

HELVETIA PHILATELIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Founded in 1946 by Edward H Spiro

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GOOD TO KNOW ! BY WERNER GATTIKER

The Toned Papers of the 1938/54 High Values



The 3 f., 5 f. and 10 f. values first issued in 1938 were printed on three distinctive papers, and it may be useful to expand a little on the all-too-brief catalogue notes.

The original 1938 printings (Zumstein 216v-218v – S.G. 388A-390A) were made onto a buff security granite paper with black and red fibres, sensitive to light and water. In its original form the buff granite paper was covered with a security-coating which turned the surface of the buff paper into a greenish-grey to bluish-grey colour as soon as the stamps were subjected to light. This coating is water-soluble, so that used stamps which have been soaked for longer than a few moments in water start to lose the toning. If soaked for a long time, the bluish-grey or greenish-grey disappears almost completely, leaving just a dullness behind. Such heavily washed stamps are recognizable by the postmark-dates which would be in the period 1938-1942, but they are worth much less than stamps with the blue/green/greyish toning intact.

The next printings were made on a similar buff granite paper, again with black and red fibres, but without the light-sensitive surface coating so that they remained buff even in daylight. While this printing was not released for use as definitives until May 1942 (Zumstein 216w-218w – S.G. 388B-390B), part of it was overprinted for use by the League of Nations and the International Labour Office and put on sale as early as June 1939 (Zumstein DIII 65-67, D IV 57-59 – S.G. LN64-66, LB56-58).

The final change came in 1954 when a slightly thinner white granite paper (with blue and red fibres) was introduced (Zumstein 216x-218x – S.G. 388C-390C). This paper was toned buff on the surface so that it looked almost identical to the previous printings, only the white back and the blue instead of black granite-fibres allow you to tell the difference.

The pioneer of Swiss Philately in the UK, Heinz Katcher, also used to list intermediate 1954/57 printings on buff paper with red, black and blue fibres or red and blue fibres only, but they have never been recognized by Zumstein, and there remains some doubt over these.

THE SOCIETY'S ANNUAL NATIONAL MEETING 2013

The Society's Annual National Meeting and AGM next year will be in Worcester on 15th/16th April (Monday and Tuesday). Worcester is close to the M5 motorway and has good rail connections with most parts of the country. The hotel is centrally situated close to the railway station. Full details and booking forms will be included with the December newsletter. (Norton Wragg, Treasurer)

A POSTAL HISTORY OF THE DISINFECTION OF MAIL

V. DENIS VANDERVELDE

The Society is delighted to announce that next summer's meeting of the Southern Group, on Saturday 8th June, will include a display entitled "Public Health Documentation and Disinfected Mail". The speaker, V. Denis Vandervelde, may already be known to some members, as he is often invited to give talks at local societies. To provide an insight into this fascinating and little known subject Denis has written an overview which, with his permission, is reproduced below :

Unlike disaster mail resulting from the sinking of ships or the crash of an aircraft, the disinfection of mail was not an occasional happening. It was rather the 'logical' outcome of a near-universal belief that infectious diseases could be brought into a healthy country by susceptible goods, including paper.

This belief, still held by many countries until late in the 19th century, was unfounded, in so far as none of the diseases against which disinfection had been practised – plague, yellow fever, typhus fever, cholera and leprosy included – could be transmitted on dry paper. But this was not established scientifically until modern times: in the 1880s in the case of cholera, and the first decade of the 20th century for yellow fever. Ironically, smallpox, a disease against which disinfection was hardly ever employed, can be so conveyed; and the virus can be very easily destroyed by heat, even a hot iron.

