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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES - Paul Russenberger

So the evenings draw in and thoughts turn to glühwein beside a blazing log fire as the sun sets on the Matterhorn, while the Xrote snowploughs are got ready for an early morning journey to keep the Bergstrecke open and preparations are made for an isolation for Oberleitung maintenance...

Enough. Stop dreaming, get real. There are Chairman's Notes to be written, hopefully they will be read and there are some hard realities to be faced.

I wrote in my last notes that "A month seems to be a long time in the life of the Society." In the two months since I wrote them much has become evident about the production and future of "*Swiss Express*". It is clear that David Stevenson was spending an unreasonable amount of time producing each issue and this time was far greater than the Committee ever understood. It is very much to his credit and has resulted in a house journal with an enviable reputation. However, this has led the situation where an unjustifiable demand is being placed on anyone who is an unpaid Editor in full time employment.

Therefore, your Committee has decided that professional, paid input is required if the standard and frequency of "*Swiss Express*" is to be maintained. This decision is born with some reluctance out of necessity. The reluctance is increased by the

consequent need to increase the annual subscription for UK members to £13.50. All other subscription rates are to be increased by £2.50, the US dollar rate by \$5. The alternative would have been a drastic and immediate reduction in the quality of "*Swiss Express*" despite a massive input from the new team.

Even at £13.50, the subscription compares reasonably with similar societies. The rate has not altered for over 8 years. Membership is still good value – access to six active Branches and a growing library, bi-annual meets, occasional privileges such as the discount on Swiss Passes ordered in 2006, and up to date information on Swiss railways. It is worth considering how many model coaches, or family meals out, can be bought for £13.50.

On behalf of the Society, I would like to thank all those who have contributed to its running in any way over the past year. It is wonderful to witness the start of a new Branch and may it be the first of many more. Meanwhile, I would like to take this opportunity of wishing you all a wonderful Christmas and New Year season.

Lastly, while in Switzerland this year I discovered a new company – "Russenberger Transporte AG" of Schleithem. Unfortunately they deal in road haulage – *never mind!*

Treasurer's Notice

Unfortunately the Society's auditor has resigned. We therefore need an auditor, or independent examiner, for the accounts that will be produced for 2006 and subsequent years. If any member has the appropriate skills and is interested in

helping the Society would they please get in touch with Paul Russenberger our Chairman with details of their experience. His contact details will be found in this edition of "*Swiss Express*".

John Fisher