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AGM - David Stevenson writes:

"The 2015 AGM event attracted 133 society members (some 10% of our total) to Derby's Hallmark Midland Hotel on Saturday 14th March. An incredible number, which pays testament to the standing and success of the Society. The event took over a number of rooms at the hotel, and there was much to see and do throughout the day including: model railway layouts representing Switzerland and other parts of Europe, including Italy and Germany; a photograph display; traders selling new and second hand models, books and other items; the SRS Sales Stand and the Bring & Buy stall; DVD and Slide shows - thanks in particular to Duncan McKay for his presentation, and Chris and Sue of MITV for permission to show their DVDs. The Swiss Travel Centre was also present during the day, and the society's excellent new book "*Swiss Tram and Trolleybus Systems Past & Present*" was launched. I would like to single out one thing from the day's event. Dave and Jan Howsam brought with them the Swiss items from the collection of the late and much missed Willie McKnight, a former treasurer of the Society. These were to be sold on behalf of the Society and raised over £300. Thanks to Dave and Jan and, of course, Willie himself. I hope he was watching from above and enjoyed the day as much as the rest of us.

The AGM itself was well attended, with 84 people crammed into the meeting room. They listened to an address by our President, Alan Pike, which he described as valedictory, although we suspect not! Alan emphasised that he wished to thank all those who have worked hard over the years to develop the Society. The formal business was concluded very quickly and was then followed by the Open Forum, which this time concentrated on things Swiss including much encouragement to continue travelling there despite the apparent cost. The committee remains the same as before, but beware - we cannot go on forever! The Chairman also announced that, in recognition of his immense contribution to the Society through the books he had written, both from their sales and the promotion of the Society in general, it had been agreed that Martin Fisher was to be made an Honorary Life Member. This was greeted with much acclaim by those present. The AGM dinner that took place in the evening was not as well attended as previous years, it may be that this particular element of the day needs a rethink, and the committee would welcome suggestions. It was, however, much enjoyed by those present, in particular Rob Morrey's quiz. Here's to next year at Derby, on Saturday 12th March 2016. Book the date in your diary now - it's not as far away as you think.

For those members who were unable to attend the AGM the Minutes of the 2014 AGM, the Officer's Reports, and the Financial Report are now available in the Member's Area of the Society Website. Your password to access this is on your 2015 Membership Card. Hard copies of the documentation are available from the Secretary on receipt of a Self Addressed Envelope.

Incidentally, members may be interested to know that provisionally the AGM cost the Society some £1330 to run. This figure included the room hire, event insurance, printing and some expenses incurred by people who brought layouts.

Against this can be set income from those who paid/donated at the door; the raffle; the bring-and-buy proceeds; Dave Howsam's sales stand; and some profits from Society Sales. This resulted in a net cost of around £220. Good value".

Apologies

Apologies are due to Arthur Gaudet for misspelling his name in the photo caption on P45 of *Swiss Express* No.121, and to Alan Jackson for allowing 'White' to get through instead of 'Wight' (as he had written) on P43 of No.121.

Request for Information

From Professor John Hensler in Australia:

"I hope that Swiss Railways Society members may be able to help me with a family history project. Any information would be helpful. During his career, my German grandfather Paul Hensler (perhaps 'von Hensler') worked at a senior level on many European railways, probably on the technical side. I have heard he was associated with a mountain railway somewhere in Switzerland, but I have not been able to get confirmation of this, or of any dates. The little information I have about him is that for a large part of his life he may have lived in southern Germany, possibly Thüringen. He died in Berlin in 1931 at the age of 60, so I guess the peak of his active working life would have been between the ages of 30 and 55, that is the years 1901 to 1926. There were many railway projects active in Switzerland during that period, including the BLS's Lötschberg tunnel and its approach routes that opened in 1913, however I suspect that few Germans would have worked on projects outside Germany between 1914 and 1918."

If any member can help Professor Hensler with his request please get in touch with the editor.

Swiss Diary Date

Members planning to visit the Suisse Romande in late summer would be wise to adjust their plans in order to visit the Blonay-Chamby Museum Railway over the weekends of the 12th/13th and 19th/20th September. The B-C is running Le Valais en fête, a special event on both Saturdays and Sundays to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the opening of the Leuk-Leukerbad Bahn (LLB) in 1915 and the Bicentenary of the formation of Canton Valais. Apart from steam specials the museum railway will be operating its unique collection LLB rolling stock that it assembled after the line closed in 1967. More details on www.blonay-chamby.ch

Members Area of the Society Website.

The Username to access the "Members Area" of the Society website is **2015@swissrailsoc.org.uk**, this will be valid throughout 2015. You will find the password on your 2015 Society Membership Card.

Members' Letters

From: David Gartside – By Email.
Danish Asymmetry

The discussion about asymmetric wheel arrangements (John Jesson, Ron Smith, etc. in recent editions of *Swiss*

Express) stirred a long lost and rather hazy memory of travelling on a lumbering DSB railcar somewhere in West Jutland in the 1970s, which I vaguely remember as having a 6-wheeled bogie under the diesel engine (this was mounted above the frames like the old BR SR DEMUs) and a 4-wheeled bogie at the passenger end. Thanks to the power of the Internet, if you search for DSB Class MO, I'm pleased to say you can find various photos of both actual and model railcars. Try <http://www.railpictures.net/photo/299905/>

Editor's Note: Apparently DSB built a total of 139 Class MO DMUs, some in 1935 and a further batch in the 1950s, for use on lightly trafficked rural services where they often hauled one or two coaches or even freight wagons. They were all withdrawn by 1984. Interestingly the DSB official designation appears to show that they were 3-Bo i.e. the six-wheeled bogie was un-driven and it was only bigger to carry the weight of the engine. One of the early series is preserved in the Danish national collection.

From: Paul Burkhalter – By Email.
St Gingolph


Ron Smith's article in *Swiss Express* 121 resonated as my maternal grandfather was from Le Bouveret, and I have many cousins there. I think that the re-opening of the defunct railway to Evian is a bit more than 'talk', if the website is anything to be believed (www.thersudleman.com), and trains could be running within a decade if the financial case can be made. Detailed studies are currently underway funded by a group of cross-border local authorities. The proposal is to extend Geneva - Annemasse CEVA trains to the full length of the south side of Lake Geneva. The last use of this line was the 'Rive-Bleu Express' steam operation from Le Bouveret to Evian between 1986-98, which was packed on the day I used it. One last point is a correction of the town name – St Gingolph ends in "ph" not "f"!

Editor's Note. It is understood from our Swiss contacts that although some lakeside authorities may support proposals to reopen the line these views are not necessarily held at the higher (policy and funding) level in France – so don't hold your breath!

From: John Chandler - By Email
Swiss N-gauge Models

I have just re-read my December *Swiss Express* and noted the article on 'New Swiss Models' on P39 where the Basel model shop Bercher & Sternlicht is praised. I am disappointed at your remark that Swiss 'N' gauge has always been a bit of a challenge to acquire in the UK. I would like to mention that Gaugemaster at Ford, West Sussex, and for whom I work, are the UK importers of Piko, Marklin and Trix and we should be able to source one of the items mentioned from stock. Regrettably we cannot source Lilliput, however I do sympathise in some respects having been forced to purchase a Minitrix item through B&S myself!

Members' Advertisement

For Sale: Swiss HO collection for sale (Fulgurex, Metrop, Hag, etc). jfdeweyrocks@google.com. 

Photos from the AGM



ABOVE: Layout watching.

All Photos: Tony Bagwell



ABOVE: Right Priorities - coffee first then model buying.

BELOW: Discussing art!