The Republics of Venice and Ragusa (Dubrovnik) enforced quarantine from the 1370s. Out of this grew a complex of health passports, ships' bills of health, quarantine guards and lazarettos. The same States introduced the 'perfuming' of mail from the Levant with sweet-smelling herbs and flowers a half-century later: a treatment which left no discernible traces. With the advent of the terrible plagues of the mid-17th century, most Mediterranean ports smoked or scorched mail from suspect vessels, sometimes after dousing it with vinegar. Wafers or seals, legitimising the opening of covers to treat the contents, are seldom seen before the 1720s. The earliest cachets to certify treatment appeared in the 1780s. These measures were mainly directed at plague, though England and France also quarantined ships against yellow fever.

Europe (with the exception of Russia and the Balkans) was generally spared plague after the end of the 18th century, though there were isolated outbreaks in Malta, the Ionian Islands and at Noja, near Bari in Italy; but yellow fever, which had occasioned disinfection of mail from the Caribbean in particular, visited ports in Italy in 1801, and several Mediterranean ports in 1805. This resulted in a short-lived resurgence of the treatment of mail, even in Northern European countries.

After a period of relatively few scares, in 1831 the western world faced a new threat: cholera, which had escaped from India, (its reservoir even now, as it was then). It came to Europe via Persia and Russia in the contamination of water sources. In the ensuing panic, even countries like Germany, which had been sceptical of the virtues of treatment of mail, rushed into action. The old Cordon Sanitaire against plague was resurrected by Austria and mail was treated in virtually every country in the known world. 1831 and the next few years saw an extraordinary proliferation in the use of cachets certifying disinfection: though countries such as Britain, Spain, Portugal, the USA, and initially France, saw no need to identify treated letters.

By the mid-1840s, disinfection had mostly been discontinued, except in Russia belatedly against cholera, in the Balkans against plague, and in Malta and a couple of alarmist Italian ports when cholera threatened...

An epidemic of cholera in Egypt in 1883-4 resulted in a brief renewal of measures especially in Italy, but most countries had anticipated the verdict of the 1893 International Sanitary Congress, that 'letters, news-papers and books should be free of all restrictions' – but only against cholera. The Americans still disinfected mail against yellow fever and bubonic plague on isolated occasions, most notably in Hawaii, and the Russians redoubled efforts against Persia and the Far East in the 1890s where plague raged, until 1911 and occasionally later. Austrian Poland treated selected mail from the east in 1879 and 1892.

In the 20th century, mail was very sensibly treated to prevent transmission of smallpox until its final eradication in the 1970s, most notably in Austrian military hospitals during WWI: but it was also used in American T.B. Sanatoria ; in leper colonies ; and even against foot-and-mouth disease in Canton Bern in

the 1920s. Australia treated letters from quarantined persons up to 1935.

The anthrax scare in the U.S.A., after the terrorist outrages of September 2001 resulted in measures to irradiate mail there, which continued for a few years with cachets and labels; and some rather half-hearted 'inspection' in Europe and Australia. This has resulted in 21st century examples of collectable items - a hitherto unimaginable development.

(Members will be interested to know that an article by Reinhard Stutz (translated by Robert Wightman) on 'Disinfected Mail During the Hoof and Mouth Disease Epidemic' in Switzerland has been reprinted in parts in the November 2011, January 2012 and September 2012 editions of the AHPS's journal 'Tell'.)

'POST D-DAY SWISS MAIL TO/FROM GREAT BRITAIN AND THE AMERICAS' by CHARLES J. La BLONDE CPhH, FRPSL. LAYOUT AND GRAPHIC DESIGN by RICHARD T. HALL
- A REVIEW BY DERRICK SLATE

Another fascinating book from Charles J. La Blonde describing the effects of the Allied invasion on the Swiss postal systems in 1944/45. In one of his previous books (published in 2003) he describes 1944 in 27 pages. This new book consists of 134 pages, describing how to read/interpret covers from the second half of 1944. It includes a complete postal history timeline for the year and research based on archival data from Switzerland, Great Britain, Canada and USA. All covers are fully analysed as to rates, routes and markings. There are over 180 illustrations in full colour. Another real "gem" from Charles.

