

Just a sec

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COVER PICTURE:

BFD 3 takes a well-earned drink on the public celebration day of the BC's 40th", 1 May 2008.

PHOTO: Michael Farr

EDITORIAL

Malcolm Bulpitt

This was scheduled to be a 'thin' magazine. However, following on from many of your comments at the AGM, the Management Committee has decided that we would try to maintain the run of 'thick' editions. Indeed, in order to allow us to devote as much space to articles as possible Ian Athey has chosen not to have a Chairman's item and I too will try to be brief.

We have a nice eclectic mix of articles in this edition including ships, trains, modelling, etc. It is always good for an editor to have a willing band of correspondents willing to write for their publication. In recent issues we have had lots of excellent items on local railways, as well as a big piece on the Gotthard Celebrations last year. However, the one area where we seem to be short of articles is on the day-to-day operations taking place on the unsung areas of the basic Swiss transport network.

Many of you will have been to Switzerland this summer and have watched the working, and photographed the trains, at various locations across the country. Why not tell us about them? We are not looking for a PhD thesis, or even an 'O' level essay, just your observations and images detailing aspects of how the railway worked at the places you visited. If you can put some flesh on the bones with some geographic or historic background, or details of the rolling stock, so much the better but it is not essential. Did you take an interesting Post Bus ride, study the trams and buses in a Swiss city; or ride an out-of-the-way funicular or cable car? Those experiences too will evoke images of Switzerland that your fellow members will appreciate. Look at the items in this magazine, or in previous ones. The authors are generally just society members like yourself who have sat down at a keyboard, or put pen to paper (we can put it into an electronic format), and relived their experiences for you to enjoy.

Having produced the magazine we would like to get it to you in one piece but we have become aware that the envelopes we have been using have sometimes not had the strength to carry their load to its destination. Some members have informed us of missing or damaged copies but some of you may be wondering where previous editions of your magazine have got to. If you think you did not see Swiss Express at the beginning of March or June please let us know.

JUST A SEC

David Stevenson

As I write this at the start of July the summer is in full swing, you know the score: rain, wind, flooding etc. Someone remarked to me that they didn't go to Switzerland in June any more as it was too hot. We went in June, hot it wasn't. I have a snap of Deb throwing a snow ball at me and this was just at the top of the Sunnbüel cable car in Kandersteg where they were experiencing one of the worst summers they have ever had. Frankly the weather was not good but despite this we had a great time with our friends - a really good time actually. It was the same when I went in May to the Gotthard with my eldest

daughter, some sunshine but quite a lot of cloud, rain and wind - in the Ticino, where I would normally have gone from Erstfeld to get some warmth, it was even worse. I don't have any great statement to make, or solution, or even comment, just stating facts.

I know quite a few members chose not to travel in June this year because of Euro2008. If you were one of these you missed the bargain of all bargains; SBB were offering half-fare cards for SFr39 which lasted for the whole of June and which also included Austria. This gave access to Tageskarte for the track bashers and also many special deals. We barely noticed the football other than the extra trains and a couple of bars in Bern and Interlaken that had turned Orange with the Dutch supporters. Other than the weather it was definitely the time to go and I would be surprised if the offer will ever be bettered.

Branches and Groups are a very important part of the SRS. Two new branches have recently been established in Birmingham and Yorkshire and a new one is in process of being formed in the Hampshire area. The West Midlands branch was originally formed with three of us, Gerry Savine, Geoff Turner and myself. Later on Bill Venton became the fourth member and gradually we have grown to encompass over 20. It doesn't happen overnight and each branch is different. The West Midlands has evolved into a very social group as wives, partners and children have joined in and we have just undertaken our first visit to Switzerland as a branch. Other groups have a more formal structure with guest speakers. The point is that members get more involved, friendships are formed and things develop organically. If you are thinking to yourself I would like to join a branch but there isn't one near me, then take the plunge and form one. Write to me and I'll get all the stuff you need and give you as much help as I can in getting the show on the road. Some branches such as the West Midlands and Birmingham have joint members, are both thriving and complement one another despite only being a few miles apart.

SRS has a very large membership and there are bound to be members near you and some who may be some distance away but who will be willing to come along and help make it a success. Give it a go, you won't regret it. Finally if you do live near a branch and haven't yet dropped in then please do, you will be made very welcome and who knows, within a short space of time you may be doing something similar to the West Midlands branch and heading off to Switzerland for the day.



Football fever at Wengen

PHOTO: Tony Bagwell

Before the start of Euro2008, Switzerland was football mad. The JB Group got into the spirit by re-painting some of their stock. One such unit waits at Wengen at lunchtime on May 23rd 2008. Sadly the football fever was not to last long - for the host team anyway!