a ticket on boarding. The penalties for not having one are drastically expensive - a CHF100 fine, plus expenses and the full fare. If you rely on purchasing a ticket at an SBB station and then you find that the office is closed, or the machine is not functioning, unless you can buy a ticket from the Conductor as they stand on the platform it is wise not to board the train. Buying on-line by i-phone is possible, but doing this on the train is also not allowed. Also remember, if you are travelling on any form of Swiss Pass you must carry your Passport as the validity of the ticket is linked to this document. In theory UK citizens should always carry their Passport when in Switzerland (or EU countries) in the absence of the Identity Cards other Nationals automatically carry. If your pass requires dates of validity to be inserted these must be completed before boarding your first train of the day. It is understood that some private railways are not being so draconian in enforcing the 'No Ticket, No Travel' rule (on some you have to board a train to buy a ticket), but the wise move now in Switzerland will be to ensure whenever possible that you have a valid ticket/pass before travelling.

Date for your Diary

The 2014 AGM will be held on the 15th March 2014 at the Hallmark Hotel (formerly Midland Hotel), Derby. It will be organised by the East Midlands Branch on behalf of the management committee. The usual format will be followed commencing with an evening meeting on the Friday. More details will be published in the September magazine and on the website when they become available. Any offers of layouts or displays should be sent to Glyn Jones – his contact details are in this magazine. Contributions towards expenses are available.

Discount Available

One of our members who has purchased a Swiss Flexi Pass, which is available overall for a month, has enquired of the STC if that pass offers a saving should you use it to buy a Regional Pass (in his case Léman-Alpes) for use during your stay. Swiss people holding Half Fare Cards can use these to get a discount on such passes. The answer is that holders of a Flexi Pass can purchase Regional Passes at a reduced rate, not half fare but something under a 25% discount. Worth knowing.

SRS Website & Society Web Forum

If you have access to the Internet have you had a look at our totally revamped Website yet? It is well worth a few minutes of your time. You can also access the **SRS Web Forum** through the website. The forum is exclusively for members and to gain access E-Mail: forum.admin@swiss-railsoc.org.uk

Swiss Model Railways at Exhibitions

Based upon information we have received at least one Swiss-based layout, and sometimes the SRS Information

Stand, will be at the following Model Railway Exhibitions in the next few months. Dates and venues may change. Always check with the organisers before you travel.

● **Saturday 15th & Sunday 16th June** – German Railways Society at Cromford Community Centre, Matlock Road, Cromford, Derbyshire, DE4 3QF.

● **Saturday 21st & Sunday 22nd September** – Blackpool and North Fylde Model Railway Club Exhibition at Fleetwood High School, Fleetwood, Lancashire, FY7 8HE.

● **Saturday 28th & Sunday 29th September** – Soar Valley Model Railway Exhibition at Charnwood College, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 4SQ.

● **Saturday 5th & Sunday 6th October** – Manchester Model Railway Society Exhibition at Armitage Centre, Moseley Road, Fallowfield, Manchester, M14 6ZT.

● **Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th October** – Furness Model Railway Club at Barrow in Furness 6th Form College, Rating Lane, Barrow in Furness, Cumbria, LA13 9LE -.

● **Saturday 9th & Sunday 10th November** – Tolworth Model Railway Show at Leisure Centre, Red Lion Road, Tolworth, Surrey. KT6 7LQ.

● **Saturday 23rd & Sunday 24th November** – Warley National Model Railway Exhibition at NEC, Birmingham, B40 1NT.

● **Friday 29th, Saturday 30th November & Sunday 1st**

December – Wakefield Model Railway Exhibition at Thornes Park Athletics Stadium, Horbury Road, Wakefield, WF2 8TY.

Member's Letters

From: Gervase Dawidek – by Email

Although this is not rail-based I thought I would recount an episode from a ski-ing holiday in Verbier last spring. One day I decided to ski in the Brusson area, which is separate from the main Verbier ski area. I caught the bus from Le Chable and walked up to the chairlift. I put on my skis and consulted the piste map and then discovered to my horror I had left my ski poles on the bus, which was driving merrily off down the road. I spoke with the lift attendant who advised me the bus would be back in 35-minutes. He then disappeared into the ski hut and came out with his own ski poles, which he lent me. When I came back four hours later I exchanged his ski poles for mine that he had very kindly recovered from the bus. I thanked him profusely. Others have said it before but it really is true – Only in Switzerland!

Members' Advertisement For Sale

Bemo Hom RhB Goods Start sets 7258 100 and 7259 110. Both in good condition. £150. and £165. Post at cost.

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Isle of Man Railway – 1950s

photographs by David Odabashian:

Author/Compiler: Robin G. Winter.

Publisher: Peco. £9.95. ISBN: 978-0900586392

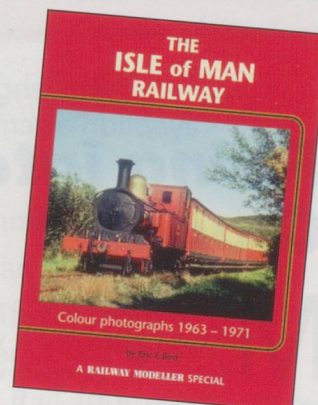
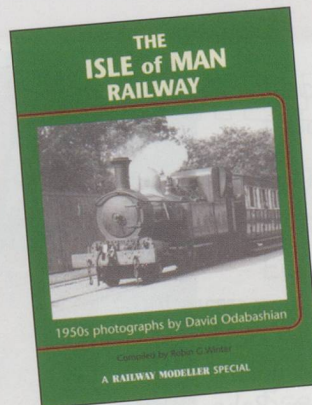
The Isle of Man Railway –

Colour photographs from the 1960s

Author: Eric E. Bird. Publisher: Peco, £14.95.

ISBN: 978-0900586439

Why review two books on Manx railways in *Swiss Express*? British and Irish 3ft lines are only marginally smaller than the Swiss metre-gauge and I know I am not the only modeller who began with 3ft in 4mm scale, running on the same 12mm gauge track which we now use for our Swiss HOm trains. My models of the IMR's former County Donegal railcars were powered in the same way (a motor bogie in the centre van) as my recently-acquired MVR GTW unit from Signalmeister Modellbau. Robin Winter wrote Peco's earlier book on prototype and model Isle of Man Railways and during this time discovered that Peco held a huge resource of black and white photos taken in the 1950s by David Odabashian during the heyday of post-war operations. By the time I ventured across the Irish Sea in 1963 the steam railway was running on borrowed time – although still serving the local population and holidaymakers in the same way it had done for nearly 100 years. The photographs in Robin's book,



digitally enhanced, show almost every aspect of the railway, from locomotives and rolling stock to stations and signals. As a modelling resource it will be invaluable, representing good value by offering almost 250 photographs for £10.

Peco's second recent book is a collection of about 200 photos (all but 18 in colour) taken between 1963 and 1971. Eric Bird had the advantage of living on the island and his style of photography had been inspired by Beebe and Clegg's classic American railroad book 'Mixed Train Daily' in which the train is seen as part of the landscape. To achieve the same style in his own views he explored the island by cycle, and latterly by car, to find the best vantage points. As well as a few station shots most of the photos show the trains steaming or