During this period the events of the War were constantly outpacing the printed word - not just the Swiss PTT, but all the various postal administrations involved. There are four pages of "Timeline of Key Events". These are really interesting...listing all the important events, (up to June 1945). For example: 25th August: Swiss air mail will henceforth be sent by rail to Berlin...., 12th November: 120 bags of mail to Switzerland, accumulated at Liverpool, sent to Southampton for ferry to France...., 24th November: All mail via France to Switzerland and reverse will be censored 100% by military authorities...., 24th February (1945) again mention of the possibility of a Swiss air mail service to Lisbon.

Each of the 8 chronological sections (total of 82 pages) open with a general overview to establish a focus on the events that were shaping Swiss postal history at that time. Section 1 is headed "Switzerland Postal Baseline Prior to D-Day-(January to May 1944)". This is an overview of the Swiss postal activity for the first 5 months of 1944. It provides a setting to understanding the drastic changes caused by D-Day. Sections 2 to 8 take you through month by month from June to December. Example: Swiss surface mail addressed to Great Britain was bagged at Basel 2 Post Office for departure at 14.53 by rail to Paris and Lisbon via Irun, a small Spanish town on the Atlantic side of the French/Spanish border. In January 1944 this service operated once a week. Illustrations also include: German Paris Pass censor A.x., Paris mystery marks with machine wheel and even with CC, GB & Bermuda Censors, German Berlin Censor and Berlin Ab. Also pen marks across writing to check for hidden wording and an envelope to USA but trapped in the war in France and returned to sender. There are also two examples of the L.F.R. Percival correspondence from Sorina to Richard, via the undercover address of the English Speaking Union Club, London W1, then forwarded to Box 111 Bletchley, Bucks. Bletchley Park was Station X, the secret code-breaking Manor House, later numerous huts were added. Amazing how almost 10,000 people worked there for years in war time conditions and nobody knew !

Finally, the Appendices (35 pages) - Swiss Ships, Switzerland WWII Courier Mail, The October 1944 "Railroad Track" Letters, The Port Bou Operation, The Sweden Connection and The German ABP Paris. I must stop, else the Newsletter will be full, and leave you in suspense! It's a really lovely, interesting book, well worth having a copy. This information is invaluable.

Charles has very kindly donated a copy to our library and if you would like to purchase a copy, he is selling direct for £25 including postage (British cheques or cash accepted). Contact address : Charles J. LaBlonde, 15091 Ridgefield Lane, Colorado Springs, CO 80921-3554, USA. (n.b. These books do have a limited print run.)

APOLOGY - It was reported in the September edition of the Newsletter that UK PHILATEX would take place in London in November. This event has been cancelled. Apologies for any inconvenience caused.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE 'GENEVA DOUBLE EAGLE'

EDITOR

Last year I found a very interesting research document at a car-boot sale in France which I purchased for a very modest sum – 'La Poste à Genève de l'Origine à 1851' by Dr. George Fulpius published by the Philatelic Union of Geneva in 1943. One chapter covers the introduction of Geneva's first postage stamp – the 'Geneva Double Eagle'. What particularly caught my eye was a transcript of a passionate speech by Professeur Alphonse de Candolle (1806-1893) to the tribune of Geneva's Grand Conseil on 23rd May 1843 promoting the introduction of prepaid postage stamps in Geneva and exhorting the local administration, at least in part, to follow in the footsteps of Great Britain (on 6th May 1840) and Canton Zürich (on 1st March 1843). He was a Professor of Botany at the University and a Deputy of the Grand Conseil.

I am indebted to our member Jonathan Cartwright who reminded me that P. Mirabaud and A. de Reuterskiöld had included an English translation of the Professor's speech in their classic book on early Swiss philately 'The Postage Stamps of Switzerland 1843 – 1862'. It is set out below :

“May 22nd 1843 to the Grand Council of Geneva.

