

HELVETIA PHILATELIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Founded in 1946 by Edward H Spiro

Honorary President Claude Mistely

Honorary Secretary Peter Vonwiller 18 Witchell, Wendover, Buckinghamshire HP22 6EG Tel. +44 (0)1296 621159

Honorary Editor Richard Donithorn 10 Park Drive Felpham West Sussex PO22 7RD Tel. +44 (0)1243 583237

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A QUERY ON AN AARAU POSTMARK

DON GARDINER



I recently obtained the cover illustrated above. Our fellow member, Don Symonds, has a similar example. It is shown in the Zumstein Ganssachen catalogue as having first been issued on 20th June 1867. The postmark falls within AW group 148A in Andres and Emmenegger and I understand that it is quite scarce. However, we have no idea what the two letters 'B' either side of the Swiss Cross stand for. If anyone has any information that may enlighten us please get in touch via the Editor. Thankyou.

FAMOUS SWISS PERSONALITIES

EDITOR

Something to ponder over as the evenings close in - who hasn't figured on Swiss stamps yet but is deserving of being celebrated ? Qualifications – has to have been born within the current Swiss border and considered of international or national importance. Suggestions to the Editor please.

To set your minds thinking – how about Carl G. Jung (1875-1961) the founder of analytical psychology who was head of the Department of Psychology at Zurich University, Georges de Mestral a native of Canton Vaud who invented Velcro, Louis Chevrolet the motor car designer from La Chaux-de-Fonds or two famous personalities who made their names largely outside the country – Ursula Andress and César Ritz ? Henri Dunant was the first person to be presented with a Nobel Prize in 1901 and has appeared on several Swiss stamps, but 25 Swiss citizens in all have won Nobel Prizes – are any others deserving of philatelic glory?

And what about the Swiss Gold Medallists in the Individual Show jumping and the Women's Triathlon at the London Olympics – after all Royal Mail did our medallists proud - issuing a stamp to commemorate each of our Individual or Team Gold medals – 29 Olympic and 34 Paralympic!. Very few women have appeared on Swiss stamps – is this the time to redress the balance? Perhaps we could pass on our thoughts, whether males or females, to Swiss Post ? (References: 'Swiss Watching' – Diccon Bewes, Nicholas Brealey Publishing 2010 and 'Eyewitness Travel: Switzerland', Dorling Kindersley 2013.)

AND TO THOSE INTERESTED IN ART - Two or more Swiss commemoratives relate to the abstract painter Paul Klee, one of Canton Bern's most famous sons. This year there is no need to go to the Zentrum Paul Klee in the Swiss capital to view much of his work. From 16th October to 9th March 2014 Tate Modern on London's South Bank is staging a major retrospective of his work. The Evening Standard has described it as "a must see Poetic colour abounds."

1901 POST OFFICE COMPETITION ESSAYS

DAVID COLMAN

In 1901 the Swiss Post Office held a competition for new stamp designs, the first of several such competitions - certainly there were others in 1933 and 1947. The prize of Fr1,000 was not awarded, but the second prize of Fr700 went to Charles L'Eplattenier as did the last prize. Below are the six winning entries, the amounts awarded, and the name and profession of the designer. None of the designs were ultimately selected for issued stamps.

Four of the copies shown here are unofficial photo-litho prints of inferior quality, which rather hide the design detail. Only those of the winners of prizes 2 and 3 are official prints. The difference in clarity of line and colour between these and the photo-litho prints is self-evident. Apparently all the entries were printed in six different colours; I certainly have a rose coloured print of the second prize essay.

Prize 2
Ch. L'Eplattenier
Frs 700



Prize 3
Eug. Cavalli
Frs 600



Prize 4a
Alf. Pfenniger
Frs 500



Prize 4b
Henri Robert
Frs 500



Prize 5a
Fr. Boscovits
Frs 350



Prize 5b
Ch. L'Eplattenier
Frs 350



Only two other prints of the submitted designs are in my possession, and are shown on the next page. One is the third ranked of fifteen "honourable mention" essays by Fritz Wildmann. The second was ranked seventh of the 25 receiving a "special mention" and was by L. Landenberger.



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Design by Fritz Wildmann

Design by L. Landenberger.



R. Kissling,

Seefeld-Zürich.

