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Annual General Meeting – March 15th 2014

The society AGM returned to Derby this year and proved to be a very successful day. Some 125 members attended the venue during the day and over 80 stayed-on for the formal AGM itself. The event held in the Hallmark Hotel also attracted a number of casual visitors who, along with our members, enjoyed seeing a wide variety of layouts, and took advantage of the sales stands and the convivial atmosphere. Martin Fisher's new book, *Basel and NW Switzerland*, the last in the Swiss Travel Guides series was launched on the SRS Sales Stand, and a new and revised edition of Roger Kemp's *BLS* book was also available. The traders who loyally support the society each year reported a great day, whilst Diana from the Swiss Travel Centre was busy supplying information about their holidays. At the AGM itself, Glyn Jones, Roger Ellis and Steve Buck were all re-elected to their respective roles on the committee, and the accounts were presented and approved. The Society made a small loss in 2013, but this had been budgeted-for in order to reduce our reserves a little. The evening dinner was attended by forty-nine members and their guests. After a short talk from Paul Haggar about the Swiss Classic Train, Rob Morrey presented a short and very enjoyable quiz on Switzerland, featuring a wide variety of questions that even non-railway people had a chance of answering. Rob is a master at these and with his natural air of authority, stemming from his years as a teacher, brought the day to an entertaining close. Martin Fisher won the quiz. This was no surprise as he has written all the guidebooks! Copies of the AGM report and accounts are available on the website. Unfortunately, we do not have any paper copies of the documents remaining, as these were all taken-up by those attending the actual AGM.

David Stevenson

Chairman's Comments

To me, the recent AGM was a first, as I did not hear (or overhear) a single negative comment. There is usually something, even if the matter is very small. However, this year – nothing. I hope this means that everyone had a good weekend, members, visitors and traders alike. Regarding AGMs in general, I would like to say a few words. It has become very difficult indeed to find venues that meet our rather exacting demands and standards at reasonable prices. Next year the AGM will be organised by Roger Ellis and the Bristol and Bath Branch. It had been hoped that this was going to be at Bristol however, the overnight room prices would have been roughly double those of the Hallmark Hotel at Derby, which I suspect would have put off a lot of people. I found Worcester in 2013 to be a pleasant venue, but it was a bit too small, and it is quite a difficult location to access for many. The Yorkshire Branch is looking for somewhere, so far without success, and London and the southeast is prohibitively expensive. So we return next year to Derby, which is centrally located with pretty good road and rail services (subject to road works, rail engineering works and the sins of various rail operators). At the moment, it looks as though Derby may become the regular venue, but organised by different people. You never know, though. If I do not see you before, I hope to see as many of you as possible at Derby on 14th March 2015.

John Jesson

SRS Treasurer – Malcolm Job writes.

After some 4 years or so I feel the time is right to think of handing on the reins of Treasurer at the AGM in 2015. The job of Treasurer is to keep the books and at the year-end prepare the Income and Expenditure account and balance sheet for presentation, together with the necessary invoices and receipts, to the auditors. The Society is a multifaceted organisation and keeping the books might be considered a challenge except for the fact that we use Sage Instant Accounts, which does most of the work automatically. Although ideally the skills required by a Treasurer include knowledge of Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Word and Sage Instant Accounts programs, I realise that not many will have experience of Sage so I would be happy to help a potential candidate to get to grips with the Sage software. The system is in place and just the day-to-day processes would need to be mastered. Broadband access to the Internet is essential. For anyone interested I would be happy to supply further information on the role of the Treasurer. I can be contacted on treasurer@swissrailsoc.org.uk

2015 AGM – Roger Ellis has a date for your diary, and a plea!

On behalf of Bath and Bristol Branch I have been asked by the Management Committee to organise the above. It will be on **Saturday 14th March** at the now usual venue of the Hallmark Hotel in Derby. Full details will be published in the September and December magazines. However, at this early stage can I ask if any member would like to bring their layout to this event, please let me know. Brief details will suffice, but in particular the size of space you would need. I emphasise that it does NOT have to be Swiss, as most of our members enjoy seeing models that represent other countries as well. Please let me know if you can help. An aside is that we thought that we could use the AGM Room to show assorted DVD's during the day. Somewhere to rest your weary feet and wallet!



Roger and his son, Simon, manning the 'Society Stand' and Glyn Jones with his layout, at the Ally Pally model railway exhibition.



