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Postage Prices

As all of our UK members will be well aware the Royal Mail brought-in a large increase in postage rates earlier this year and obviously this has already impacted upon the Society. One of the advantages of moving to the A4 magazine format at the start of 2011, was that we were able to capitalise on our printer's automated envelope filling and bulk mailing system to see substantial savings in distribution costs. Now we have lost some of these savings, not just to the rise in the postage rates but also to a little publicised tax change. In the last budget the Treasury imposed VAT at 20% on all bulk commercial mailing to addresses in the UK and Europe; however we are still able to mail-out magazines through our new system at lower cost than if we reverted to sticking stamps on envelopes. Paradoxically, as VAT is not payable on postage to addresses in the 'Rest of the World', it now costs us less to send a magazine 12,000 miles to New Zealand (£1.78) than 22 miles to Calais (£2.05)!

Top Brass - a branch record?

The West of England branch was delighted to welcome to its meeting on the 14th April 2012 the two Joint Presidents, the Chairman of the Society and a member of the Management Committee. Can any branch of the Society equal or better that? The Chairman, John Jesson, entertained the gathering with the first part of his series of The Gotthard. If any members are on holiday in, or visiting, this area they will be most welcome to attend any of the branch meetings as a visitor.

SRS Library

The SRS Library collection is now available for members to access at the Stephenson Locomotive Society (SLS) Library. This is located a 15-minute walk from Hershams Station (on the South Western main line out of London Waterloo), and some 15 minutes driving time from Junctions 9 or 10 of the M25. SRS members are welcome to use the SLS Library on production of their current membership card. The Library is normally open on the 2nd Monday of the month (except Bank Holidays) from 14.00 to 17.00, and the 4th Wednesday of the month from 14.00 to 17.30. Directions to the Library are on: <http://www.stephensonloco.org.uk/SLSLibrary.htm>, but check before you travel.

SRS Archive

Three members have been in contact to offer to assist with the digitising of the numerous photographs that we have in the Society archive. Their offers of help are appreciated and will allow us to have one of the best Swiss transport photo collections around.

New Gotthard Book

SRS Member Malcolm Hardy Randall is publishing a completely revised edition of his earlier book on the Gotthard. The title of the new volume is 'The Gotthard Railway. Vol:1. 1871 - 1909' and it will have 304 pages with 285 illustrations (20 colour). The book will cover: planning and construction of the line with drawings, maps and photographs; descriptions of all the locomotive classes;

detailed descriptions of the passenger and baggage coaches (including a large section on the 4-axle coaches, that were not detailed in the original book); freight stock is described, and finally details of all the bridges, tunnels, construction equipment, stations (some with track plans), etc. We will aim to review the book when it is available.

Society Web Forum

Remember the SRS has a Web Forum. This is accessed via our website and is exclusively for members. To gain access email forum.admin@swissrailsoc.org.uk

Another exhibition

Simon Ellis has been asked to take his layout to the Loughborough exhibition that takes place on the 29th/30th September at Garendon High School, Thorpe Hill, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 4SQ. It is hoped that the SRS stand will also be there.

Plea from the Photo Editor

"Now that we've gone to an A4 magazine it is even more imperative that when sending in images for possible inclusion in *Swiss Express* that you please submit them at least 2000 pixels on their longest side. Ideally just email them as they came from your camera as JPEG images. Unfortunately a lot of good images are being submitted but they have been reduced down to a size that is too small for publication. If submitting a small batch of images, send them spread over several emails, up to three images attached to each email. Thanks."

2013 SRS Calendar

It is time to order your 2013 edition of the SRS Calendar. Last year all of the 200 copies printed sold out and we expect the same this year, so get your order in as soon as possible. The format will be similar to last year's. The Calendar costs £10.00, however with postage to UK addresses the cost will be £12.50. Due to a large increase in overseas postage rates the cost, when sent abroad, will be £16.00. Although this price will cover the airmail postage for Europe it will only cover the surface mail cost to the 'Rest of the World'. If you opt for this rate, in order for the calendar to arrive before Christmas, order by 30th September. This year the calendars are again being sold through Society Sales. Send your order and payment to Glyn Jones whose contact details are on the inside of the back cover. It is anticipated that the calendars will be posted out in early October.



Members' Letters

From Vincent Hart (Retired Reader in Applied Mathematics, University of Queensland) – by email.

