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Hon. Treasurer:
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135, St. John's Road,
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Hon. Secretary:
MR. G.W. HUBBARD
43, Webheath,
Netherwood Street,
London NW6 2HD.
Tel. 01-328-5370

Pkt. Secretary:
MR. D.M. SLATE
149, Ware Road,
Hertford,
Herts. SG13 7EG.
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Hon. Editor:

MRS. E.J. RAWNSLEY, 3 Cranford Gardens, Victoria Drive, Bognor Regis, W.Sussex PO21 2EL

No. 1

JANUARY 1984

38TH YEAR

THE TRAVELLING POST OFFICE IN SWITZERLAND

By ADRIANO GERVASI - of the Philatelic Office of the PTT

Up to 1848 the management of the post was a matter for the twenty-two sovereign Cantons. With the passing of the Swiss Federal Constitution of 1848 the Federation, i.e. the Central Government, took over the management of the post in 1849, this duty being expressed in the present Federal Constitution under Article 36.

In 1848 the operation of the post was undertaken by (horse-drawn) post coaches, but with the invention of the railway and due to the positive experiences abroad, the Swiss Federal Government decided that the railways should carry the mail and it had special postal vans built, in which the mail could be checked and sorted during the journey from one area to another.

The first postal vans were introduced on the 12th of October 1857 on the route Zürich-Brugg. The vans were very simple compared with those in use nowadays.

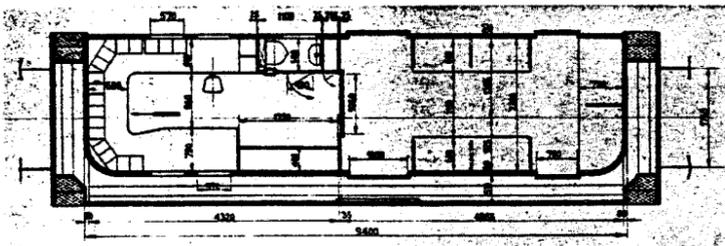
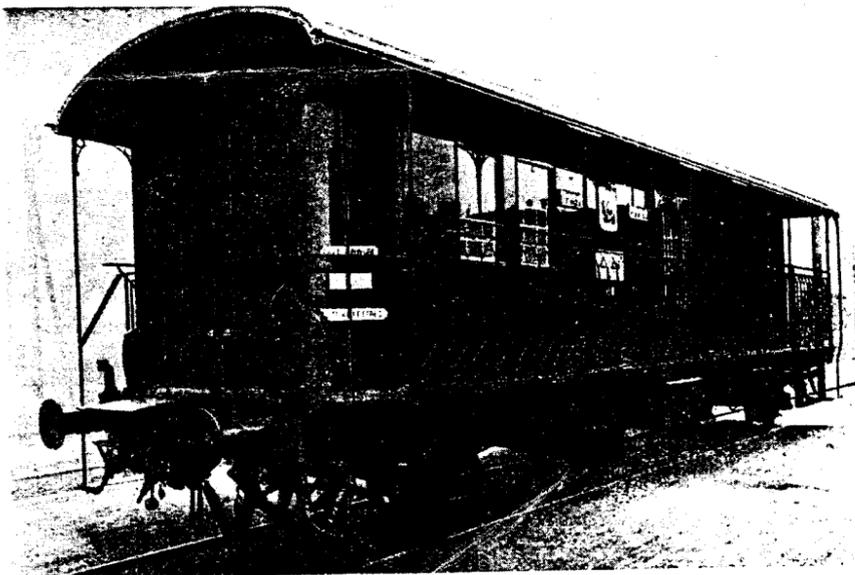


Fig. 1

Ground plan of an early postal van of the type shown.

In wintertime there was no heating and it was only in 1862 that the first iron stoves were put into the vans.

Illumination also was very poor. Up to 1868 candles were in use, later petrol lamps and gas lamps in 1875. Sixteen years later, in 1891 the first