Among the "special mention" entries was one of considerable significance. This design by R. Kissling is quite clearly the basic design adopted in 1914 for the Tellbrustbild series. The only differences between the 1901 design and the issued stamps concern the positioning of the label HELVETIA and of the value number. The actual design of Tell's head and shoulders are exactly the same as in the issued stamps. According to notes left by Cedric Dry "The designer of the William Tell stamp has been questioned among specialists in spite of Zumstein's attribution in the specialised catalogue. The main reason is that Kissling was a sculptor and was responsible for the larger than life statue which constitutes the Tell monument at Altdorf. The ability to transfer skills displayed in monumental stone to the design of such a small two-dimensional artistic form as a postage stamp defied the credibility of critics at the time. Why such should ever have arisen can be answered by examining the stamp itself which bears the initials R.K. as well as J.S. for the engraver J. Springer." I only have a rather indistinct black and white photocopy of the 1901 design (see the illustration on the left) made from a poor print of the 30 "special mentions". The attribution to Kissling is clear, but the J.S. is not. Nevertheless, it would be difficult to argue that the 1901 submission is not the basic design of the Tell series.

MEMBERS' DISPLAYS

EDITOR

Another display to a local philatelic society by one of our members on Swiss philately has been reported to me. Kit Jarman will be performing on 22nd October 2012 at the Stirling and District Philatelic Society. His subjects will be: 'Swiss Definitives 1854 – 1948' and 'Moroccan Local Posts, "A Flight of Fancy"'.

Please send me details of any others that you are presenting or are otherwise aware of. Reports on interesting Swiss displays or presentations that you have seen would also be of interest to our readership, including any at regional or national exhibitions.

THE SECOND-RAREST SWISS STAMPS

In 1979 Heinz Katcher discovered a Postage Due 5c stamp of 1878 with a 'rayed star' background. Before this all the Postage Dues produced in that period, other than the 1c value, were thought to have a blank background. After rigorous tests this stamp was declared authentic - the only recorded example of its type in the world.

In June 1980 Michael Rutherford asked in his 'Did You Know?' column: which is the next most rare Swiss stamp which could exist twice, but has not yet been seen? He believed that the answer to his question could be in an article in the publication 'NZZ' where it was stated that "On each sheet of 50 of the 1924 Fr.1.25 stamps (Z No.164/1) the error of the first 'E' in 'HELVETIA' being printed as an 'F' comes twice. In the following year, 1925, 2,400 sheets were overprinted 'Société des Nations', but one sheet got inverted. Therefore the combination 'F' and inverted text must exist, twice, somewhere."

GOOD TO KNOW ! BY WERNER GATTIKERThe 40c. Helvetia with Sword 1908-35

Type I



Type II

This is the only value which was printed using two different types. Type I can be detected by looking under the sword's hilt, where the full designer's name "L'Eplattenier" appears in small writing, diagonally rising from near the "H" of Helvetia; to the right of this are three laurel leaves. Type II only shows the initials "CL" in place of the signature, with only two laurel leaves to the right of them. The main colour for both these first 1908 40c values was purple, with the faint secondary colour of the figure Helvetia being in a pale orange-yellow. All subsequent 40c values are of Type II. The colour changed to (pale) greenish-blue in 1921 and to ultramarine in 1922, both quite distinctive, but in 1925 the principal colour reverted to what catalogues call "magenta" but in reality is very close to the purple of the 1908 stamps. The only sure way to distinguish the 1925 stamps is by their secondary colour: The figure Helvetia appears now in a pale yellowish-green, instead of the pale orange-yellow of the 1908 stamps. One final word of caution: The original Type I stamp's purple colour is very susceptible to outside influences: it can fade drastically if exposed to too much light and/or water.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Northern Group: Saturday 14th September: 'New Acquisitions/Members' Choice' – All Members (not 13th as previously stated) ; 12th October: 'The Swiss Army 1939-1945' – David Hope ; 2nd November: 'The Chairman's Presentation' – Tony Hoyle. All meetings take place at Corporation Mill, Sowerby Bridge, Yorkshire commencing at 2.00pm. Further details from David Hope Tel. 0161 3030091.