Gentlemen – The administration of the most commercial city in the world, the country which best understands the value of time, has recently entirely changed its Postal System.

I was present in 1839 when the ideas which led to the method that has been adopted, were promulgated : and I have followed its development with all the interest that a bold and ingenious plan is capable of inspiring. The results are known, for the system has now been in force for nearly four years. It has had the advantage of destroying certain abuses and facilitating correspondence. On the other hand, it cannot be ignored that it has deprived the United Kingdom of a considerable revenue, and that, to make up the deficit, it has been necessary to have recourse to taxes that are, perhaps, more burdensome and more unpopular than was the cost of postage.

But if the benefit of the system is, on the whole, a somewhat doubtful one for England, and if the difference of our position prevents our contemplating its introduction in its entirety, there are, it seems to me, certain principles and certain details which we might do well to adopt.

A fundamental idea of the English system, an idea which appears to be of universal application is the facilitating of the voluntary prepayment of letters. It is evident that prepaid letters are never a loss to the administration that carries them. Even those that go to the Dead-Letter Office have been prepaid. The Post also profits by the time saved by the letter-carriers who have to obtain payment for the unpaid letters, and also that which is spent in keeping accounts, which are always more complicated, when the postmen have to collect payment, than when it is made in advance. With regard to individuals, prepayment is an advantage when it does not entail loss of time. There are a great number of cases in which the person who writes the letter ought, as a matter of justice, to pay the carriage, while there are but few cases where this should devolve upon the recipient. A moment's reflection shows this. Every one writes more letters in his own interest or for his own satisfaction, than in the interest and for the satisfaction of another ; consequently, if it were as cosy to prepay a letter as to post it a general feeling of delicacy and justice would cause the number of prepaid letters to be in excess of that of unpaid letters.

The new English system has given a proof of this ; for it is not only on account of a slight difference of cost (10 to 20 centimes) that, all at once, prepaid letters have become as numerous as hitherto they were rare. The public must have thought it just to prepay the greater part of their letters, as soon as the act of prepayment became so simple.

It is evident that with the old system, in which prepayment is not very easy, personal inconvenience is often caused ; persons are compelled to impose upon others the payment of letters for which they feel they ought themselves to pay ; and the consequences is that a great number of letters are conveyed by servants and travellers, or, when they are of no pressing importance, delayed. In order to increase the number of letters, and thereby the postal revenue, it is desirable to facilitate prepayment by every possible means.

I propose two methods: one relative to letters to be conveyed beyond the Canton * ; the other, the more important of the two, relative to the "Petite Poste" within the Canton. * ... à l'étranger, literally 'for foreign parts'. But this phrase would be misleading. The reader will bear in mind that a Swiss Canton is not like an English county, but is an almost independent Republic (Translator's note).

It has often happened that I have kept back letters, or delayed writing them, because, as I live in a quarter which is not very convenient for communication with the lower part of the town, I have not cared to go to the Post-Office myself, or to send a servant there. The new Post-Office, it must be admitted, is somewhat remote from some parts of the town, and consequently, those who live, for instance, at Longemalle, at Rive, or Bourg-de-Four, avoid, when they can, sending there to frank their letters. Besides, many people prefer prepaying their letters themselves to leaving it to servants, and one often wishes to know the cost beforehand. The distance from the Post-Office deprives the inhabitants of Rive and of the upper part of the town of those facilities which are a desideratum, and which would no doubt increase the number of letters.

It would be easy, it appears to me, to have at the Hôtel de Ville a means of prepaying letters, without even providing an additional office. The clerks of one of the present offices, or the porter, could, perhaps, for a small payment, be employed in this business. If this method seems inconvenient, I would recommend the system which has been long adopted in London, by means of which prepayment is rendered easy to all the inhabitants, more so than in Paris or in any city I know. It consists in placing boxes in the front of shops whose owners inspire full confidence (and there is no difficulty in finding such in any quarter), and in commissioning these persons to receive the postage. When you wish to prepay a letter, you enter the shop, pay the rate shown on a tariff table, and when you see the shopkeeper mark the letter with the franking stamp, you have all the security you need. It would be difficult to find more economical and trustworthy servants. Before the introduction of the new system, there were a great number of these receiving shops in London, scattered throughout all the more important streets, and I never heard that the method had any drawbacks.