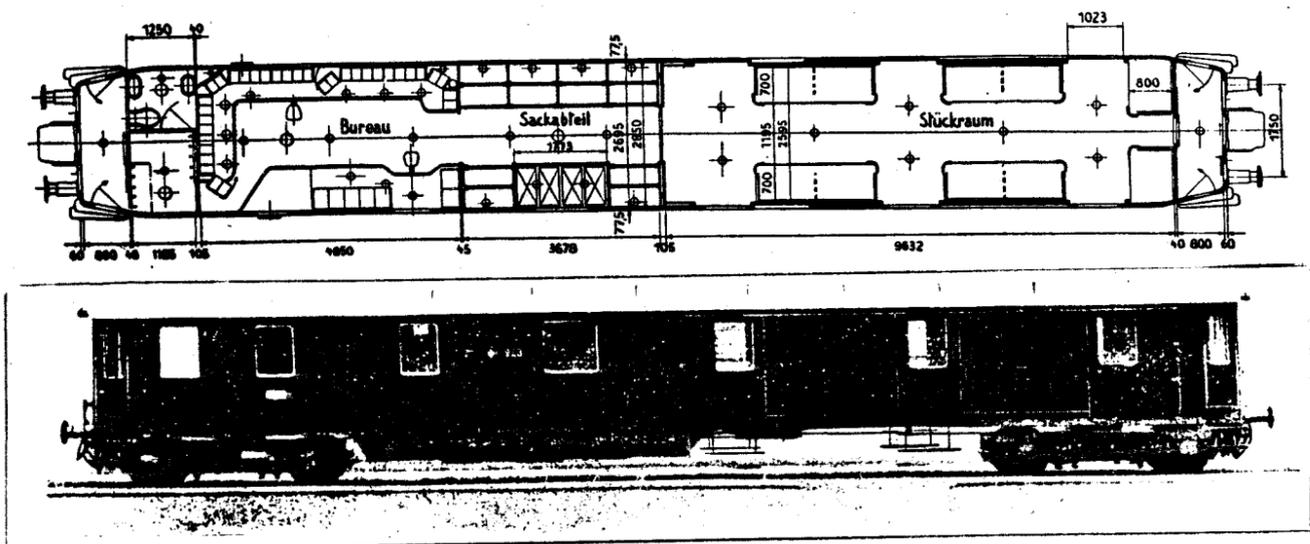
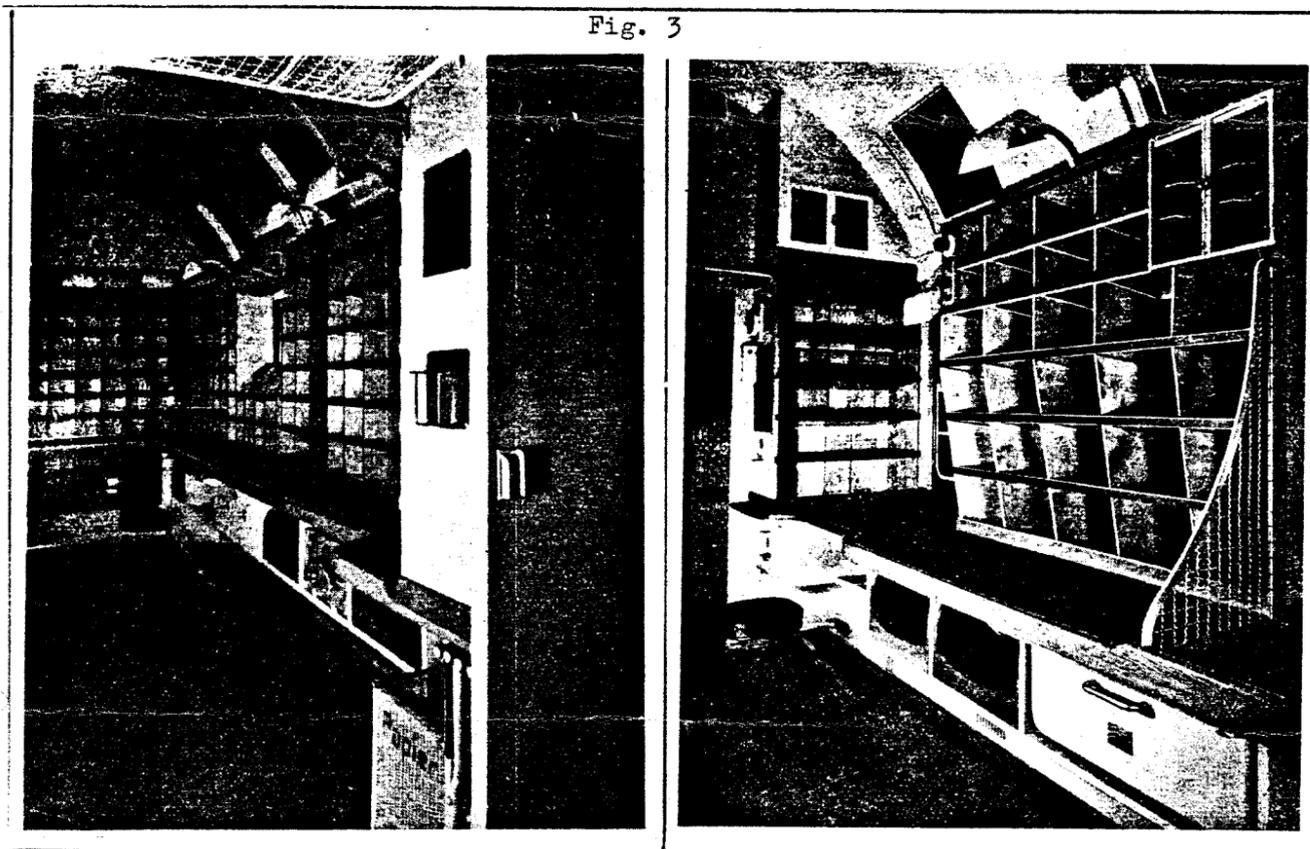


Fig. 2 Ground plan and view of a modern postal van

electrical illumination was installed. During the period of use of candles and petrol lamps the vans were constantly in danger of fire and small fires often occurred.

The first postal vans were equipped with inkpots (which were often frozen in winter-time), containers of dry pens, seal pots, letter balances and other devices used for the then very heavy tariffs. The railway law of 1852 obliged the railways to transport the complete letter post, and parcels up to 5 kilos, for which the Post Office had a monopoly, and the travelling staff, free of charge. For non-monopoly deliveries of parcels weighing more than 5 kilos, the postal authorities defrayed compensation to the railways. The compensation covered costs for the maintenance of the postal vans.



