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Chairman's Notes

For once, it does not seem quite so daft writing notes for the December magazine at the end of September. The latest period of poor weather encourages me to close the curtains to shut out the gloomy evenings. While I have not suffered from the weather this "summer", I appreciate that many may not have been so fortunate and I extend my sympathy to you, especially if your homes have been affected. The Editor always asks me if I want to write anything but, at the same time, advises that he is short of space in the magazine, so I will keep this short. The Society is stable, although costs are rising all the time and a subscription increase has been made inevitable, largely through postal charge increases. You, the members, seem to be content with the Society. We have not received much in the way of complaints, anyway. The committee continues to meet regularly, roughly every quarter, but communicates frequently through the medium of e-mails. As always, I thank all the committee and others who do so much for the benefit of the Society, and I thank all of the membership for continuing to support the Society. I wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and New Year. Let us hope that, next summer, the weather will allow us some time outdoors. ❏

Subscription Increase

Having held the Annual Subscription at £16 for two years rising costs, especially postage charges, have resulted in the Management Committee having to increase the UK subscription to the SRS by £1 to £17 for 2013. Again due to increases in postage the two 'overseas' rates have now been combined into one of £24. Details are on the Address Sheet/Renewal Form that accompanied this magazine. Members who paid their 2013 subscription in advance are spared these increases. We understand that other railway societies also have raised their subscription rates this year. ❏

2013 Calendar

As we go to press with the magazine there are still some copies of the Society's 2013 Calendar available. It can be dispatched to UK addresses for £12.50, and overseas ones at £16.00, and represents great value for money. Treat yourself, or others, this Christmas. ❏



LEFT: Wiesen Viaduct.

Photo: Roger Ellis

Membership Secretary's Plea

You will have seen, as last year, the membership renewal form for 2013 is incorporated with the address sheet/branch diary information. Steve Buck has asked that we point-out that when renewing you should send back the whole sheet as it has your address on it. Last year some members only sent in the form and he was faced with having to identify who had actually renewed. If you wish to keep the Branch Diary information why not note the meetings you hope to attend in your own personal diary, or on a calendar, before returning the form? The information is also on the SRS website. If you have already paid for 2013, you should already have received your new membership card, which was sent out in November. ❏

Society Web Forum

The SRS Web Forum is accessed via our website and is exclusively for members. To gain access email forum.admin@swissrailsoc.org.uk ❏

BLS 100 Celebration and RhB Trip - July 2013

Roger Ellis writes: "I would not like any of those members and their partners/friends to undertake any of our planned walks that I have not done myself. To ensure that they are possible I checked them out during an August holiday in Filisur. The **Two Viaducts Walk**: We walk from Filisur to Davos Wiesen (over the Wiesen Viaduct) followed by a lunch stop. Return to Filisur via the Landwasser Gorge where we will end up under the famous Landwasser Viaduct. Then for those that feel able we can make a fairly steep uphill climb, with steps, which will take us to the Scmittentobel Viaduct and onwards to the viewpoint over the Landwasser, as pictured in the centrefold in Marin Fisher's excellent "Glacier Express" booklet. The total time for this day, including stops, would be six to seven hours. **Railway Walk**,



Preda-Bergun: I did this signposted walk in under three hours but if we stop at certain locations for pictures it could take four hours plus. After, we visit the new RhB Albula Museum in Bergun and I am trying to contact the Albula Model Railway Club in Bergun to see if we can have a private visit to their model railway. **Railway Walk, Ospizio Bernina-Alp Grum:** We travel to Ospizio and then undertake the two-hour walk to Alp Grum. If we get the timing correct there is a choice of getting an onward train to Poschiavo and then returning to Filisur, or walking back to Ospizio and back to Filisur via St Moritz. There are a number of possibilities. Equipment: I have had a word with the man upstairs and he says if I am good he will arrange for us to have excellent weather. Seriously, as with any walk in the Alps, you should always carry a water and windproof coat and wear good quality, waterproof walking shoes/boots. Coincidentally, the RhB have agreed to let us visit their Control Centre as well as the works at Landquart. At the time of writing (early September) the Hotel Grischuna is almost full of the "Roger Ellis Party" as there were twenty-four of us booked in and Anna had only three double rooms and one apartment left." ❑