It will perhaps be objected that difficulties in prepayments would arise for some countries (Germany and Italy, for instance) on account of the different rates resulting from the postal agreements with these States. This objection does not seem to me to have much force. Moreover, it might, perhaps, be surmounted by simplifying the postal rates. Could not the Administration, while retaining in its relations with the services beyond its own boundaries twenty different rates for twenty German States, fix a single rate, so far as Geneva is concerned, for any letter destined for Germany ? And, for Italy, one could have a single rate, or two rates, so as to simplify prepayment.

The second change I propose is, I think, of more evident utility. The following method is adopted for home purposes in England, and could very readily be imitated for our cantonal postage system. The Administration causes marks or labels to be manufactured, which can be fastened like wafers on a letter. These labels cost the same amount as the prepayment of the letter; and the cost of prepayment is uniform for the whole of the three kingdoms, as it might be with us for a Canton. Such labels are sold at the post-offices at 10 centimes (a penny) each; and, when required to do so, stationers fasten them beforehand upon envelopes, which they sell plus the cost of the ticket. People keep them ready to hand, just as they do their pens and wafers. Many are lost; but this is so much profit to the Post Office. Moreover, one uses them more readily than money.

By this very simple means, almost all the letters are prepaid. It causes a saving of time to the Post-Office servants and to the recipients of letters. One no longer hesitates before writing a letter to a poorer person than one's self, or in one's own interest, when it is not necessary to send to the Post-Office to prepay it; and this greatly increases letter-writing.

When the stamped letters are received at the Post-Office, the label is so obliterated that it cannot be used a second time.

Letters above a certain weight can be franked by means of a blue label which costs double. This arrangement would be a needless expense in Geneva. It would be a saving to allow two labels to serve for a double letter, or one for every ounce.

The only difficulty I see, arises from there being two rates : one for letters delivered in the commune in

which they are posted, another for letters to be conveyed from one commune to another. Letters now cost 5 centimes in the former case, and 10 in the latter. But it is clear that one could adopt a uniform rate for the whole Canton by selling the labels at an intermediate price, say at 8 centimes (8 francs a hundred). This would cause a loss of 3 centimes in prepaying for the interior of a commune; but there would be a gain of 2 centimes in prepaying letters sent from one commune to another, and these latter are by far the more numerous. In England, unpaid letters are taxed double, because, it is said, they give more trouble to the letter-carriers, and complicate the Postal accounts. In Geneva, the difference between 8 and 10 centimes would be reasonable.

But I do not insist upon these details, which are of secondary importance.

The "Petite Poste" or Cantonal Post seems to me to be destined to receive twice or three times as many letters as at present; but in order to reach that probable increase, the reduction of the rates, which are already moderate, does not appear to be the chief means. The aim will be more certainly attained by accelerating the delivery of letters, and by enabling everybody to prepay them without going out of his way for the purpose. I hope the Administration will consider the suggestions I have had the honour of submitting. To facilitate their examination, I deposit specimens of the labels and envelopes in use in England. For these I have to thank the Judge Prevost and his brother Mr. L. Prevost, Swiss Consul in London. The last named gentleman is so placed that he can give all such information as may be desired, and this he would no doubt furnish with the enlightened zeal he brings to bear upon the business affairs of his own country."