3a. Frame for letter sorting

3b. Desk & frame for registered mail

The purpose of the T.P.O. and the use of postmarks (cancellations)

The travelling post office accepts deliveries of mail until shortly before departure of the train. During the journey the mail is sorted which significantly accelerates the time of delivery. For this purpose each postal van is equipped with its own letter-box and its own postmarks which signify the stretch of line being served.

(To be continued)

FIRST NEW STAMPS OF 1984 TO BE ISSUED ON 21 FEBRUARY

A. DEFINITIVES. The series of 'Signs of the Zodiac', which began in 1982 will be continued with the release of two further values: Fr.4.- (Sagittarius) and Fr.4.50 (Capricorn). The Lion and Scorpio signs will be held in abeyance and will probably appear with lower face values in the following year in accordance with the seasonal sequence of the signs as a whole.

Fr.4.- SAGITTARIUS looks ready to defend the cantonal landscape of Canton Glarus, represented here by a scene near Niederurnen, with Vorderglärnisch, Wiggis and Rautispitz, at the same time reminding us that the hunting season has started.



Fr.4.50.- CAPRICORN shows a view of Scuol/Schuls in Lower Engadine with its unmistakable Engadine type houses, has been chosen to represent Capricorn - whose relative, the ibex, is the heraldic animal of Canton Graubünden - and the backdrop of mountains rounds off the picture, forming a harmonious whole.

Values: Fr.4.- Sagittarius - the Archer & Glarus landscape
Fr.4.50 Capricorn - the Goat & view of Scuol/Schuls

Designers: Eugen & Max Lenz, Zürich

Engraver: Karl Bickel, Walenstadt

Printing: Rotary line engraving by PTT Printing Works, Bern

Paper: White with luminous substance, without coloured fibres

Size: 24 x 29 mm. in 4 sheets (1-4) of 50 stamps each.

**B. PUBLICITY STAMPS - Series I.**

25 c. NATIONAL STAMP EXHIBITION in ZÜRICH. After a six year break, the Federation of Swiss Philatelic Societies is again organising a national stamp exhibition, the 'NABA ZÜRICH 84', to be held from 22 June to 1 July. The special stamp shows a pre-stamp cover sent from Zürich to Paris, which received the Zürich large double circle and black 'P.P.' cancellations on 3 January 1839 as required by the Postal Agreement of 21 November 1828, effective as from 1 April 1829. The cover also carries the French frontier transit stamp, 'Suisse par Belfort' and '7/AED' (7 = Huningue / affranchi à l'Etranger jusqu'à destination', signifying that postage had also been paid for the section from the Huningue frontier office to destination.

50 c. 1100TH ANNIVERSARY OF SAINT-IMIER. The town of Saint-Imier in the watch and clockmaking Jura country was named after Imier, who had an oratory in honour of St. Martin erected there in the 7th century. This gave way to a chapel in the year 992 and to a church in 1146. In the archives of the Diocese of Lausanne, to which Saint-Imier then belonged, two churches are first mentioned in 1228: the parish church and the imposing collegiate church. The latter, whose nave was destroyed in 1828, was a place of pilgrimage until the Reformation. The bell tower - also known as 'Tour Saint Martin' (St. Martin's Tower), 'Tour de la Reine Berthe' (Queen Bertha's Tower) or simply 'Vielle Tour' (Old Tower) survived and was last restored between 1969 and 1971; its clock face, decorated with a 17th cent. fresco, is visible from afar. Inscribed beneath it, in French, is the quotation from the Bible: 'Watch therefore for ye know not at what hour your Lord doth come'. Using the clock face as the main feature and prominent buildings of the town as a background, the stamp design pays tribute not only to the 1100 years of the old town of Saint-Imier, but also to the entire watch and clockmaking region.

80 c. INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE (IOC). In July 1981 the Swiss Government officially granted the status of an international non-governmental sports organisation to the international Olympic Committee (IOC), which was formed in 1894 and has been based in Lausanne for more than 60 years. Thanks to the joint efforts of the IOC the city of Lausanne, Canton Vaud and the Swiss Government, the 85th Congress in 1982 took the historic decision to keep the headquarters permanently in Lausanne - where they have been located

since 1915 - and to erect an Olympic Study Centre there. The new building, which is to be constructed during the present decade, will be at once the administrative headquarters of the IOC, an Olympic Museum and an Olympic Research Centre. The stamp features the emblem created in 1913/14, with its five coloured rings symbolising the five continents, above a view of Lausanne.

Values & Designers: 25c. Pre-stamp cover - Hans Jörg Bolzhauser, Basle
50c. Clock-face and old town - Michel Dayer, Ravoire
80c. Olympic rings and view of Lausanne - Laurent Pizzotti,
Lausanne

Printing: Rotogravure by Courvoisier S.A., La Chaux-de-Fonds

Paper: White with luminous substance

Size: 36 x 26 mm. in 2 sheets of 50 stamps

Commemorative covers will be available for each issue, one for each stamp and one for the set. Folders and collection sheets also available. The same simple First Day cancel will be used for both issues.

