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2017 AGM

Members are reminded that the Society AGM will be held at the Hallmark Midland Hotel, Derby, on Saturday 11th March. Full details were given in the December *Swiss Express* and are available on our website. You are also reminded that the hotel has introduced parking charges for both day visitors and residents. However, the hotel has agreed that SRS members attending the AGM will not have to pay. After parking your vehicles, as day visitors you will have to register your vehicle's registration on a terminal at the reception desk. Any failure to comply with this, or the inputting of incorrect registration numbers/letters, will result in a potentially expensive penalty charge notice from "Parking Eye", the private company contracted to manage the car park. If you are attending the SRS event on the Friday evening the system should be the same as for a day visit to the AGM, but as on Saturday make it clear that you are part of the SRS event. You are advised to ensure that you do everything correctly, and/or check this with the hotel reception at the time, as we have been informed that "Parking Eye" appears to have a reputation for taking every advantage of extracting money from vehicle owners at the car parks they manage for others.

AGM Layouts.

Due to an impending operation Steve Tinsley will not be able to bring his layout 'Zweitesfeld' to the AGM.

Roy Duglison Memorial Seat

Working with the Brienzer Rothorn Bahn the Society has funded a Memorial Seat for installation at Planalp station on the BRB, Roy's favourite location on his favourite Swiss railway. The installation and dedication of this bench in memory of one of the Society's founders and, at the time of his death, one of our joint Presidents, has taken some time due to unavoidable delays in the reconstruction of Planalp station. The BRB has now arranged for a short dedication ceremony to take place on the afternoon of the 26th May 2017. SRS Members wishing to take part in this event should arrange to meet at the BRB's Brienz station in good time to depart at 13.45 for Planalp, for arrival at 14.15. Departure from Planalp following the dedication will be at 15.00 with arrival at Brienz station at 15.30. Members intending to be present should advise Bryan Stone, the magazine's Swiss News Editor, who has kindly taken on the role of our liaison person with the BRB, in good time before May 26th, by emailing him at stone@eye.ch.

Alan Ramage 1943 - 2016

We have received from Roger Ramage the sad news that his brother Alan Ramage, the first editor of *Swiss Express*, died in Broomfield Hospital, Chelmsford, Essex, on the 6th November 2016. Alan was an early member of the Swiss Railways Society taking an active role in its development during the early years. He served as Fixtures/Events Officer during 1981/2 before becoming Secretary, a post he held until spring 1986. Early 1985 saw the launch of *Swiss Express*, the idea for which (and the name) was Alan's. He became its first Editor, a role he held until the autumn of 1987 when he

resigned, apparently due to illness and other commitments. From that point he became less involved with the Society and gradually faded from the scene over the following few years. John Jesson the current Chairman recalls going to Switzerland in 1985 and 1986 on successful trips organised by Alan for his train driving and railway colleagues at London's Waterloo Station. Thanks to his brother we have learnt that prior to working at Waterloo Alan had started his career on the main line from London Kings Cross, where he had worked as a fireman/driver on such railway icons such 'Flying Scotsman' and 'Mallard'. He also drove the replica of George Stephenson's 'Rocket' during the 1980 celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. In 1983, whilst driving a Waterloo-Southampton train, Alan had the unusual and frightening experience of an attempted hijacking of his train that resulted in his being attacked in his cab, however he and a colleague managed to apprehend the culprit. Although he received recognition, and a certificate, from BR Southern Region for his courage the incident took a toll on his long-term health and confidence, causing him difficulties in future years. This did not stop him from doing some freelance writing, also some local broadcasting, plus making visits to Switzerland, which he loved.

2017 Calendar

By now those of you who purchased the Society calendar will have realised that according to it, there was no 10th January, but the 20th was going to occur twice that month! If you have yet to look at the page for April you will find that the 1st to the 5th have crept in twice. This was not an All Fools Day joke but, like January, a mistake that slipped through the checking process. *We apologise for these errors.*

Ticino Update

On P33 of the last *Swiss Express* we published a SwissTip from Trevor Gauntlett regarding tourist tickets in the Ticino. This has prompted the following helpful response from Peter Mann:

"From 1st January 2017 guests staying in hotels, youth hostels and camping sites will be offered the 'Ticino Ticket', which will give free travel on public transport, and discounts on mountain and lake transport and other tourist attractions." www.ticino.ch/en/ticket.html

Correction

In the article on P19 of the last *Swiss Express* I incorrectly stated that the gradient of the funicular in Fribourg was '... greater than 1 in 1'. This is incorrect as the gradient is 55% as has been pointed out by keen-eyed reader Richard Green.