Southern Group: 5th October: 'The Swiss Postal Coach Service' – David Hope and in the afternoon 'A Transport Theme – Trains, Boats and Planes' - All Members ; Saturday 22nd February 2014: 'Mixed Franking' (i.e. any item of mail with stamps of different value, or different design) – All Members. All meetings take place at the Cricketfield House Hotel, Wilton Road, Salisbury, Wiltshire commencing at 10.30.am. Further details from Fred Hoadley Tel. 01403 711987.

SOUVENIR CARDS OF THE FESTIVAL VAUDOIS

ERIC LIENHARD

Further to my request for our members' help in the HPS Newsletter (December 2012 Page 93), I thought you would like a progress report. Sadly there was no response to my plea from members. However with the help of information from the internet, my top number is now 31 and I am now looking to fill six gaps in the series. How many from 32 onwards is still a mystery. In case you have any information my email address is elienhard@hotmail.co.uk.

CHERYL GANZ

Those members who remember Felix Ganz, might be interested to know that his wife Cheryl R.Ganz is now the Chief Curator of Philately at the Smithsonian National Postal Museum in Washington DC, USA and has enjoyed a life-long interest in Air Mails and Zeppelins (including the 1933 'Graf Zeppelin' Chicago flight). Her various researches, publications and exhibition displays have resulted in many honours in America, the Lee Medal of the Royal Philatelic Society London and a Gold Medal from the Federation Internationale des Sociétés Aerophilateliqes. (ref. the American 'Philatelic Literature Review' 2nd Quarter 2013 P. 137).

CANCELLATIONS

GRAHAM SMITH

Not so long ago, Werner Gattiker received a batch of typed papers, from Mrs. Mary Smith, the wife of one of our Society's stalwarts, Graham Smith, who was once our Packet Secretary. The covering letter read : "I thought you might be interested in these notes which Graham made of Swiss stamps and postal history. I expect much has changed in the last few years! Please dispose as you wish." They were probably written in about 2001 and seem to be draft manuscripts for potential articles on the subjects he knew best, primarily concerning the various Cantonal and Swiss definitive issues and Swiss cancellations. Although as a whole they provide a very useful introduction to the subject, much of the information is probably well known to many members. However, two topics which he dealt with have not been covered in recent years in the Newsletter, namely Customs and Feldpost Cancellations. Hopefully publishing Mr. Smith's material in this edition will rekindle some interest in these fascinating subjects and provoke some responses which further our understanding. (n.b. Don Symonds, who is a keen and very knowledgeable collector of Customs Cancellations, informs me that some of the information has appeared before in the Society's Newsletter in articles by Alfred Golay in October 1971 and Derek Beak beginning March 1974 onwards.)- Editor.

Customs Cancellations

These cancellations show much varied imagination by the Swiss Customs staff, but the results are often far from artistic. In fact, the stamps are often so heavily marked as to almost completely blot out the design. So, here again, is another area of Swiss cancellations where unattractive markings has led to failure to recognise limited usage and, hence, scarcity of examples available for collectors.

Cantonal Customs offices were found in all villages bordering a canton until 1848 when they were suppressed by Federal edict. After that some splendid cancellations appeared with the Federal Shield (Schildstempel) in the centre, and this style is still in use.

Many collectors of Swiss stamps are surprised to learn that Customs Offices use Post Office stamps, and have always done so. Ordinary issue stamps were used for export declarations, transit documents and so on, but unfortunately the regulations governing their use and cancellations are no longer available.

Even a casual glance at just a few of the various old and strange obliterations placed on stamps by Customs officials shows the great freedom of style permitted for cancelling the stamps. Each office, and there are now well over 300, used a different method. Within each office individual officials exercised their freedom, thus providing an enormous number of varieties.

Cancellations with the Federal Shield and others clearly showing a date and evidence that they were for Customs Office use are more or less 'official' and can be easily identified (OR made at Customs Offices are obviously 'official' and easily identified too. They are still in use and are made from metal 'chops' like those of the Post Office.). But all other obliterations designed by and 'manufactured' at the whim of any Customs Officer prepared to exercise his 'right', comprise an amazing variety of cancellations. (OR It has to be assumed that all the others are obliterations whose design stems from the imagination of an individual employee). They appear to have been made of many different materials – metal, rubber, wood and cork, for example. Their life is not known, but they were all in use at the same time as more official ones. Carving a canceller from a wine-bottle cork appears to have exercised the mind of many a Customs Officer ! And some of them were not very skilful with a knife either !