On the same day, 21st February, a new offset-printed 50c. inland postcard, designed by Heinz Bürgin of Basle, will also be issued, featuring a fragment from the graffiti adorning the celebrated 16th century 'Pedrun House' in Andeer (Ct. Graubünden).

LONDON GROUP MEETINGS - DECEMBER & JANUARY

In December a larger attendance than expected just prior to Christmas, witnessed a display by the Secretary, Mr. G.W. Hubbard, of 'POSTAGE DUES'. He was quick to point out that it was a working collection and there could be some duplication. It was intended to show the exhibit in two sections, but due to the sheer volume it became necessary to make three sections - and part of the Chairman's table as well!

Part 1 of the display covered the issues from 1878 to 1938. All shades were represented, as well as normal and inverted frames. There were even a few Type 1 frames from the green issues in singles, blocks, mint and used. The entire section was enhanced by covers and postcards which enabled the postal historian to sort out the rates of postage and postal rates at the time.

In Part 2 the subject of 'T' dues was shown, both the large open type and the 'T' in circle. The earliest 'T' strike was on a cover of 1876 to London. It was pointed out that early 'T' strikes were really intended for Telegraph use. From the 30 or so 'T' strikes (large type) known to exist, a good two-thirds were seen. The 'T' in circle, which began life in 1911, was also well represented, with many different types. Finally the non-PTT cancellations were shown, including the famous 'Flying T'. Mr. Hubbard ended his display with a machine 'T' cancel - no doubt the shape of things to come. A most informative display.

The subject for the January meeting was 'POSTAL HISTORY'.

Mrs. E.J. Rawnsley opened the displays with a little of her extensive collection. Route marks and French transit marks were shown, also an early registration mark and finally a rare 'En Numéraire' strike.

Mr. I. Tillen followed with covers, mainly from the Italian speaking part of the country. The earliest, dated 1791, was most interesting. Ticino 'Ovals' were also shown.

Mr. L.E. Stiles produced a miscellany of covers. Early Swiss spellings held a lot of interest. Value marks, Straight-line strikes with and without date, Route marks, Late postage and Ticino ovals all made an exciting exhibit.

Finally Mrs. M.O. Bidmead showed some of her favourite Route markings, followed by mail both to and from Switzerland. A cover dated 1807 to Paris showing French markings clarified a lot of queries. The interesting strikes from the Thurn & Taxis post were most revealing. It was stressed that confusion could arise between the Swiss Kreuzer and the German Kreuzer. A really comprehensive collection of excellent material.

Mr. J. Keller of the Swiss Embassy proposed the vote of thanks and congratulated the exhibitors on their research and patience in translating the hieroglyphics of 18th and 19th century markings. He suggested that their ability was due to the fact that they came from the "land of Sherlock Holmes".

G.W.H.

SWISS FEDERAL RAILWAYS POSTCARDS

1954-1972

Advising the arrival of goods transported within Switzerland

By B. L. Hoddinott

Part II

In 1967 the postage rate was raised from 10c to 20c and the cards were up-rated by the addition of a franking machine cancel of 10c in red on the August 1963 series (Fig. 3). This franking was carried out by the PTT. (Fig. 3)

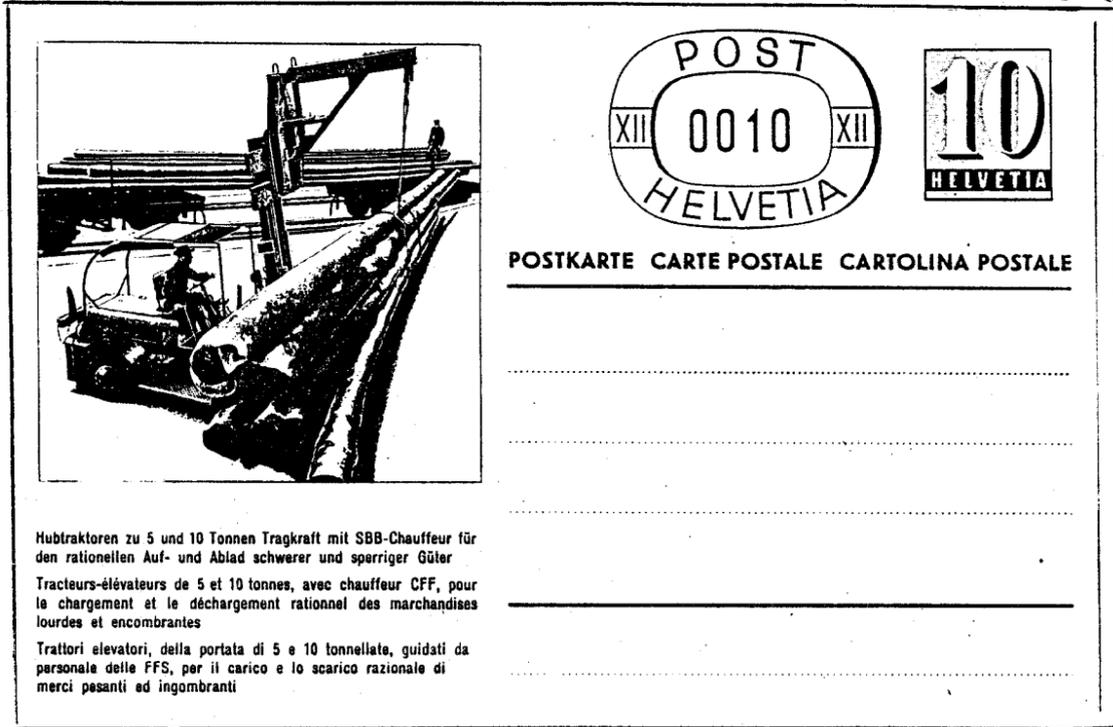


Fig. 3

On 1st January 1968 a new value card of 20c in green was issued but this series consisted of only 10 different pictorial cards instead of the usual 12 cards. They were of the same type as Fig. 1, with the text printed in green, and in addition they were also issued from April 1968 until December 1969 with details of the counter hours and the name of the issuing Station.