Members' Area of the Society Website

The new Username for 2017 to access the "Members' Area" of the Society website is MOB@swissrailsoc.org.uk. The 2017 password is printed on your 2017 membership card.

SRS on Facebook

The SRS has a Facebook presence. Our Facebook page is at: <https://www.facebook.com/swissrailwaysociety/>. It is

hoped that being on Facebook will promote the Society and will be a vehicle where we can put announcements at short notice. We also have a Facebook Group page at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/swissrailwaysociety/>. Members can join, ask questions, post photos and videos. Please 'like' our Facebook page and join this closed group and make use of it.

TRAINSMANIA is coming!

This, promoted as the biggest model railway exhibition in France, will take place at the Grand Palais in Lille from Friday 28th to Sunday 30th April 2017. It is scheduled to host more than 60 layouts of different types and different European countries: UK, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, Switzerland, Spain, Poland and, of course, France, alongside craftsmen, societies, and many model train manufacturers. Lille is a pleasant city with a wide range of accommodation and many other attractions, and is only just over one hour from London on Eurostar, or about the same time on the Autoroute from Calais. The location has some 6,000 parking spaces and is just a 10-minute walk from the main stations and the historic center. Admission is €12 with three-day passes and family tickets available. This could be a different destination for a weekend excursion, or even a day trip. See <http://www.trainsmania.com/>

Members' Letters

From: Phil Emond – By Email

I was interested to read the comment in Swiss News, on P31 of *Swiss Express No. 128*, under the title 'Coffee Out – Beer In.' As a member of CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale) I totally agree with the sentiment that the SBB showed a 'lack of potential initiative' regarding the promotion of the excellent craft beers now produced in Switzerland. I decided to contact the SBB about this and I attach a slightly edited version of their response.

"Thank you for your e-mail. I'm glad that you're asking this. I agree with you, and because of this I asked the responsible person. Apparently due to the national operation of the dining car, it is very difficult to handle it with only one partner. We have to restock the coaches on several stops of the train. With only one partner this would be quite hard - we should have to build storage service at several points to cover this. Moreover the acceptance of the brand throughout Switzerland plays a central role. These are apparently the reasons". Raymond Glutz – SBB Customer Relations.

Members' Advertisements

Wanted: Collection of weighing machine cards (at least 40 different ones). Contact - jprak58@hotmail.com 

BOOK REVIEW

Swiss Mountain Climbing – the easy way

Author: Martin Fisher.

Published by: Swiss Express Publications.

ISBN: 978-0-9926812 -6-5.

English. Softback. 120 pages,

Approx. 400 colour photographs.

298mm x 210mm.

Price £16.00 – including postage – from SRS Sales

I am sometimes asked, "Why Switzerland?" and in reply, I certainly have no shortage of examples of scenic delights to be explored and enjoyed when travelling on terra firma using railways, trams or PostBus services. That said, this latest addition to the range of Swiss Express Publications adds a further dimension to the travel options to be considered by illustrating how the Swiss have made it so easy to reach and explore many of its superb mountains. Published in A4 format, the 120 pages are packed with information supported by a splendid set of colour illustrations, many of which have been sourced from the on-line Wikimedia library. Following a brief introduction and a setting of the scene, the author provides well-informed background information in turn on rack-and pinion railways, funiculars, cable cars, chairlifts, lifts and gondelbahns with each topic supported by a comprehensive table presented in a regional format. The regional structure used is in line with the format employed in the earlier publication dealing with the Swiss PostBus network and is intended to assist the reader in reviewing wider travel options when planning a visit to a particular part of Switzerland. The author reminds us repeatedly that planning is indeed essential as not all services are timetabled, some operate on demand and a good number are seasonal. That said, the 370 routes described provide ample scope for visits to higher and generally more remote locations be it for winter sports, summer walks or to simply enjoy the vista of a pastoral landscape or alpine view. Within this excellent book you will find the shortest public funicular, the highest cable station in Europe and the means to maybe spot a dragon on Mount Pilatus. This book is highly recommended. **DCG** 

