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SRS books

By the time you receive this edition, a new SRS book about 'Swiss Lakes' will have been published and another new title, 'SBB Electric Locomotives Past and Present' will be on track for publication in time for the AGM in March 2018. An expanded and updated second edition of the book about 'Swiss Postbuses' is in the pipeline, possibly for publication at the March 2019 AGM. Martin Fisher and David Stevenson are looking to expand the collection of photographs available for this book. They already have access to two collections and have enough photos taken between the 1980s and 2014. However if members have relevant photographs taken prior to 1980, or since 2014, they would be interested to see them. They could be close-ups or showing vehicles in a rural/urban setting. They should be submitted to David (contact details on the inside front cover of this issue) no later than the end of September 2018, preferably with basic details for captions. Ideally they would like originals whether digital or film/prints. In the case of digital, it should be the file as it came off the memory card in the camera, without adjustment, sharpening etc. With film, if you have access to a good scanner then scan the film at 3,200 dpi and leave the output at original, in all cases including black and white use 24 or preferably 48 bit RGB, not 8 bit or grey scale. With prints, scan at 600 dpi - otherwise the same. If you wish, the authors can scan the originals themselves for you and return the originals, paying postage in both directions.

Members' Area of the Society Website

The new username for 2018 to access the 'Members Area' of the Society website is **MGB@swissailsoc.org.uk**. The 2018 password is printed on your 2018 membership card. You can use the new username and corresponding password now, but the 2017 username and password will still be valid until the end of January 2018.

London Branch

After many years of being resident at the Model Railway Club, located in Keen Street near Kings Cross Station, the SRS London Branch has reluctantly been forced to seek a new venue, due to the escalating costs of renting the venue. It is hoped that we will soon be able to confirm that future meetings will be held in the Kings Cross YMCA, located on the corner of Cromer Street and Judd Street. This is closer to Kings Cross/St Pancras Station, nearer to Euston Station, and just a short walk from Russell Square Underground Station. Please check the website and diary sheet prior to setting-out for a meeting.

SRS 2018 Calendar

There may still be some 2018 calendars available when you read this in early December, but please check either on the website or contact SRS Sales before sending a cheque. Calendars can be ordered via the On-line shop, the price is £10.00 including postage to the UK, or £13.50 for the rest of the world.

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 social media 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.

Members' Letters

From: Robert Foster – By Email

SBB Website. I wonder what members make of the new look SBB timetable website. I think it is a retrograde step. It perpetuates the clumsy need to enter the departure time manually and the calendar leads one to change the year of travel, rather than the month. If one types Zürich, one has to type in three (sometimes four) letters before it is brought up: after two letters it brings up Mulhouse ZU Rhein. It is a pity that it does not incorporate the "stopover" facility which is so useful on, and unique to, the DB Bahn.de website.

Moreover, it contains errors: it shows trains between Zürich and Uetliberg, Switzerland's steepest adhesion railway at 1:12.6, taking 20-minutes, but in the margin states that they take 27 up, 28 down. Some will know that this is a very good trip for anyone with a spare hour or two in Zürich and there is an excellent restaurant on the station platform. Another issue I find disappointing is the interchange time in Zürich HB between platforms 33/34 and a train departing from the terminal part of the station. The connection time to Chur for example is only 9 minutes from the hourly Genève-Bern-St. Gallen train and a mere 7 minutes from the 'via Biel' train. I might risk that alone or with my wife, but not otherwise.

Swiss Politeness. Tony Bagwell's experience in 1996, when a lady gave up her seat so that he could look out of the window between Goppenstein and Brig on that remarkable descent to the valley floor, struck several chords. As a child in 1967 on a family holiday travelling (by car) from the Simplon towards Martigny, I noticed a railway line high on the hillside above, and assumed it to be closed owing to its remote location - then a train came into view! More recently, a friend and I joined at Spiez, a crowded 'Lotschberger' EMU from Brig, heavily populated by young skiers returning from Kandersteg. Immediately, no fewer than twenty of them stood up and, in English, offered their seats. The Swiss still appear to hold the British in high regard, which goes back a long way, as indeed the Editor's Mystery Ticket article illustrates, and as others have done. Also, perhaps Switzerland is fortunate that potentially poorly behaved British tourists don't go there!

From: Martin Fisher - By Email

Locarno Ballrooms. In Mary and Keith Strickland's article (SE – Sept 2017) they ask why some English (British?) ballrooms were called 'Locarno'. I may well be wrong but I think it was because they opened in the mid-late 1920s, shortly after the Treaty of Locarno was signed in October 1925, and at the time when the ballroom dancing craze was at its height. In the wake of the Great War, that Treaty was intended to mean that signatory European countries would

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recognise the borders of other countries and so not invade one another. Presumably, the newly built ballrooms signified a return to normal, more carefree times. Sadly, that wave of optimism was to prove spectacularly ill founded a decade or so later.

Editor's note. *Martin's speculation appears to be correct. In a Scottish newspaper article commemorating the 90th anniversary of the opening of the Glasgow Locarno in 1926 it clearly notes that the new ballroom was named after the Swiss town that had recently been in the news.*

From: Adrian Friend - By Email

Christmas Markets Plus. This article in the September 2017 *Swiss Express* recommended the station buffet at Basel SBB station located in the west wing of the station, between the SNCF platforms and the SBB booking hall. This section of the station closed for several years in Spring 2017 for total rebuilding. It is unclear if the station buffet will re-open in the new building; the SBB information office had no information when I enquired in January.

From: Neil Wheelwright - By Email

Val Bavona. The article in June 2017 *Swiss Express* 'Discovering the Val Bavona' reminded me of a not entirely successful attempt at taking line-side photographs of the FART/SSIF railway in 2009. During my walk I came across the Palagnedra Dam, which had a small information hut that featured a diagram showing how the various western Ticino dams and hydro-electric power stations were inter-linked. I was amazed by both the scale of the overall water flow, but also that the water was often used multiple times to generate power on its route from the mountains to Lago Maggiore. I have attached a scan of the original slide and the Robiei dam and Bavona power station can both be seen on

the geographical and diagrammatic views.

Members' Advertisements

For sale:

Swiss Narrow Gauge South and West (2017) and Swiss Narrow Gauge North and East (2017): Softback books, A4, 36 pages, 120 colour photographs. Each book £10.00, or buy both for £18.00, including postage, direct from the author. Send to Jason Sargerson, 17 Muirfield Park, Westbourne Avenue, Hull, East Yorkshire, HU5 3JF. Contact Tel: 01482 446451 or email: Jasonsargerson88@gmail.com. Cheques payable to Jason Sargerson. Please see my website for further details: www.jasonsargerson.uk. 

