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2016 AGM

A final reminder that the Society Annual General Meeting will take place on Saturday 12th March at the Hallmark (Midland) Hotel in Derby. Details of the event were published in the December *Swiss Express*, or are available on the SRS Website. There will be a discussion regarding the Management Committee's proposals to restructure the Society as a Company Limited By Guarantee. Details of this are also to be found on P2 of the December magazine.

Year-by-Year Membership of SRS as at 1.12.15 - Steve Buck

Year and Letter	Members Joining	Members Remaining
1980 A	3	1
1981 B	172	38
1982 C	68	8
1983 D	79	11
1984 E	50	13
1985/6 F	132	23
1987 G	72	12
1988 H	150	41
1989 J	170	24
1990 K	117	29
1991 L	145	25
1992 M	151	30
1993 N	100	27
1994 P	145	25
1995 Q	129	21
1996 R	117	28
1997 S	142	39
1998 T	90	24
1999 U	98	26
2000 V	90	27
2001 W	123	46
2002 X	127	42
2003 Y	147	51
2004 ZA	143	37
2005 ZB	127	53
2006 ZC	114	47
2007 ZD	85	35
2008 ZE	95	53
2009 ZF	87	56
2010 ZG	79	42
2011 ZH	82	50
2012 ZJ	74	46
2013 ZK	111	78
2014 ZL	84	74
2015 ZM	84	84
TOTAL	3782	1266

From the totals above, if everyone who joined the society had remained, we would be three times the size we are now. However many societies would be envious of the fact that last year we had nearly 1300 members, most of which are in the UK, but over 100 are scattered across Europe and the rest of the world.

Message from the Membership Secretary

Membership of the Swiss Railways Society runs for a calendar year and with the December issue of "*Swiss Express*" comes the annual invitation to renew your membership. About a quarter of the membership had paid for two years at the end of 2014, so were sent their 2016 cards in mid November. By the end of the year another 420 had renewed which means there were still nearly 500 who hadn't.

Once your form is received by me, and checked to make sure the value of your cheque equals the box you have ticked, a minimum of three different spreadsheets have to be used to record the transaction. (This ensures that my figures agree with those of the Society Treasurer). It does not assist the process when members try to be helpful by sending stamped addressed envelopes for the return of their new cards, or when they staple their cheques especially if they do not cut off the renewal form from the diary sheet. Writing needs to be clear too - my poor eyesight needs all the help it can get. It would help greatly if your change of address or change of email could be advised before the process starts, as I have little time to do it in the middle of renewals. Best of all, please use the PayPal system on the bottom of the membership page of the Society's website to renew. I'll make sure these points are repeated on the renewal form next November.

Steve Buck

Member's Information Requests

The *Swiss Express* team welcomes as much written and photographic input to the magazine as you, the members, can provide. After all, without it there would be little for us to publish. If you have not submitted anything recently we look forward to receiving it soon. We also welcome members' letters for inclusion in the magazine - including any critical of what is published, or of how the magazine, or the SRS is managed.

However, we regret that we are not able to enter into personal correspondence, either by post or by email, on matters reported in *Swiss Express*. Recently there have been several instances of SRS members contacting the *Swiss Express* team directly, with enquiries about issues that have either been fully covered in published articles, or requesting travel and other information about Switzerland. It is requested that members direct such enquiries to one of the many outside sources available. Everyone who assists in the publishing of the magazine already voluntarily gives up a considerable amount of their personal time for these tasks, so it is hoped that members will respect this request.

Relocated Swiss Layout

Some members may recall the splendid Om gauge model railway layout based upon the Rhätische Bahn and erstwhile Furka Oberalp Bahn that was once on display in Interlaken.

This layout has been painstakingly restored and is now installed above the PostAuto garage located at Zeughausstrasse 10, CH-3860 Meiringen. Currently it only appears to be open to the public over some weekends. More information is available on its website www.modellbahn-meiringen.ch/ where the opening details are listed.

Members' Area of the Society Website.

The Username to access the "Members Area" of the Society website is **SBB@swissrailsoc.org.uk** You will find the password on your current Society Membership Card.