Research Information

SRS Member Boyd Missiar who lives in Connecticut is currently undertaking research about the Underground Postal railways in Zürich and Luzern. He understands that Schweizer Eisenbahn Revue 4/80 had an article on these but he has failed to track down a copy or a website link into it. Has anyone out there a copy? Or do they have information and/or photographs of these operations. If so could they please contact him at boyd@missiar.com or get in touch with the editor.

Free entry

Regarding the article on P16-17 of the March *Swiss Express* Glyn Jones has pointed out that holders of a Swiss Pass can gain free entry to the Albula Railway Museum, as they can to many other museums in Switzerland.

Speakers Wanted

SRS Member David Canning has asked if there are any members who would be interested in giving a talk on any transport topic to the Newbury and District Transport Group. The Group meets monthly at Thatcham in Berkshire and they are happy to pay travelling expenses and (if required) a small fee. They regret they cannot fund any accommodation costs. If anyone would like to take

up this invitation please contact David on 01189 815678 or at dandmcanning@hotmail.co.uk

Colin Jarman 1934 - 2014

Maurice Criddle writes: "It is with sadness that I have to record the death of Colin Jarman on 3rd April, three months short of his 80th birthday. He was an SRS member for many years and attended meetings of the London Branch. Colin was born in Plymouth and, like many families there, when bombing in WW2 damaged his home, he was evacuated to the Tamar Valley. As a young man he became a member of Plymouth Railway Circle. Following National Service in the RAF he qualified as a member of the Chartered Insurance Institute subsequently working in Exeter and London, where he lived for many years. He was a keen photographer, studying that subject in depth, and also had a great interest in the Swiss lake ships, which he shared with readers of *Swiss Express*. He was a great friend of mine for more than fifty years and we made many trips together on the railways of Switzerland and other European countries. He and I shared a sense of humour and a love of travelling. We enjoyed many hilarious moments on our numerous trips caused by the situations in which we found ourselves. His wife, daughter, and grandchildren survive Colin. I shall miss him a lot." 

Members' Letters

From: Mervyn Pritchard – by email.

A *SwissTip* in a recent issue of *Swiss Express* guided photographers at Brig via Platform 9, Autoquai, to a convenient location for afternoon lighting, and overlooking the freight yards. Unfortunately recent renovations in this area have included the installation of large glass panels, which are covered in small decorations. Both inhibit the use of a camera. Regarding the 'Romanshorn Report' in the March 2014 *Swiss Express* the SwissPass guide map for 2012 shows the Bodensee ferry crossing as a half fare route. In 2013 when making the

crossing to the Zeppelin museum I had to educate the ticket clerk at Romanshorn on the concession. Another attraction at Romanshorn is 'Locorama', which uses the former loco depot site located between the line for Weinfelden and the lines to St Gallen and Rorschach. This museum hosts a wide range of standard gauge rolling stock including steam and electric locomotives. Some are stored outside and visible from passing trains. Although only open normally on Sundays from May to October, using my Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway volunteer credentials, I was able to negotiate an unescorted visit in February this year. The site boasts an impressive signal gantry and also has an extensive 5-inch Gauge layout. There are three steam locos – an ex SBB 2-10-0 HG 3/3 No.2958; an ex Bavarian Pacific No.18508 in rather poor condition and currently sheeted over due to building roof repairs, and a diminutive 0-4-0 made by Kraus, Munich.



Mervyn's photos of the glass panels at Brig and below, the signal gantry at Romanshorn.



From: David Brooks, Nuneaton.

I was interested to read the article 'Switzerland in Guineas' (*Swiss Express* – March 2014), regarding an Ian Allan Ltd. Swiss rail tour in 1963. I did not participate in this tour, but joined their Swiss visits in 1965 and 1966. I still have some documents relating to these tours including the preliminary itineraries they issued in response to their adverts and the small booklets given to those who participated. Both tours included 1st Class travel where possible, and were well organised. The 1965 tour cost £75. I could not fault either tour. In the January 1965 Railway World they advertised a Junior Swiss Tour for the 15th-24th April based at Arth-Goldau. The following year a similar tour was advertised and was to be based at Stansstad.

Editor's Note. David has kindly supplied me with photocopies of some of the documents he still has. I will see if I can use some of this historic information in a future issue of the magazine.

From Paul Burkhalter, Plymouth.

I feel duty bound to correct a typographical error in SE117 March 2014, page 29. In the text of the article headed 'President's Special' you misnamed the President, although the adjacent photo caption is correct. The current office holder is Didier Burkhalter. I hasten to add that I am no relation to the President - and I have never had a personal train provided to Plymouth!

