

Thoughts from the chair

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THOUGHTS FROM THE CHAIR - Paul Russenberger

Welcome to the first *Swiss Express* with colour in each issue.

This really is it! At the last Committee Meeting it was agreed that the Society was securely in a position to move to colour and to be able to do so at present without raising the subscription. Since the decision was taken to have colour in alternate issues, the Committee, usually through the Editor, has received a significant number of suggestions that we really should be brave and go for colour, raising the subscription if necessary. The Committee would have been reluctant to do that and it was also clear that there is a not insignificant proportion of the membership which would be hesitant to pay an increased subscription – that despite the fact there is no cheaper specialist society of our nature. (Having written that, I confidently expect the Editor to be inundated with letters listing a large number of cheaper ones, but at the moment I am unaware of them.) However, the Society's finances are sufficiently robust for an increase in the subscription to be relatively unlikely. (The Committee may rest assured that that is not a promise to keep to the present rate – I would emerge from the next meeting severely bruised if it were!) I hope you all enjoy it and now is the chance for your colour photographs to be seen in all their glory accompanying that article you were always going to write.

If you read the lists of the Officers at the front of *Swiss Express*, you may have noticed a change. At the Committee meeting in May, Roger Ellis was co-opted to the Committee in the role of Society Secretary. Additionally, although this probably only has a very marginal effect on the Membership and is rather more of an internal matter for the Committee, Geoff Thompson, who is formally an "ordinary member" of the Committee, is kindly acting as secretary to the Committee keeping the all-important record of the decisions taken. I am very grateful to both these gentlemen for kindly agreeing to take on these duties.

While winter does not bring an increase in the number of exhibitions to attend as they seem to go all the year round now, a vital part of the external image of the Society is the presence at exhibitions. The Exhibitions Officer, Paul Hannant, longs to hear from anyone who would like to help representing the Society by assisting on the stand at an exhibition. Having done it myself, I can assure you that it is good fun, time passes rather too quickly and with easy entry to that exhibition what more could you want? The other Paul will be delighted if you get in touch with him to discuss how you can help.

JUST A SEC - Roger Ellis

Members who attended the recent AGM in Derby will know that the position of Secretary remained vacant at that meeting. As a result, the Committee approached me and asked if I would be willing to undertake the post which I agreed to do. I will aspire to do the job as best I can for the Society and its members, but take this opportunity to thank Brian Hemming personally for the guidance and advice he has given me.

If any of the members wish to contact me then my address can be found in the usual place with my telephone number in the "Diary" section under Bristol & Bath Branch. I am a Train Manager with First Great Western so cannot guarantee to be there if you ring. As with some of our trains, "the times are subject to variation"!

At the recent Committee meeting the subject of archive material was raised, in that over the years, Editors of *Swiss Express* have accumulated a vast amount of information on Switzerland and its railways. This is in the form of articles from members, both published or retained for future use, photographs and literature containing Swiss related subjects. It would be useful if this material could be both indexed and catalogued so that members would be able to access it if required. For example it could be put onto a CD ROM. If any members have any thoughts or ideas as to how we could or should proceed, please let me know.