And how was this exhortation received? Having examined the Professor's proposals in some detail Geneva's Finance Department at its sitting on 13th June 1843 concluded that it would be beneficial to introduce prepaid stamps and envelopes for the carriage of letters within the Canton ('a measure that is in vogue in Zürich and England') – the charge to be 5 centimes for letters within the commune (local rate) and 10 centimes between communes (cantonal rate). The enthusiastic Geneva postal authorities commissioned the lithographer Schmid of Rue de Terraillet in Geneva (he who published the pioneering 'strip cartoons' of Rodolphe Töpffer (1799 - 1846)) to produce a suitable design, which was soon known as the 'Geneva Double Eagle'. The stamps were first issued on 30th September/1st October 1843.

Reference : 'The Postage Stamps of Switzerland 1843 – 1862' by P. Mirabaud and A. de Reuterskiöld published in Paris by Libraries-Imprimeries Reunies in 1899.

A TESSINO QUERY !

EDWARD QUINTON

In the September edition of the Newsletter, Callum Watson asked for information on his rather unusual item from 'Tessino'. Our long-standing member Edward Quinton was quick to respond. He writes: "This stamp is a bogus issue. Referred to by both A. De Reuterskiöld in 'The Forgeries of the Cantonal Stamps of Switzerland' and Rev. R. B. Earee's 'Album Weeds' Vol. 2 (1892) and Vol. 3, where he states – 'Made many years ago at Lyons. It resembles the Neuchâtel stamp except the shield is oval, the arched band at top has Tessino and the value at bottom is 5 rappen.' De Reuterskiöld also says the cross has a black frame."

YET MORE AWARDS

Ian Gilchrist, globe-trotter extraordinaire, has picked up another philatelic award for his 'SCADTA' exhibit. At the international (F.I.P) stamp exhibition in Jakarta this summer he received a Vermeil medal. For the record, he also won a gold, special prize for his display 'International Red Cross Tracing Labels 1914-19' at PHILASIERRE last year. Well done Ian ! I hope this inspires other members to enter competitions and raise the banner for British collectors of Swiss philatelic material (Editor).

DID YOU KNOW ?

That the distinguished American philatelist Felix Ganz was a concert pianist, Dean of the Music School at Roosevelt University and the conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. He came to the USA in the '50s with his family and died there in 1990. A fluent speaker in 5 languages, he was the author of over 200 articles, many appearing in 'Tell' and the HPSN. He also wrote several books including 'Postal Cancellations and Markings in Switzerland' 1994 and, as co-author, 'CH Perfins'. He won many awards including his competition entry 'Pre-Confederation Switzerland' exhibited in the Champion of Champions.

ALTERNATIVE SOURCES FOR SWISS PHILATELIC INFORMATIONEDITOR

The 2013 editions of Zumstein's and the SBHV's catalogues of Swiss, Liechtenstein and UN Geneva items were published in September. The prices in both have been fully updated.

Bob Medland has written to say that he has found an interesting article about Güller cancellations co-written by the late Michael Rutherford in 2004 on the following website :

http://www.post-und-geschichte.ch/site/uploads/pdf/artikel_homepage/allgemein/gueller_stempel.pdf

Derrick Slate has pointed out to me that you can enjoy a virtual tour of the American Smithsonian's National Postal Museum and its displays through their website – npm.si.edu/virtualtour/desktop/

Your Editor is not a regular subscriber to any particular British philatelic journal, but when I do purchase a copy of one of them from my local newsagent I often find enough on Swiss-related issues alone to justify the purchase price. The April edition of 'STAMPmagazine' is a case in point. I was attracted by the reference to 'UPU Uncovered' on the front cover. The article, featuring the collection of Mr. Barry Evans turned out to be of more interest for the way his collection had been developed and was presented to a 'general audience' than for the UPU's Swiss connections. However it included full-colour illustrations of the UPU Monument postal stationery card cancelled on the day of its unveiling in Bern - 4th October 1909 ; the UPU official stamps FDC issued on 16th September 1957 and the Stampex UPU Centenary souvenir sheet of 1974 depicting the Swiss UPU 25th Anniversary 10c stamp.