On 1st January 1970 an agreement was reached between the Railway and the PTT whereby the cards should be treated as 'bulk flat postage rate'. Also from this date the stamp ceased to have a prepaid value. However, the 20c cards still in stock continued to be used without any obliteration of the stamp. As an interim measure a label signifying bulk postage rate was affixed to these cards although I have only those issued from Luzern Station. Whether they were also used by the other main stations I do not know.

At this time a further 20c card was issued with the imprint 'V 70'. Although the front remained the same as for the previous issue the printing on the reverse side was now in black instead of green, and the advice text in the three languages was now headed 'Advice of Parcel Goods'. Imprints of these cards go up to August 1972 and despite the fact that they had ceased to have a prepaid value I have in my possession cards which have passed through the post individually as late as November 1972.

The cards that were issued in August 1972 still had the 20c imprinted stamp, even though the bulk postage rate was officially in force. These cards now had the 20c stamp obliterated in black and a boxed 'flat postage rate' also in black, applied between the illustration and the stamp (see Fig. 4). I do not think that these cards remained in circulation for very long as the print order was for 15,000 only, and I have not seen any cards with an imprint later than 'VIII 72'.

In addition, these cards were overprinted in red with 'Dienstavis' (see Fig. 5). They were used for internal purposes within the Station and also to departments outside the Station area in order to advise the arrival of railway material etc. For example, the Goods Administration Office at Luzern Station would inform their office in Güterstrasse Luzern of the arrival of material,

machines, uniforms etc. Although these cards had been overprinted for the bulk postage rate some were individually posted as I possess cards that bear the Luzern Head Post Office cancellation with machine slogan (see Fig. 3).

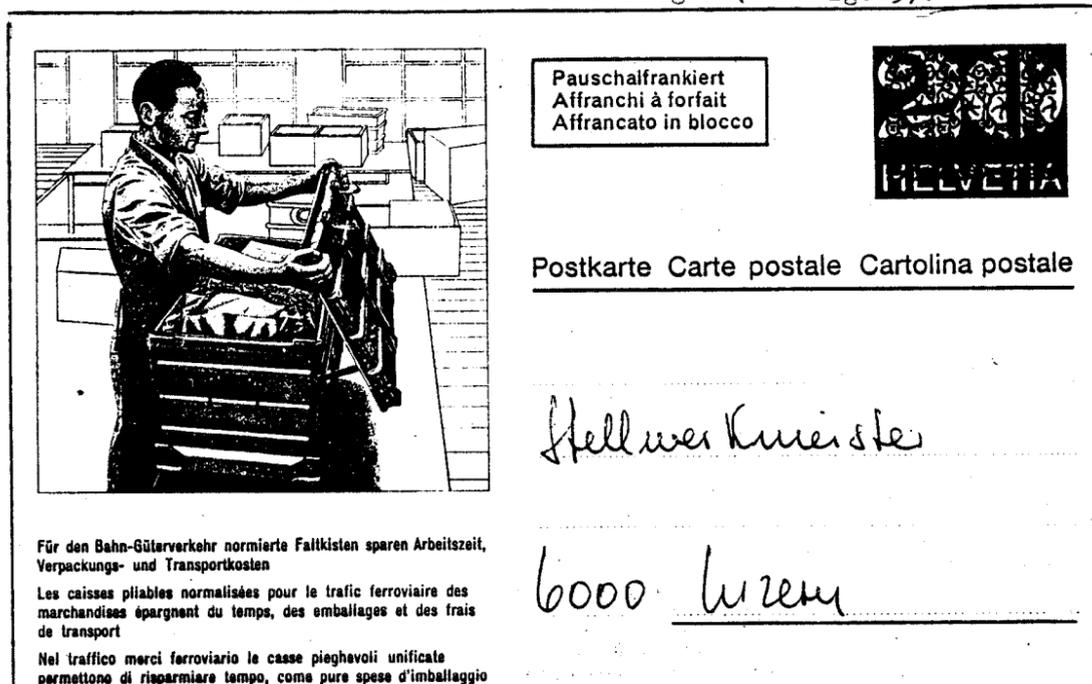
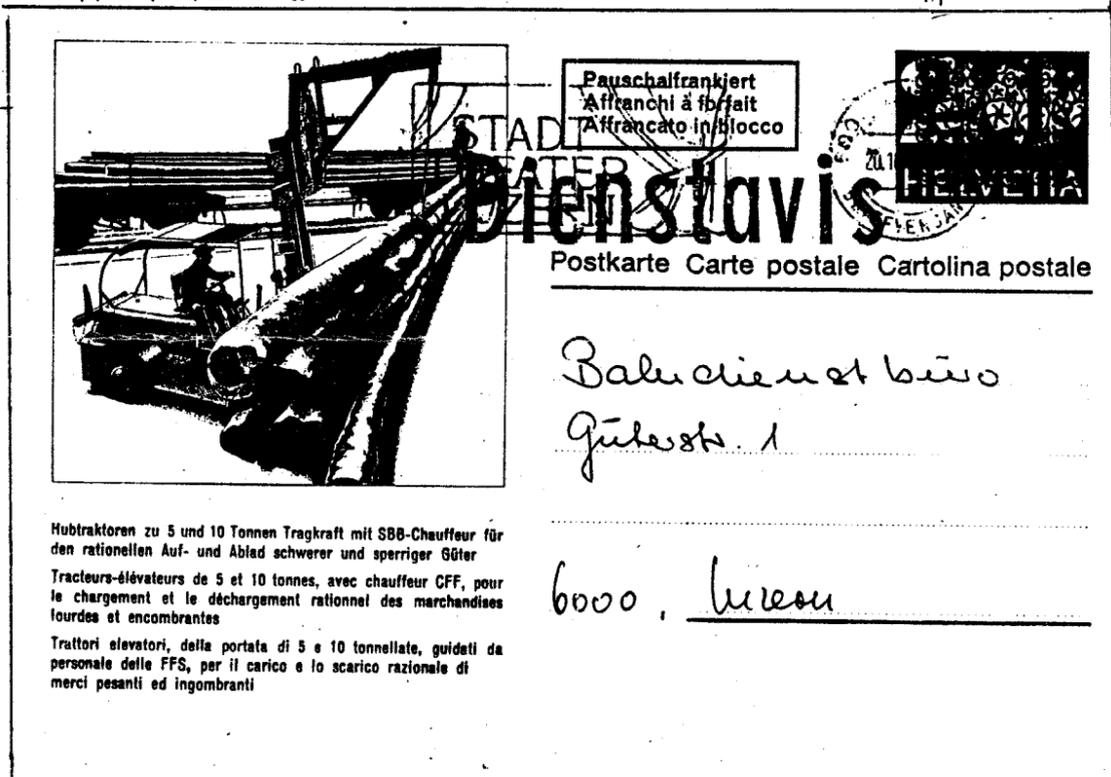


