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THOUGHTS FROM THE CHAIR - Paul Russenberger

This is a rather truncated issue of "Swiss Express." The Committee has been concerned for longer than it would like to have to admit about the continued late publication of the Society's journal. The matter has taken a significant proportion of the time at recent Committee Meetings and been the subject of serious debate, your Committee being painfully aware that in allowing the situation to continue we are failing the membership. The possibility of replacing the September issue with a newsletter, very much on a once only basis, was suggested and very seriously considered. It was seen as a potential solution, though not without its difficulties.

However, the situation has now arisen where the Editor has received a combination of material suitable for rapid production and recovery of the situation. He has indicated that by taking advantage of this, it should be possible to resume "punctual running" in the publication of "Swiss Express."

You will also have found what is possibly the largest enclosure ever with this "Swiss Express" – a complementary copy of the 25th Anniversary Calendar! Further copies are available from the Sales Officer. They may well solve a few Christmas present problems and advertise the Society in process. Given that all the views were taken by members, it shows what we can produce from our own resources.

Selecting the pictures was an interesting experience. As far as possible, the selection was made "blind" – the selectors did not know who had taken which photograph and hearing the comments about one's own efforts from the others was a salutary experience! We set a limit on the number of photographs from the same member and that did result in a rerun in that one member exceeded the limit, enforcing a reselection. It was also necessary to ensure a reasonable mix of subjects and choose suitable seasons. It was definitely not the same as choosing illustrations for an article and as one selector (not me) said "You have to remember the picture is going to be on the wall for a whole month."

It is by no means certain that another calendar will be produced. The constraint is mainly financial. At present, the Society is sufficiently strong to give all members a copy in celebration of the Silver Jubilee. Future calendars will have to be self-financing. In round terms, that means being certain of selling not less than about 750 and in general about 10% of a society's membership will purchase a calendar. That would require about 600 calendars being sold outside the Society or as duplicate purchases. Let me know what you think.

On a lighter note, I was delighted to receive no brickbats for the tongue-in-both-cheeks-at-the-same-time notes in the June issue and I have had at least one comment in general terms of "I like your idea of a fantasy railway." Now, I do rather fancy the Lima model of a Berlin S-Bahn train and have toyed with the idea of getting one. By combining two railways, there are precedents in Switzerland for third rail and second hand stock, so a unit could arrive for use on the local private railway. It is, of course, the Mittel Zargau Bahn.

JUST A SEC - Roger Ellis

Where the heck is Kingsbury Episcopi?

I know, "what on earth possessed Roger to volunteer to organise the Autumn Social Event in such an out of the way place?"

Having been at previous AGMs when many members said that we should, as a Society meet more often, I thought someone should bite the bullet. I would like to think that members will support the efforts of Bristol & Bath Branch and make the weekend a success. It really is a nice part of Somerset, and as many members have their own transport easily reachable from most areas of the UK via the motorway or trunk road network.

Details of the weekend are on a separate page of this magazine and on the SRS web site. Please let me know as soon as you can if you wish to attend the Saturday evening meal. I need to know potential numbers in order to know if it can go ahead.