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THOUGHTS FROM THE CHAIR - Paul Russenberger

First I must thank Glyn Jones for all he did to organise the AGM and Spring Meeting (why do we usually call it "Meet?") in Derby. It is a nerve-racking task not to be undertaken lightly, yet Glyn certainly made it all look so easy. He is already emailing me about the 2003 AGM.

Thank you, too, to all those members who took the trouble to come. I hope you enjoyed the exhibition and that those who stayed for the dinner found that equally enjoyable. We were honoured to have the presence of the Swiss Consul from Manchester, Herr Max Inhelder with his wife, Sylvia, and are very grateful to him for buying every table a bottle each of red and white wine.

Arrangements are already being put in hand for next year. It has still to be finally confirmed, but the date is planned to be 29 March and the venue the Midland Hotel in Derby. Go for your diaries now and get working on that model you always wanted to exhibit!

The AGM ended with the position of Secretary vacant. Roger Ellis has agreed to be co-opted to the Committee and will act as secretary to the Committee. For the moment, communications, which would normally be addressed to the Secretary, should be sent to me. The next Committee meeting is in June when the issue and modus operandi will be considered further. The result of this will be indicated in the September issue of *SWISS EXPRESS*. I am grateful to Roger for this and to the members who offered to help in this situation. While writing about Committee meetings, remember that on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope, the Chairman will send you a copy of the minutes of the last Committee meeting.

Paul Hannant has taken over as Exhibitions Officer. He is keen to ensure that the Society is represented widely. He will need assistance in this. Shows occur all over the country, so it is quite likely that he will need help near you. If you are able to help him staffing the Society stand at any exhibitions, please do get in touch with him. Limits on travelling distance are understood and it can be great fun

Some of you may have read a notice in *Continental Modeller* of an exhibition to put on by the Society with the Trent Group of the German Railway Society. The Society was indeed invited to participate. The invitation came at a time when the Committee felt unable to commit the Society to such an event, not least as it was relatively close to the AGM both in time and location; it was therefore declined. I hope no member attended hoping for an SRS presence, only to be disappointed. As I write this, the source of the error is not known.

Brian Hemming remains "webmaster" looking after the Society Website for the time being. He does this expertly and the Society is grateful to him. Any lingering doubts as to the usefulness of the site were dispelled for me at the dinner. Chatting to a member and his wife afterwards, he described to me how shortly before Christmas he received an unsolicited package from somebody called Dave Howsam, whom he had never met and did not know, containing the new member's pack and that year's copies of *SWISS EXPRESS*. They looked interesting, but why he had received them remained a mystery until he received a letter from his mother. In her seventies, she is a regular web surfer and had come across the Society's site. Knowing her son's interest in railways and Switzerland, she had found the ideal Christmas present in two years' membership!

Swiss Railways Society AGM 2003

The AGM and Spring Meet will be held on 29th March 2003 at the Midland Hotel Derby. Any offers of layouts, displays etc. will be most welcome. Please contact: Glyn Jones 18, Robin Road, Coalville Leics LE67 4LB. Tel: 01530 837939. email: sales@swissrailsoc.org.uk. More details in the September issue of Swiss Express.