Fig. 4

Fig. 5



The latest dated card in my possession was issued by Luzern Station on 22nd Sept. 1976 and has the imprint 'Vill 72', I have not seen any card with a later imprint than this so presumably the cards continued to be used until stocks were depleted. Possibly after this time a different type of 'Form' was used to advise recipients of the arrival of their goods. I use the word 'Form' as officially after 1st January 1970 the 'cards' were no longer classified as Postal items but as 'Forms'.

The 1975 edition of the Postal Stationery Catalogue does not give much information concerning these cards, and it is to be hoped that when the new edition is published more details will be available.

When I first started planning this article I did not think that there would be a lot to write about but this has not proved to be so. Although I have written in mainly general terms, I have at times gone into greater detail for clarification. Even so there are many details which I have not touched upon, such as the counter hours being altered in ink by Luzern or the fact that Biel/Bienne had two offices which issued these cards.

Although those described in this article were issued by the Swiss Federal Railways, the pre-'nationalised' railways such as the Swiss Central Railway and the

AN URGENT MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

Once again I wish to remind members that NO REFERENCE TO THE SOCIETY should be made on any correspondence to Officers of the Society. The name and address are all that is necessary. Please note this for the future.

L. E. STILES

"INTRODUCING THEMATIC COLLECTING"

You may already have seen this most excellent booklet, written by our President, Mrs. A. Lee. You may not, however, be aware that this may be obtained free from Mr. E. Halliday, The National Philatelic Society, 27 King Street, London WC2E 8JD, on receipt of a stamped (23p) addressed envelope at least 240 mm. x 164 mm.

RAILWAY POSTCARDS (Cont.)

and the Swiss North-East Railway also issued cards of a similar format. In addition these advice cards were also issued by the private railways. I know that the Rhätische Bahn issued them and I have in my possession cards from the Gotthard Bahn, B.L.S. Group, Chemin-de-fer Jura-Simplon, Mittelthurgaubahn and the Kriens-Luzern Bahn.

I would be interested to hear from any member who possesses these types of cards from any of the other private railways.

--- FIN ---

A VERY BIG 'THANK YOU'

The Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Editor wish to thank everyone who sent letters, cards and good wishes at Christmas - too many for individual reply, but much appreciated and guaranteed to keep us all on our toes.

R. F. BULSTRODE
L. E. STILES

G.W. HUBBARD
E.J. RAWNSLEY

FEBRUARY MEETINGS

N. GROUP - Sat. 4 Feb. MEMBERS'

COMPETITION

LONDON - Wed. 8 Feb. 'CUSTOMS' -
All Members

DID YOU KNOW? (Continued)

.... that the answer to Question No. 135 is that this 25c. stamp first appeared in 1907.

.... that Question No. 136 is the result of my suddenly noticing that generally the PP stamps have a horizontal shape, but that the PJ stamps are almost all of vertical shape. The Question is: how many PJ stamps are wider than high? Try a guess before checking in the catalogue.

