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Annual General Meeting & Spring Meet 2014

This will be held at the Hallmark Hotel, Midland Road, Derby DE1 2SQ on Saturday 15th March 10:30 – 16:30. Guests and friends are also welcome but a donation of £2 per person would be appreciated.

Confirmed Sales Stands: Winco; Platform 5; Contikits; Hornby International; Gerald Savine Prints; Society Sales; N-Scale Ch; Switzerland Travel Centre; Swiss Classic Train; OnTracks; SRS Bring and Buy Stall.

Confirmed Layouts and Displays: Beckenwick (HOM) by Simon Ellis; Zweitesfeld (N) by Steve Tinsley; Switzerland on the Move (Z) by Chris Atkinson; Leventina by Axel Klozenbuecher; plus layouts by Dave Howsam and Alan Wardman.

There will also be the Photographic Competition and a Raffle.

The evening Dinner commences at 19.00 for 19.30 hrs. The Menu is: Mushroom Soup with Truffle Oil, followed by Poached Fillet of Scotch Salmon with a Saffron Cream Sauce OR, Daube of Braised Beef on a Mustard Mash in a Red wine and Shallot Jus OR, a Vegetarian Option, all served with Seasonal Vegetables and New Potatoes. This is followed by a Mango and Passion Fruit Cheesecake served with Chantilly Cream and Freshly Brewed Filter Coffee with Swiss Chocolate.

The after dinner speaker will be Paul Haggard of the Swiss Classic Train who will be followed by one of Rob Morrey's (in)famous fun quizzes.

The cost is £26.00 per person including service and VAT, but NOT wine. Last date for booking is 1st March 2014, but late bookings may be available - please contact the organiser first. Dinner bookings to:

Glyn Jones, 13, Welland Close, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire DE15 0AG. Cheques should be made payable to "Swiss Railways Society". Please enclose an s.a.e. for the return of your tickets and state your choice of main course.

Hotel Accommodation. A special bed and full English breakfast rate of £55.00 per person for a single room, or £48.00 per person for a double or twin room per night is available. This reduces to £52 and £46.50 respectively if booked for both the Friday and Saturday Nights. In addition a table d'hôte dinner will be available on Friday 14th March at a cost of £20 per person. This must be booked with the Hotel a minimum of two weeks prior to the event and is also available to non-residents attending the Friday evening talk. Bookings should be made direct with the hotel, but please ensure you mention the Swiss Railways Society AGM when making your booking. The full address of the hotel is:

The Hallmark Hotel, Midland Road, Derby DE1 2SQ. (Tel: 01332 345894)

Why not join us for the whole weekend? The East Midlands Branch will be hosting their March meeting at the Hallmark Hotel on the Friday Evening commencing at 20:00. The Speaker is Rob Morrey whose talk is entitled "1984 and all that".

AGM Photographic Competition

A photographic competition will be held at the 2014 AGM. There will be three categories: Railways, Scenic and Humorous and members can enter a maximum of one photograph in each category.

Entries must be prints (mounted or un-mounted), with a maximum size of 10 inches by 8 inches and titled. All photographs must have been taken in Switzerland and the photographers name should be written on the back of each print. Entries can be made on the day or in advance by post to Glyn Jones (address details are on the main AGM advert). Please include a stamped addressed envelope for the return of your photographs. There will be a small prize for the winner of each section and the winning photographs will be published in *Swiss Express*.

STC Discount

Members are reminded that in recognition of the 30-plus years that the SRS has been "flying-the-flag" for Switzerland the Switzerland Travel Centre in London will be offering SRS members 5% discount on Swiss Travel System products (tickets, etc.) and Swiss Travel Centre packages as detailed in their brochures. This offer applies to all bookings made before 31st December 2014. The SRS must make it clear that the offer does not apply to individual hotel bookings and other travel arrangements made through the STC.

Ticket Checks in Switzerland

At the end of 2013 one of our members noted that unusually for Switzerland he, and others on the train, had been subjected to a surprise ticket check by a revenue protection squad who were apparently curt, but civil. All the members of this team were in casual clothes such as jeans and "T" shirts (although they obviously produced appropriate identification) and correctly requested to see the Passports of SwissPass holders. Fortunately our member always travelled with this document, but this might not be the case with all travellers who could then find that they faced a CHF100 fine for not having valid tickets. The SBB have noted that the SwissPass, and other forms of high-value tickets along with the documentation that goes with them such as the synoptic map, are now subject to forgery by criminal gangs who sell these through unofficial outlets to unsuspecting tourists. This activity, along with non-ticketed travel, could be losing the Swiss transport industry millions of francs each year hence the use of revenue protection teams in addition to the normal checks undertaken by uniformed on-train staff. If a squad of uniformed staff were seen to be waiting on a platform to board a train travellers without tickets would immediately leave-it, hence the use of teams in everyday clothes. Remember to always have a valid ticket in your possession before you board a Swiss train and to only purchase tickets and passes from authorised sources, such as the STC in London.

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 email forum.admin@swissrailsoc.org.uk