On a recent trip on the Glacier Express we heard an announcement that, the Swiss Railways' rotary snow ploughs can remove 19,000t of snow per MINUTE from the track. My companion was convinced that this represented the effort of ONE snow plough when in action, but a little calculation persuades me that she is somewhat in error. Assuming a speed of 10kph, a cross section of 4sq.m and an average density of 320kg/m³, I came up with 213.4t of snow removed for the effort of one plough in one minute of steady motion. Thus 19,000t would represent the effort of about 89 snow ploughs. If you or one of your contributors could comment on this item of interest we would be very much obliged.

Editor: One of our Swiss Rail friends has supplied the following information.

The 'Zaugg' rotaries on the RhB Bernina line are the biggest in Switzerland with a side sweep, fully extended, of 6m. They are rated to move 8,500t/hour (142t/minute) at full power. The normal rotaries for the RhB main line can only sweep 4.6m wide at full extension. Their rating is 3,500t/hour. The width of sweep is related to clearances along the way. Much of the Bernina is single track and wide open, and apart from catenary masts there are few obstructions. Naturally the clearance at individual locations is greatly reduced e.g. at crossings and stations, and for all sorts of other reasons. The units for normal lines are generally not as powerful as those the RhB owns for its high and wild places and have no hope of sustained operations within the normal loading gauge, so they will clear far less snow. No practical snow clearance equipment can simply press on for a steady hour and shift thousands of tonnes; there are always interruptions. So the actual figures are rather different to the 19,000t/minute the Glacier Express commentary suggested.

A cumulative 19,000t/hour across the entire Swiss snow plough fleet working at full capacity in ideal conditions might be possible.

From Michael Donovan – by email.


Regarding the letter from Geoffrey Bryson in the June edition of Swiss Express, I am afraid his comments on closure processes in the UK are out of date. The Department for Transport (DfT) specifies the level of service to be operated by a train operating company, and this includes what your correspondent refers to as "Parliamentary Trains" although this is not a term that is recognised within the Railways Act. These trains (or a substitute bus in one case around London) are operated to avoid DfT having to initiate the closure process. The Rail Passengers' Council has long since ceased to exist, with some of its tasks having passed to Passenger Focus. The ultimate decision on whether to accept a closure proposal now lies with the Office of Rail Regulation. I hope that this clarifies the situation.

Members' Advertisements

For sale:


Lima/Fleishmann/Roco SBB HO rolling stock; 7 Lima coaches (green), 2 Fleishmann coaches (green), 4 Roco mainline double-decker coaches (red/white), 13 Roco 2-axle closed wagons, 1 Lima 4-axle tanker wagon, Roco SBB Historic Set (historic loco and 4 historic coaches), 3 Roco SBB locos (Re 6/6, Re 460), 1 Fleishmann SBB loco (Cargo Re 421), 2 Lima SBB locos (Re 6/6). Telephone or e-mail for further information; Neil Medland on 01666 823461 or eastwood@horsleyglos.wanadoo.co.uk

For free:

Back numbers of Swiss Express from the March 1987 edition to the December 2001 edition, are available free to any member who would like them. They can be collected from an address in the Pontefract area of Yorkshire. Contact Keith Ellis at keithellis_1970@hotmail.com. 

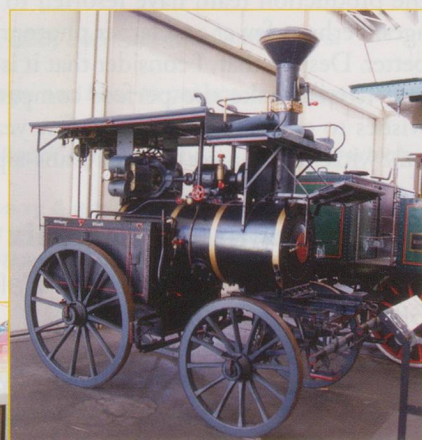
VERKEHRSHAUS EXTRA

Keith Scotland

In the June Swiss Express an article reported on the special exhibition running until 21st October 2012 at the Verkehrshaus in Luzern featuring the use of electricity, in particular energy from the sun. One superb transport exhibit is "Mathilde", an electric powered bus, built by Tribelhorn in 1912 for the Schweizerhof Hotel in Luzern, to shuttle guests to and from the Hauptbahnhof. Electric powered vehicles were much more common in the early days, and the wheel turns full circle as they find favour again using our modern batteries and technology. 

Left: "Mathilde", the electric powered bus built by Tribelhorn in 1912.

Photos: Ron Smith



Above: This is not a traction engine, as it first seems, but is an electric light generator for road works. It was pulled to the site by horse power and just used as a generator.