For those interested in foreign stamps with Swiss connections I noted that a stamp was issued by Kenya in 2006 to commemorate the 24th UPU Conference which was due to take place in Nairobi. Unfortunately for them the event was transferred to Geneva at the last moment – hence the Swiss stamp (Z1288) depicting the new Conference Centre.

Elsewhere in the periodical I noticed reference to a Peruvian stamp issued in 2010 which commemorated the 'centenary of the first flight across the Alps' by Jorge Chávez in a Bleriot XI aircraft. He flew from Sion to Domodossola on 23rd September 1910, apparently crashing on landing. The stamp depicts both Senor Chávez and his 'plane.

It was nice to see the names of two of our Society's members – Frank Parsons who, it was reported, had recently given a display of 'Switzerland' to the Croydon Philatelic Society. and Adrian Keppel. Adrian is a frequent writer for 'STAMPmagazine' and has a regular blog on the magazine's website. His latest article was entitled 'From Mad to Worse' concerning the last definitive series of Bavaria issued in 1914.

NEXT HPS REGIONAL MEETINGS

Northern Region - Saturday 6th October 2012 'Definitives 1960 – 68' – David Whitworth ; Saturday 17th November 'The Jungfrau Railway' – Tony Hoyle. Both meetings will take place at Corporation Mill, Sowerby Bridge, Yorkshire commencing at 2.00.p.m. Further details from David Hope Tel. 0161 303 0091.

Southern Region - Saturday 6th October 2012 – 'Airmails' – All Members (n.b. not 20th October as suggested in the last newsletter). Saturday 23rd February 2013 – subject to be announced. Both meetings will be at the Cricketfield House Hotel, Wilton Road, Salisbury, Wiltshire commencing at 10.30 a.m. Further details from Fred Hoadley Tel. 01403 711987.



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IMPROVEMENTS TO YOUR NEWSLETTER

THE EDITOR

The survey of readers' views was very encouraging and certainly gave food for thought. The matter was reported to the AGM and it was decided that, whilst there was no need for any dramatic changes, efforts would be made to mould the content to satisfy the needs of as wide a cross-section of the membership as possible.

Since the questionnaire was undertaken we have provided several articles to help the 'relative novices' amongst our membership, without curtailing the number of more specialist articles. Werner Gattiker's regular 'Good To Know !' column has helped in this endeavour and compensates a little for the loss of the 'DYK ?' articles. Several stated requests have been fulfilled e.g. articles on thematics, airmails, postal coaches, classic stamps, postal stationery, stamp design and Liechtenstein. If anyone is looking for a subject for a future article, I have a long wish-list I could discuss with you.

On a more practical level, key officers' contacts are being printed twice a year, more potential information sources have been included and the occasional photo of 'members in session' should help to put a face to one or two names. I have published any items received on : 'Members' News', 'Questions and Answers', 'Items for Sale', or 'Requests for Help', but I have to say that they are few and far between.

On the basis that there were very few concerns expressed about the format, no significant changes are proposed. There have been many high-quality illustrations published and the Committee has agreed to finance two double-sided colour pages this year (ref. July 2012 edition).

The Newsletter Editor and the Webmaster are in close contact regarding the best ways of delivering a service to our members. The HPS's Archive CD-ROM is a wonderful research resource and articles which are too long to be printed in full in the Newsletter have a potential place on the Website. Formatting such material can impose quite a burden on our Webmaster, but you should see more and more interesting items on the Website as resources permit.

Whilst we can never please everybody (particularly as we have only 8 pages to play with each month), I hope members will agree that we are going in the right direction. However, if your patience is running out because your particular suggestions have not been taken on board then feel free to contact me.

HELP WANTED

AHPS Member Dick Hall is working on an article on the Gotthard Railway. He is seeking copies of any covers that travelled on the line or other ephemera that could contribute to the article. If you wish to help his email address is : travis@alum.mit.edu

I.G. STAMPS**SWITZERLAND**

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