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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

As incoming Chairman, I must first thank Alan Pike and Roy Duglison for acting as Joint Chairmen for the past year. With the Committee, they have certainly kept the Society going and the members are surely grateful to them for this. Secondly, I must thank you, the members for doing me the honour of accepting me as Chairman.

Yes, it was with more than a little trepidation that I decided to put my name forward, but, with the new Committee, I hope to be able to serve the Society to the benefit of the members. The 1999/2000 Committee is a combination of experienced members and "new blood" with most corners of the country represented. This mixture is extremely healthy, particularly as the key position of secretary was contested at the recent Annual General Meeting. It clearly demonstrates that the Committee is not limited to a narrow self-sustaining group and bodes well for the future development and growth of the Society.

I am painfully aware that I do not know as much of the Society as I should. The London Branch I know well, but not the others. I am therefore aiming to visit as many of the Branches as I can within the next year or so in order to meet as many members as possible and to understand the character of each Branch. Branch Organisers should already have heard from me and, if arrangements work, I should have visited one Branch before this appears.

Attending the London Branch has been, and is, most enjoyable; it continues to remind me how much more I have to learn about Switzerland and its railways. As a High Street Bank once said "our roots are our branches" and it applies just as much to the Swiss Railways Society. If there is a Branch near you, give it your support, you will surely find it a worthwhile activity.

Lastly, many of us will no doubt be visiting Switzerland this summer. I hope those of you that are, have better trips than I did in February!

Paul Russenberger

AGM REPORT AND SECRETARY'S NOTES

The Annual General Meeting of the Society and the associated exhibition took place at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza, Bristol on Saturday 20th March 1999. Over 100 members and their guests attended the exhibition, whilst in excess of 80 attended the AGM.

The weekend proceedings started on the previous evening when the Bristol & Bath Branch held their monthly meeting at the hotel rather than their usual venue in Bath. A well attended meeting was entertained by Sue Knight and Chris Harnett of MITV who showed a selection of out-takes and "tricks of the trade" from their video productions. Of particular note were the problems experienced in positioning mirrors outside the panoramic coaches of the Glacier Express, and Sue complete with camera and tripod perched on the front platform of a Furka Oberalp HGe4/4 I passing through Disentis. They also showed footage of a recent trip to Switzerland when too much snow and the resultant lack of trains prevented any serious filming. After a break for buffet refreshments the meeting continued with a quiz set by Sue and Chris. The evening was thoroughly enjoyed by all present who demonstrated their appreciation, as well as that of the Branch and the Society, for both the presentation and continuing support given so generously by MITV.

Saturday started early for those participating in the exhibition and all was ready for the opening at 11.30. A steady flow of members and their guests came through the doors where a number of trade stands, the Bristol & Bath Branch second hand stall and the Society sales stand plied their wares. Thanks go to Michael Farr, Great Little Trains, Philip Kelley, MITV, Trevor Ridley Publications, Gerald Savine and Winco for their trade participation as well as to all those members of the Bristol & Bath Branch who contributed both with stewarding the event and manning the second hand stall. Special

thanks go also to those members from the Bristol & Bath and West of England Branches who presented Swiss model layouts in H0 and H0m gauges respectively.

During the course of the day photographs submitted for the photographic competition were on display. The result of the competition, judged by the Editor of Continental Modeller, Andrew Burnham was:

Trains	Alan Pike
Scenery	Glenn Allen
Humerous	Colin Jarman

The Annual General Meeting started promptly at 14.30 with the appointment by the meeting of our Joint President, Alan Pike, as Chairman for the meeting. During the formal business the Treasurer's Report and audited Accounts for 1997 and 1998 were presented, in writing in his absence and adopted as was the written report of the Secretary. Regrettably no report had been received from the Editor who, the meeting was informed, had not submitted his formal resignation and also had not renewed his Society membership for 1999. The first indication the Committee had of the Editor's resignation was that given in the March issue of *Swiss Express*.

Two changes to the Rules & Constitution (rules 4 and 10) detailed on the Agenda were adopted with amendment. The new Rules & Constitution should be distributed with this issue of *Swiss Express*. Elections of officers took place with a ballot for the only contested position, that of Secretary.

