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Contact: Roger Vine - 01 634 864843 (Northeast Kent).

SIDETRACKS... a miscellany of items

● Railwayman's daughter Micheline Calmy-Rey has been elected as only Switzerland's second woman President. In her former role as the Confederation's Foreign Minister she had regularly topped the popularity polls for Swiss politicians. She will serve as President for one year.

● Preparations for the opening of the Lötschberg base tunnel on 9th December 2007 are right on schedule claim its builders although questions are being raised about the reliability of its control system. Intensive testing of the 34.6km bore began last December with up to 10,000 special trains running on the new route, some at up to 280km/hr, before it is available for general use.

● As previously projected in Swiss Express SBB boss Benedikt Weibel retired at the end of 2006. The 60 year old was named Chief Executive of the SBB in 1993 and finished his 28-year railway career as the longest serving rail chief in Europe. His retirement project will be as Switzerland's delegate to the Euro 2008 football tournament, which the country is co-hosting with Austria. Andreas Meyer will take over as his successor at SBB.

● The SBB historic site, in association with Railway, has announced its plans for special trains in 2007. One worth noting is on 10th October when restored Ae6/6 11402 "Uri" is scheduled to head a special trip from Zurich to Luino (Italy) with the potential for a side trip from Pollegio, near Bellinzona, to the Alp Transit facility. See their websites for details.

● 9th December 2006 saw the beginning of the end for the use of Edmondson card tickets in Switzerland, for as from the following day transport enterprises were forbidden to print any more of this type of ticket for through journeys. More on this item in an article

that we hope to bring you in the June edition of Swiss Express.

● SRS members may be interested to know Andreas Jenny, the former owner of the Stolzenfels Hotel at Davos, has restarted his Rhaetian Railway Weeks. These follow his usual pattern of trips to works, special rail journeys and trains and walks to well known railway locations. The Jenny family now manages the Hotel Dischma located at 128, Promenade in Davos Dorf so no doubt further details could be found on the Hotel website www.dischma.ch. Dave Howsam chanced upon this information when looking at a back copy of Loki (courtesy of the Hotel Grischuna library!) and picked up a leaflet when passing the Davos hotel.

● Have you considered entering the annual SRS Photographic Competition held at the AGM? It is open to all members - just bring along your entries (prints only) on the day or post them to Roger Ellis at his address in the front of the magazine.

● To celebrate the Centenary of the opening of the Simplon Tunnel, the Swiss Fulgurex Company are producing HO models, in extremely limited quantities, of the early 3-phase locomotives. There are four varieties on offer: Firstly the two Italian loaned locomotives Nos. 361 (in black/red) and 362 (in brown/red) as well as the first two Swiss-built locomotives Nos. 364 and 365 (both in green/grey). Details may be obtained from www.greatlittletains.co.uk or Greatlittletrain@aol.com. We intend to bring you an article on the early 3-phase electrification of the Simplon in a future Swiss Express.

● During the high winds on Friday 19th January 2007 two cars of a three car Appenzeller Bahn train were blown off the tracks between Wasserauen and Schienen, Kurs route 854.