M. RUTHERFOORD

DID YOU KNOW ?

.... that the PTT have just announced that in view of the new postage rates on 1st March a new Fr.5.- booklet will be issued on 1st Feb., with a yellow cover containing (Folklore) 4x5c, 4x10c, 4x35c and 6x50. These 5 panes will be glued, not stapled, and will not have interleaves, because of the thickness limit. The panes will be cut from sheets (which as before will not be sold) and the gum is now matt.

..... that with about a year's delay I can announce that the PTT have changed their logo, as shown (with slogan example of old type), which is now appearing on all printed matter. The horizontal lines suggest, heraldically, blue, but coloured examples show the old red.



IHR PARTNER
TAG FÜR TAG



Old type

New type

.... that in the PTT Museum they are showing some of their new acquisitions, until 29 Jan. Two important gifts will interest specialists, from W. Liniger his postmarks of Geneva, from 1458 to 1851, and from E. Bosshard, the posts of Appenzell. In addition one of the largest existing collections of Hotel Post items.

.... that this year in Zürich there will be, on Sunday 24th June (opening of the 'NABA', a 2 km long postal-philatelic procession through the city. A unique event, and well worth seeing.

.... that 400 collections have been accepted for the 'NABA', all getting the number of frames requested.

.... that in 1983 there were 10 more special cancels than in 1982, i.e. 75, made up as follows: 21 special PO, 23 special PO in an MPO, 20 PO with cachet, 2 temp. PO (Geneva) with cachet and 9 FD cancels.

.... that the number of pictorial 'K' cancels has, thank heaven, dropped from 59 in 1982 to 41 in 1983. According to a PTT 'leak' this should drop further in '84.

.... that an Austrian stamp shows a Nobel prize holder, physicist W. Pauli who became Swiss in 1948, following a long stay in the USA. So 3 countries can claim him.

.... that the UPU in Bern will not distribute 'Frama' labels to all member countries, as they do not call them stamps. Considering the daily output of 'junk' stamps which are, apparently, acceptable, one wonders how they judge these bits of paper. The whole idea of sending everyone's stamps to all members is rather out of date.

(Cont. in Col. 1)

N. Group: Hon.Sec. MR. R. A. HOYLE,
8, Rhodesia Ave, Stafford Rd, HALIFAX,
Yorks HX3 OPB.

At the December meeting of the Northern Group in Leeds the display was given by Mrs. V. Davis from Hull who chose the title of 'Cinderellas'.

She began by explaining that she loosely described this term as meaning an uncatalogued collection or a selection of bits and pieces many of which would not, at one time, have been collected.

Her most informative talk and well presented display covered such topics as post paid handstamps and meter marks, stamps from automatic machines, trial prints, postage due covers, covers showing hotel post centenary labels, privately printed air letter sheets, money order and various other postal forms, customs cancels, labels, postal stationery items and cards depicting Swiss lake steamers.

At the N. Group meeting in January Mr. Gilchrist displayed a superb collection of the stamps of the Geneva International Offices.

The display began with postcards depicting the U.N. & I.L.O. building in Geneva and a selection of covers with various office cancels, followed by the Education Bureau forerunner miniature sheets with examples of stamps on cover. Then came sets of the 'Official' stamps beginning with the 'Industrielle Kriegswirtschaft' overprints of 1918 and the perforated cross and overprinted cross issues in complete sets.

Finally Mr. Gilchrist showed the various International Office overprints in complete sets and concluded with the new designs of 1956 onwards.

G.W.H.

You may have missed your chance to enter for 'Stampex', but never mind, you have time to try for the Autumn Exhibition.

So look through your collection to see what is missing, or how some sections could be improved ... and let me know.

I will be pleased to receive your Wants Lists or requests for material on Approval for

Stamps, mint or used; Covers - First Day or commemorative; Airmail stamps and covers; Tete-beche & se-tenant, Postal History cards and covers; Route marks; T.P.O.s etc.

J.S.ARMSTRONG

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NEWS LETTER



Founder: E. H. SPIRO

President: MRS. A. LEE, F.R.P.S.L.

Hon. Treasurer:
MR. L.E. STILES
135, St. John's Road,
Walthamstow,
London E17 4JH.

Hon. Secretary:
MR. G.W. HUBBARD
43, Webheath,
Netherwood Street,
London NW6 2HD.
Tel. 01-328-5370

Pkt. Secretary:
MR. D.M. SLATE
149, Ware Road,
Hertford,
Herts. SG13 7EG.
Tel. Hertford 57784

Hon. Editor:

MRS. E.J. RAWNSLEY, 3 Cranford Gardens, Victoria Drive, Bognor Regis, W.Sussex PO21 2EL

No. 2

F E B R U A R Y 1 9 8 4

38TH YEAR

NEW DEVELOPMENT IN 'PP' HAND-STAMPS

By M. Rutherford

I have heard from my usually well-informed source that the PTT is dropping the old octagonal 'PP' mark, after 72 years of use (see Fig. 1), as used by the smallest Swiss post offices for bulk payments, i.e. 50 or more items paid in cash at the counter.