The new Committee comprises:

Chairman	Paul Russenberger
Secretary	Brian Hemming
Treasurer	Ian Athey
Editor	<i>Vacant</i>
Membership Secretary	Dave Howsam
Publicity & Exhibitions Officer (North)	<i>Vacant - post to disappear at next AGM</i>
Publicity & Exhibitions Officer (South)	Andy Nelson
Sales Officer	Steve Horobin
Librarian	Giles Della Gana
Branch Co-ordinator	<i>vacant - post to disappear at next AGM</i>
Committee	Roger Ellis, David Stevenson, Geoff Thompson

It was agreed by the Meeting that should matters arise for the attention of Publicity & Exhibitions Officer (North) these would be dealt with by Andy Nelson, whilst matters requiring the attention of a Branch Co-ordinator would be dealt with by one of the three Committee members.

The date of the next Annual General Meeting was fixed for Saturday 18th March 2000 to be held at Derby subject to satisfactory negotiations with the hotel. It is expected that the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting will be circulated with the September *Swiss Express*.

The traditional dinner was held on the Saturday evening where our guest speaker was Andrew Burnham, Editor of Continental Modeller magazine. The evening concluded with a quiz which tested knowledge of Switzerland and left many of those present determined to look more at the country and less at the trains (or perhaps a little less!).

The new Committee held its first meeting on 10th April at Worcester. Top of the Agenda was the vacancy created by the resignation of the Editor, Les Heath. After a great deal of serious consideration an offer to fill the post of Editor by David Stevenson was accepted unanimously. The June issue of *Swiss Express* has been put together very ably by Malcolm Hardy-Randall and the Society is extremely grateful and indebted to him for his assistance at this very difficult time. We hope that he may be able to contribute in some way to the future well being of *Swiss Express*.

The Committee has decided that it would like *Swiss Express* to become a magazine produced by a team rather than an individual. David Stevenson will have overall Editorial responsibility but he will be getting an Editorial team together in time for the September issue. Any comments or offers of help from members would be much appreciated.

On the personnel front, members may have noticed in the Society Diary section that the post of Organiser of the North East Branch is vacant. David Ford, the Organiser for a number of years, is unable to continue due to his work commitments. If there are any members in the North East who feel they could fill this role please would they contact David Ford on 01670 369060 or the Secretary. The Committee expresses its thanks to David for his work as North East Branch Organiser, and hopes that at some time in the future he may once again be able to take an active part in the administration of the Society.

In the last issue of *Swiss Express* the post of New Zealand Co-ordinator was shown as vacant. The Committee is happy to announce the re-appointment of Sean Millar who has now returned from the UK and taken up permanent residence in his native New Zealand. His address appears on the title page, but Internet buffs can reach him at his e-mail address: seanmillar@clear.net.nz.

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Please note that the Membership Secretary holds all spare copies of the current year's *Swiss Express*. All queries regarding the distribution of the magazine and faulty or damaged copies should be addressed, in writing, to the Membership Secretary for a prompt reply and replacement magazine (if appropriate). Delays and difficulties occurred in sending out replacements for faulty copies of the March magazine as we had not made it clear to whom enquiries should be made. Our apologies to those who received a March *Swiss Express* with some blank or missing pages.

EXHIBITIONS REPORT

I will be taking a short summer break, unless any late offers come in, from participation in exhibitions until September 11 when the Society stand will be at the Oxford show. If you need me to bring any particular item to any exhibition where the Society stand is present, then let me know, on 01753 534313, or if you cannot wait, then contact our Sales Officer Steve Horobin, who will be happy to help.

I will be pleased to hear from any members who have a layout on view at any exhibition in the future so that it can be advised in *Swiss Express*. It should, however, be borne in mind that the copy date of *Swiss Express* is some 3 months ahead of publication date

SRS stand attendance	11 Sept Oxford (GRS exhibition)
Swiss Layouts on View	"The wrong kind of snow" (HOM) (Diorama featured in Continental Modeller Dec 98)

Important Announcement

This edition of *Swiss Express* has been edited by Malcolm Hardy-Randall. He has ensured that, despite the problem confronting the Society in March, we have been able establish continuity and publish a June issue of a high standard. The Committee is unanimous in placing on record its sincere appreciation for all the hard work that Malcolm has put into this production particularly as he virtually started "from cold" in March.

The Committee is pleased to announce the appointment of David Stevenson as Editor of *Swiss Express*. He will be heading an Editorial team, of which more in future issues. Meanwhile, any material for the September issue should reach David by 20th July and can be sent by mail as written, or preferably typed copy, on 3½" floppy disc or by e-mail.

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