

After the click, the Techie bit : Tony Bagwell, the Photo Editor, explains what happens to your pictures when you submit them to Swiss express

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Objekttyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Swiss express : the Swiss Railways Society journal**

Band (Jahr): **- (2014)**

Heft 118

PDF erstellt am: **30.04.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-854133>

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After the click, the Techie bit

Tony Bagwell, the Photo Editor, explains what happens to your pictures when you submit them to **SWISS EXPRESS**

Pictures are submitted to the Photo Editor in a variety of forms, and for several uses. These days most arrive by email, some as digital files on a CD, but for those who still prefer film, some come as slides or prints to be scanned. They can be submitted in association with an article that has been sent to Malcolm Bulpitt, the Editor, or else as stand alone images for possible future use in the magazine or other SRS publications.

With so many pictures arriving each quarter they have to be stored carefully to ensure they don't get lost (though I apologise in advance if some do). On my PC system I have two hard drives plus the society's USB disc. On the second hard drive and the USB disc are two identical large archive folders containing individual files, one per member who has sent in pictures, with this member's pictures in each. Currently that amounts to over 11,000 images we have on file. Each of those photos has a set of 'key words' that catalogue the photographer (220 at present); railway company (164 and rising); place (712 now, but which gets more as you explore remote locations); subject (loco, coaches, freight, station, etc.), and where it has been used if appropriate (magazine issue, calendar, etc.). Using these 'key words' programs such as Adobe Bridge or Lightroom can find say, all the RhB photos - and there are a lot, believe me!

For each issue of the magazine, I set up a separate folder. Within this are three main sub-folders - "Items still to do", "Items Prepared" and "To go to Upton". This is as the quarterly team meeting to put each issue together is held at Gerald Savine's studio at Upton-upon-Severn. Thus when a member sends in some photos, they are stored in a discrete file in 'Items still to do' along with any email or caption text if that's provided - and you'd be surprised how many photos don't have that. Over time "Items still to do" gets bigger. As and when time permits and I'm in the right mood, I'll start to process these images. Initially they are opened in Photoshop, resized so they fit across an A4 page (that's why I like you to send in large picture files preferably, as they come from your digital camera), any corrections to exposure, colour, etc. are made and they are converted to CMYK colour mode - to suit the printer. They then get stored in TIFF format in the relevant part of 'To go to Upton'. This basically has 3 main




sub-folders, 'Cover Images', 'Gallery Images' and 'Article Images', the latter having one folder for each potential article. Caption texts are also prepared as MS Word documents at this time.

As each section of "Items still to do" goes through this process, the pictures also have their "Key Words" assigned to them and are then copied into both copies of that

member's archive file. Having done that the section is dragged across to the "Items prepared" folder. Thus gradually 'Items still to do' gets smaller, "Items prepared" gets bigger and at the same time "To go to Upton" gets populated with the necessary images for the next magazine and the archive files contains all the pictures that have ever been submitted.

Before the Upton meeting, I produce contact sheets of all the images (A4 sheets with up to 30 images on each), so we know which pictures we're talking about at the meeting, and I also dump all the "To go to Upton" data onto a DVD so that Gerald can transfer it to his AppleMac system. Malcolm, also an AppleMac user, brings all the texts for the magazine to the same meeting on his machine, and a memory stick to enable the data to be transferred so that ultimately Gerald has all the data he needs to put the magazine together.

My journey from Taunton to Worcestershire usually entails a diversion at Bristol to pick up the Editor from Parkway Station (Malcolm comes from Kent via London) and then up the M5 again to Upton. We then spend a happy few hours deciding what we've actually got room for, which items will have to be left out, and the general layout of the next issue. When we've done, Malcolm and I leave Gerald to spend a few days putting the magazine into a printable form, although he subsequently often makes changes to the way the content is handled. Once I'm happy that Gerald has all the photos that are needed, a few days later the folder 'Items prepared' gets deleted, the 'To go to Upton' folder gets archived to the SRS USB disc and we can look forward to doing it all again for the next issue. *Whoopie!!*

However, it doesn't end there. Some weeks later when the magazine drops through my letterbox I then have to go back to the individual member's folders and set a new keyword for each image that has been used so that, hopefully, they don't get replicated in later publications. 



Pictures (and text) from Member A as digital files (scanned from slides or prints if necessary)

What happens to your pictures when you submit them to Swiss Express?