From: Richard Awade, London, E11.

I was intrigued to read in the article 'The Secret Life of Flirts' (*Swiss Express* – December 2013), that the author could not trace any reference to the trains he recorded stopping at 'closed' stations in the Kursbuch. I can confirm that Ambri-Piotta, Lavorgo and Bodio do appear in the current Kursbuch – including in the index. The train service is not shown in Table 600, but in the local TILO Table 631. The number 631 also appears on the map. I can only assume that the author was using an old version of the Kursbuch.

From: Ian Provost – by email.

Many thanks for another great magazine full of interesting articles and tips. Just one niggle. In your editorial you mention damaged deliveries due to the Post Office delivery staff not taking care. I think you mean the Royal Mail delivery

staff, as the Post Office doesn't handle mail. That's the job of Royal Mail. The Post Office works through its many branches offering various over-the-counter services including banking. Post Office Ltd and Royal Mail plc are two separate companies with two different remits. At least all this shows I read your editorial! ☑

Members' Advertisement

Wanted: Bill Thursfield is searching for two additional coaches for a Lima Cisalpin/Gottardo set.

The items he requires are: 1 x '201005' 1st and 1 x '201006' Diner, with the diner as a preference. If you think you can help him the contact details are: Bill Thursfield, 45, Sterndale Drive, Newcastle, Staffs. ST5 4HS. Tel. 01 782 638 225 or email b.thursfield@talktalk.net.

For Sale: As reviewed in the March *Swiss Express* Swiss Narrow Gauge Volume One: West – A4, on 36 page booklet describing 25 Narrow Gauge Railways in South and West Switzerland. 100 quality colour photographs. Send £10 to Jason Sargerson, 17 Muirfield Park, Westbourne Avenue, Hull, East Yorkshire, HU5 3JF. Contact: Tel: 01 482 446 451 jason@sargerson.freeserve.co.uk. Cheques payable to Jason Sargerson. ☑

BOOK REVIEW

SRS Swiss Travel Guides –

8. Basel and North-West Switzerland

Author: Martin Fisher.

Paperback A5. 52 pages, with numerous colour illustrations.

ISBN 978-0-9926812-1-0

Price £7.00 by mail order from Society Sales.

This is the final booklet of this splendid series of travel guides highlighting what Switzerland has to offer the tourist/visitor and how to access it by public transport. This guide covers Basel and areas broadly south and west of this strategic border city, extending through much of the Swiss Jura and the lower lying Mittelland south of the Jura, including the lakes of Biel, Neuchâtel and Murten. Although not strictly in North West Switzerland, the booklet also includes Fribourg down to Bulle to provide that final piece of the travel guide jigsaw of Switzerland, for completeness. Having defined the area and provided the customary sketch map for reference purposes, options on how to get to and from Switzerland are outlined. Information on the range of Passes and Cards that may be of interest to the traveller is also provided. Our 'journey' commences at Basel, Switzerland's only port. While a major centre of commerce and industry, Basel is one of the country's cultural capitals providing a wealth of varied interest to any visitor. The extensive and efficient tram system provides an excellent means of touring the major sights and there are even cable ferries across the Rhein and river cruises providing water based options. Venturing through the eastern Jura, the medieval town centre of Delémont, picturesque St Ursanne and the cobbled streets and 18th century buildings of Porrentruy all feature. Onward through the delightful hills of the Western Jura, we reach La Chaux de Fonds, Switzerland's highest city and centre of watch-making before the more remote areas of the Montagnes Neuchâteloises and the Val de Travers are featured. We then follow the original line from Olten through Oensingen to historic Solothurn before we head to Burgdorf and briefly into the Western Emmental. Onward through the bi-lingual town of Biel, we reach Neuchâtel, an excellent lakeside base for touring and to explore itself, complete with a château, old town, trolley buses, funiculars and a tram route. Our tour is completed by coverage of Western Mittelland and mention of the towns and villages well worth a visit before we reach Fribourg with its Gothic cathedral and houses, fountains, cobbled streets and funicular powered by waste water. This well illustrated and ease of reading guide is concluded with sections on general information, a bibliography and a brief coverage of Swiss locomotive and unit classifications. Previous booklets in the series have sold out and been subject to reprint, so why delay your purchase? Invest in a copy soon and enjoy! DCG ☑

Correction:

In the review of Swiss Narrow Gauge, Volume One: West in the March *Swiss Express* we failed to note that when ordering the book direct cheques, should be made out to 'Jason Sargerson'.