Those marks which can be found on the numerals issue of 1882 are still in use today. For the majority without dates the stamps on which they are struck are the sole guide to the approximate time of usage. Cancellers with the Federal Shield differ from each other in the shape of the shield, but all have the same arrangement of the inscription. The Customs function is shown above the the emblem and the name of the Customs Office below. The wording differed, of course, from canton to canton in accordance with language differences. The Customs titles most often met are: in German - Schweiz Zollamt, Zollstätte or Nebenzollamt. In French - Douanes Suisses or Bureau de Péages. In Italian - Dogana Svizzera or Offizio dei Dazi. At Head Offices Schweiz Oberzolldirektion; Direction Générale des Douanes; Hauptzollamt, etc.

Among the names of places of Customs Offices are found some situated abroad. In fact, Switzerland still has six Customs Offices outside her own territory, at Waldshut, Konstanz, Luino, Domodossola, Iselle

and Pontarlier. Those marks which can be found on the numerals issue of 1882 are still in use today. For the majority without dates to the obliterations the stamps on which they are struck are the only guide to their approximate time of usage.

Military – Feldpost Cancellations

On the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 Switzerland called up her armed forces under General Guisan, and the normal privileges of free franking of service mail came into force. No postage stamps were therefore necessary except for special services letters, such as registration or special delivery. Then the serviceman, or the military agency posting it, was required to affix stamps for the amount of the special service only.

This explains why, especially in the World War II period, military cancellations are found on Swiss postage stamps – used perfectly legally. However, this is a limited use of postage stamps then currently issued, and thus such military – feldpost cancellations postally used are comparatively rare.

Note that no date or location details are shown on these military cancellations: simply the unit cancellation with the inscription possibly giving some clue to location Feldpost : Poste de Campagne: or Posta di Campo.

Military Postmarks – Barracks Mail

Most postmarks connected with military mail are concerned with, almost literally, 'in the field' soldiers' letters, either in time of general mobilisation, as during World War II, or when the men were doing their stint of annual military service at camp, barrack or some form of army school – 'on a course'.

Most of these barracks mail postmarks are struck with devices bearing dateless double circles, for example those from two well-known Swiss military establishments, the barracks at Bülach near Zürich and at Brugg in Canton Aargau.

The most famous exception is the Thun Barracks Complex, which used a dated circular date-stamp presumably because all the mail was serviced at a regular post office – Thun 2 (Kaserne).

SWISS MILITARY TRAINS OF 1919-1920

MALCOLM BULPITT

Derrick Slate's article on Swiss Army escorts for relief supply trains from Switzerland to Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Romania (ref. HPS Newsletter August 2012 page 61) was reprinted in the June 2013 issue of the Swiss Railways Society's magazine 'Swiss Express'. I thought members might be interested in the 'Editorial Note' accompanying the article which provides an insight into some of the difficulties of running such an operation in this post-war period. We thank the Society and their Editor, Malcolm Bulpitt, for permission to reproduce it in our Newsletter. (Editor)

From the railway operating side of these exercises the trains would probably have been a motley collection of freight rolling stock (no doubt including flat wagons for the guns to be mounted upon), plus ancient 4 or 6 wheeled carriage accommodation for the army contingent and any Swiss citizens that were to be repatriated. By the end of WW I the Swiss operators were short of equipment and it is doubtful if they would have risked losing any decent rolling stock. These vehicles would have been assembled as block trains handed over at the appropriate frontiers, where the adjacent railway administrations would provide motive power and train crews to take the equipment through their territory. Locomotives are designed for their local operating environment, loading gauge, etc. and seldom stray, though SBB had in 1918 sold some old freight engines to the military railway administration in Poland and also Hungary. Swiss crews would not know the routes to be used and the local crews with the route knowledge needed would not have had experience of using 'foreign' locos. With changing engines and crews at each frontier, and en-route, in the difficult post-war environment (and the probable clapped-out state of all the engines), it is no wonder that some of the trips took days and weeks rather than the hours the journeys could be completed in today. A first search through our archive has not revealed any contemporary photographs of these trains. Incidentally, many Swiss locomotives did work in Germany and France in both WW I and WW II, partly for hire, and partly as a bargaining counter, horse trading to compensate shipments of necessary supplies such as coal and foodstuffs.