Fly to the Bernese Oberland

How many members realise that if they are heading to resorts in the Bernese Oberland they can potentially gain more time at their destinations by flying to Bern's Belp Airport? SkyWork Airlines, a Swiss company, operates several flights daily from London City Airport to the quiet airport that serves the Swiss Capital. For those who do not know London City, it is a dream to use with few queues and easy access using London's DLR, with its connections into the Underground network. Your editor has used the Airport (travelling BA and Swiss, not SkyWork) on many occasions and rejoices in the usual 15-minutes elapsed time from the moment his plane touches down to boarding a DLR train. That includes clearing immigration and collecting baggage. Bern Belp, being small, is also apparently an efficient gateway to the area it serves. There is a direct bus link into the Capital from where all the region's resorts are easily reached by train. Flights may be more expensive than some airlines, but I understand SkyWork is a 'full-service' airline with reserved seats and no scrimping on the baggage allowance, useful if you are taking skis or walking boots, etc. ❑

Model Railway in Birmingham

The promoters of this commercial project have asked that the information below be passed-on to members. The Society has no links with the project.

"It is planned that *'The Wonderful World of Trains & Planes'* will open at Easter 2013 at a location close to the centre of Birmingham. It is intended to be a lively, educational and fun visitor attraction, with a target of 100,000 visitors annually. Trains of various countries will be featured, including Switzerland, where visitors will see: a lake steamer; the Glacier Express; other Swiss trains; a mountain railway; ski slopes; funfair, and a spectacular end to the day in what will be a 12-minute theatre-style presentation. Helpers are needed who can supply or build various parts of the overall model

including; electrics; track; scenery; lake steamer, etc. Building is planned to run from December, through to March. For more information contact Peter Smith: peter.trainsandplanes@gmail.com" ❑

Invitation by OnTracks

OnTracks have informed us that they are hosting open days at their Pontrilas, near Hereford, HQ on the 7th & 8th December to showcase the revolutionary new Z21 DCC control system that can be downloaded onto a smartphone or i - Pad. Attendance at these open days costs £10 booked in advance, but this includes hands-on demonstrations/tuitions of the device and £20 worth of vouchers to spend on the 1,000s of products the company sells. More details on www.ontracks.co.uk or by calling **01 981 241 268.** ❑

Steve Crebbin

We have been informed that Steve Crebbin, a former Sales Officer of the Society, died on the 16th October after a short illness. Together with his wife Kath he moved to live in Saas Fee a few years ago. ❑

Members' Letters

From: Keith Cunliffe, Kidderminster

(This is an edited version of the letter. Ed.)

This year I again returned to my favourite hotel in Zürich for 10-days of intensive railway travel with a Swiss Pass. I like the hotel as it serves breakfast from 06.00, which some people think is too early, but it allows me to get to the already bustling Hauptbahnhof by 07.00 in time to make long day trips. My one complaint with the otherwise excellent Hotel Grishuna at Filisur, where I have also stayed, is that their not serving breakfast until 07.30 means that the earliest trains that can be used are the departures around 09.00. From Zürich I had planned a trip to the Ticino to sample one of the former Cisalpino ETR610 units but I was not impressed, preferring the ETR470 sets that are soon to be phased out. Despite their troubles I think that they have a character and style all of their own and give a much more comfortable ride than the later units. I accept the SBBs plight that they are troublesome and hence will have to go. Indeed on the two occasions on this holiday that I did manage to ride on ETR470s both services were some 15 minutes late, but I was willing to forgive that for what I regard as the far better ride. Farewell ETR470s... ❑

Member's Advertisement

For free:

Back issues of Swiss Express From January 1985 to December 2010, are available free to any member who would like them. To be collected from an address in the Preston area of Lancashire. If interested please contact Duncan Perry at dunmuperry@virginmedia.com. ❑

SWISS RAILWAYS SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2013

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Railways Society will be held in the White House Hotel, Worcester on Saturday 23rd March 2013 and will start at 1400.

NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICERS

Nominations are invited for the following posts: **Treasurer** (3 years), **Editor** (3 years), **one other elected member of the Management Committee** (3 years). Nomination Forms are available from the Secretary: David Stevenson, 3 Aldersey Road, Worcester, WR5 3BG or by email at <Secretary@SwissRailSoc.org.uk>

Completed forms must reach him by post or by hand, but not by email, no later than Saturday **9th March 2013**.

It is important to note that all nominees **AND** their proposers and seconders **MUST** have paid their subscriptions for 2013 **PRIOR** to signing the nomination form. Failure to do so will render the nomination form invalid. Members are advised that a list of nominees and a copy of any accompanying statement they may have made to support their nomination will be supplied by the Secretary on receipt of an application by post with an **SAE**, or by email, at the above addresses.

Any application for a postal vote must be accompanied by an **SAE** and will be sent out by post only to the named addressee who must be a member of the Society at the time of application. The application must reach the Secretary by **Saturday 16th March 2013**. Completed ballot papers must reach the Secretary no later than the start of the **AGM** meeting on **Saturday 23rd March 2013**.

MOTIONS FOR THE AGM

Motions for the meeting, proposed and seconded by members who have paid their 2013 subscriptions, must reach the Secretary by **Saturday 23rd February 2013**. This will ensure that they can be included on the Agenda together with any motions put forward by the Committee.

SWISS RAILWAYS SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & SPRING EXHIBITION 2013

This will be held at the **WHITE HOUSE HOTEL**, Foregate St, Worcester, WR1 1EA on Saturday 23rd March 2013 from 11.00-16.30
The formal AGM will begin at 14.00.

Non-members of the Society are welcome to attend the Exhibition and a donation of £2 per person would be appreciated.
This event is organised by the West Midlands Group of the SRS with the support of the Management Committee.

INVITED STANDS

Contikits, Gerald Savine Railway Prints, Platform 5 Books, Hornby International, NScaleCH and WINCO.
Society Sales, Society Bring & Buy, Italian Railways Society, Swiss Travel Centre.

LAYOUTS

A selection of layouts have been invited including "Switzerland in Spain", the RhB, SBB, San Pellegrino and others.

LUNCH

The hotel have agreed to add a Bratwurst lunch to their regular lunch menu. Hot sausage and beer to get you in the mood!

SATURDAY EVENING DINNER

A moderately formal dinner will be held on Saturday evening at 1900 for 1930 with a speaker of volcanic reputation, a quiz which can be answered and the following tasty menu:

Smoked Salmon & Prawn Parcel Set on mixed salad leaves & dressed with a raspberry & grain mustard vinaigrette
Pan-fried Pork Escalope topped with cranberry, glazed with brie & served on with a port wine jus
Served with potato rösti and seasonal vegetables (vegetarian option available)
Tarte Au Citron, accompanied by clotted cream
Coffee, Tea, Mints & Swiss chocolate

The cost is £25 per person including VAT. Drinks and wine are available.

Please make your cheques for the dinner payable to the Swiss Railways Society and send to:
Malcolm Job, 8 Hill Farm, Inkberrow, Worcestershire, WR7 4JE

Please ensure bookings and payments are received by Malcolm by 9th March 2013 at the latest.

HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

We have a special rate of £79 per night for a twin/double or £67 per night for a single both including breakfast. To book with the hotel please ring 01905 24308 (please note this is the correct number, it is one of the last analogue exchanges left in the UK) and quote ref no. 87146 and that you are attending the Swiss Railways Society AGM.

FRIDAY 22nd March - ENTERTAINMENT!

All members and indeed anyone who wishes are invited to join the West Midlands Group and Birmingham Branch joint meeting on Friday when the guest speaker will be Don Gatehouse, renowned photographer and freight expert. This will start at 2000.
Dinner is available in the hotel prior to the meeting although no formal arrangements for this will be made.