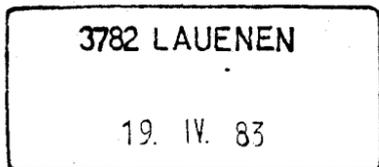


Fig. 1



Fig. 2

When this scheme started in 1911 it was for a minimum of 200 items, 'PP' denoting 'Port paye' (postage paid).

Perhaps this change of policy was triggered off by the totally strange encircled 'PP' used in Vättis on the occasion of the First Day of their new publicity cds (see Fig. 2), also a rarity combination. The '7' of the PLZ denotes Chur and Graubünden, but this valley is actually in Canton

St.Gallen. but postally served from Chur since 1849. Next to the village arms is shown a reminder that nearby was found a large cave, used by bears and bear-hunting stone-age man.

These separately applied octagons will be superseded by an existing device which screws into the ordinary date stamp to give a combined impression (see Fig. 3), which was actually the last day of use of this type - used quite extensively - at that post office. The next day they started to use their new universal type handstamp (see Fig. 4).



P.P.



Still larger offices have a cancelling machine with 'PP' die, making the above superfluous, except for occasional small orders. Large firms have the 'PP' printed onto their own covers and don't need the date.

All these impressions are in black, even though, strictly speaking, they should, according to the UPU rules, be in red denoting pre-payment. Only the U.K. I think, does its machine bulk payment cancellations, correctly, in red.

**SUPER
STAMPEX
1984
MARCH 6—11**

BRITAINS NATIONAL STAMP EXHIBITION
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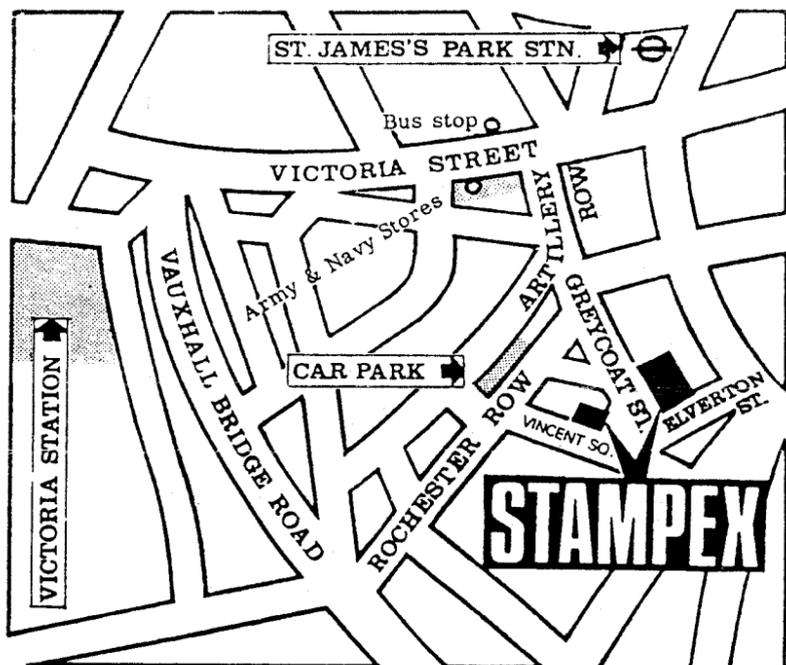
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THE TRAVELLING POST OFFICE IN SWITZERLAND

By ADRIANO GERVASI - of the Philatelic Office of the PTT Part II

The purpose of the T.P.O. and the use of postmarks (cancellations) - Cont.

A work for collectors of T.P.O. postmarks has been published in Bern under the title: "The Swiss Travelling Post Office Cancellations according to district, from the beginning to date" - Author: Dr. A. Müller 1977 (in German).

The Swiss post has its own maxim: Mailing of the post to-day, delivery tomorrow. Deliveries which are particularly urgent, such as press reports, livestock etc., can be collected immediately on arrival of the specific train, a system which guarantees the greatest rapidity of delivery.



3c. Parcels compartment



3d. Mail-bag compartment

Practical work on the T.P.O.

Shortly before the departure of a train having a post van, the post office at the railway station delivers the bags filled with mail, as well as large and small parcels. Many of the bags can be transported without being opened, they are labelled according to destination and only need to be conveyed. One spare bag contains unsorted mail which arrived last. First of all the staff of the travelling post office separates this particular mail which could contain items destined for the next station. The staff has to work at considerable speed, particularly on short stretches. Often the mail is discharged without calling at the station, the bag being thrown out and collected by a post official awaiting the 'airmail'.

In order to sort letters, parcels and other items the postal sorter has to distribute the mail into a frame according to villages. (See Fig. 4 overleaf) In order to do so the sorter has to know the names of all the villages by heart, and is aided by the distribution schedule which he has to memorise. Most T.P.O. travel early in the morning or at night.

Qualities of the T.P.O. staff

The travelling postal sorter is acquainted with a thorough knowledge of the geography of the country; he knows every post office and a good number of the villages of Switzerland and of the surrounding country by heart, which in turn enables him to avoid faulty deliveries.

The post of Switzerland delivers mail in all directions. Airmail and urgent deliveries have to be distributed correctly and without delay. The T.P.O. is equipped with dictionaries, which are hardly ever used, due to the intensive training by the Post Office.