SRS on Facebook

The Society now has a Facebook presence. We have a Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/swissrailwaysociety/> which will promote the Society and where we can put announcements at short notice. Please have a look at it and "like" it. We also have a Facebook Group page at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/swissrailwaysociety/> which members can join and ask questions and post photos and videos, please join this closed group and make use of it.

Members' Letters

From: Martin Fisher - By Email.

Swiss Post Bus book: Last year the Editor kindly included an item in *Swiss Express* inviting members to send me photos for inclusion in the Society's book about Swiss Post Buses, due to be published at the AGM in March. This is to thank all those who responded. They filled many gaps I knew existed and, I'm slightly embarrassed to admit, some gaps I didn't know existed. Of course, there were some duplicates and in the end, far from having insufficient photos, I ended up with more than could be used. So I hope members will understand if they find that some of their submissions did not make the final cut. There are various matters David Stevenson and I have to take into account; some are of a technical nature while some are simply down to tailoring particular sections to the space available and achieving a "best

fit". Anyway, thanks to all those who submitted photos and I hope all members enjoy the book.

Members' Advertisements

For Sale: An approx. 12' 0" x 3' 4" (on four boards but track and catenary do not align perfectly) HOm gauge railway layout of an RhB station built by an SRS member. Comprises: continuous oval; station area with passing loop; four sidings; electrified points; full 'decorative' catenary; fully operational Brawa bubble car, and Faller Road System with PostBus and bells! The layout has taken several years to build, but needs to be sold to make room for a new Nm gauge RhB layout and planned house downsizing. E-mail for photos, track plan, etc. Will consider reasonable offers. Purchaser to collect from West London. For more information contact: markfox1959@gmail.com

For Sale: Quantity of N gauge Locomotives and Rolling stock by Fleischmann, Roco, Arnold and Minitrix available. Contact Paul West at dandpwest@outlook.com or ring **01747 838677** for details.

For Sale: 'Swiss Narrow Gauge Volume One: West' and 'Volume Two: East'. Both booklets: A4, 36-pages, 100 colour photographs. Each booklet: £10 including postage. Send to Jason Sargerson, 17 Muirfield Park, Westbourne Avenue, Hull, East Yorkshire, HU5 3JF. Contact: Tel **01 482 446 451** or by email at Jason@sargerson.freeserve.co.uk. Cheques payable to Jason Sargerson. Please see my website for further details: www.jasonsargerson.uk.

For Sale: Complete set of *Swiss Express* magazines from March 1993 to December 2010 (up to start of larger A4 format). All in *Swiss Express* binders and in excellent condition. Offers invited. A fascinating archive! Contact Richard Hallam in Olney, Bucks on **07513 174577** or via email: at richardjhallam@yahoo.co.uk 

Swiss Tip: Good ideas and information about Switzerland from travellers.

From Michael Donovan

MOST communities charge a small, fixed tax per night for those staying in hotels, guest houses, apartments, etc., which is added to the nightly rate charged by the accommodation provider, and this goes towards supporting local services. Sometimes these taxes are compensated by, usually, small benefits within the community. Those I've noticed include a free croissant when buying a coffee at certain locations (at Bergün – for early travellers at the restaurant at the top of the ski-lift, and at the Hotel Preda in Preda), or a free train ticket (at Filisur, to Davos and return). The best I've ever come across was experienced this summer, when staying in the Savognin area, where the tax is less than SF3 per night. An 'Ela' card was provided. This included free travel on the Post Buses within the area – from Salouf on the valley side in the north, through Cuntér, as far as Bivio in the south – with a 50% discount on the occasional (to selected locations on selected days of the week, during the summer) buses that take cyclists and hikers to remote locations. The ski-lifts at Savognin are also free (two of the three legs are open in summer), and there are other benefits, such as free access to the library, the local museum, etc. See <http://www.savognin.ch/ela-card.html> (regrettably, only in German). That's an amazing return for the tax paid! It's well worth checking what's offered when thinking about where you're going to stay! 