TIME WITH TIMETABLES

BRYAN STONE



Acknowledgements: This is an edited version of an article that first appeared in the Swiss Railways Society's magazine 'Swiss Express'. We thank the Society, the Editor, Malcolm Bulpitt, and the author, Bryan Stone, for permission to reproduce it in our Newsletter. The illustrations show some posters and the covers of some of the timetables displayed at the exhibition.

Bryan Stone recently reported on his visit to an exhibition in Bern related to Swiss Public Transport Timetables organised by the VÖV (the Swiss Association of Public Transport) and the SBB in April 2013. It contained some information which may be of interest to those of our members who use such publications for philatelic research or planning their next holiday in the country :

"The first Swiss timetable was not an official one, but a private one, Bürkli in 1856, a 32 page booklet with 6 tables. In 1872 the new National Railway Law, among many improvements, established an obligatory harmonized timetabling process, including the obligation to connect, and a single Indicateur Officiel/Amtliches Kursbuch was published. Bürkli continued for many years (independent as was Bradshaw in Britain) and many of us have Bürklis in our collections.

Around 1982 the Swiss Public Timetable sold about 300,000 copies twice a year – they were bought like warm croissants at the kiosks and stations of the various lines. They were compact, dense and tightly packed with one book containing all trains (including international services), ships, PostAuto services, and mountain lines. Around 2002 the sales fell below 100,000, and today they are 45,000. It's still a big business with sales now stable despite on-line Apps, etc. Today the timetable changes every year in December, but now it is a huge work weighing 2.4 Kgs. And produced in three volumes: one with rail/lakes/mountain and cables, and the other two with buses. You don't take it all with you anymore, whereas the old one was a companion for long trips, nights in guesthouses and so on. Switzerland is now even a curiosity; very few other systems now publish an all-line timetable.

The exhibition had a strong social element. Whilst the transport advertising posters were sending British or Russian aristocracy to St Moritz or Bad Ragaz, workpeople took their times from the big, once familiar wall timetables in stations, or the once ubiquitous Nigg aluminium wall table with its set of figures carefully placed in its frame by the station agent. Spine-chilling was a poster from the Val-de-Ruz, nr. Neuchâtel, with suspension of the public service on 4th August 1914, and times shown for the general mobilization of soldiers.

The current Swiss network timetable only shows trains by the minutes in the hour in which they arrive and depart. It is a huge puzzle, but very valuable; however most of us will stick to our table of times. That was also the motif for perhaps the most famous poster of all 'Der Kluge reist im Zuge' (shown above left). This spawned a phrase that is still on the lips of Swiss you will meet, and means, as you might guess, 'The wise go by train'. Classically simple, showing no more than a passenger's seat, his arms and an open newspaper, relaxed crossed legs and, with as background, the timetable Geneva – Lausanne – Bern. Hans Thörni, the then SBB Publicity Manager, designed it in 1958. Nothing since has come closer to the essence of Swiss travel.

SPECIALIST STUDY GROUPS

Bob Medland has volunteered to act as convenor for an additional study group on 'Cancellations'. Anyone wishing to join should contact Bob by email: hirundo@dsl.pipex.com or telephone: 01761 452959 or 07702 537000 (Ref. HPS Newsletter August 2013 'Specialist Study Groups' Page 68).

TRIAL PRINTS

John Larson has informed me that if you wish to see a range of 'trial prints' (or 'test stamps') associated with stamp printers and postal authorities in other parts of the World it is worth having a look at the Website : <https://www.stampprinters.info> The comprehensive catalogue of Swiss Trial Prints compiled by Derrick Slate has now been added to the Helvetia Philatelic Society's Website. This listing is a must for any collector of these beautifully produced trial impressions. (Ref. HPS Newsletter August 2013 'Swiss Trial Prints' Page 67).

A REQUEST FOR ARTICLES

I am always looking for short articles on items in your collection which you are particularly pleased with or you have a query about to share with fellow members. If you have anything you think suitable, please send me a picture scan of it together with a few lines of description. This way we can make the Newsletter more of a dialogue involving all the membership. It would also be nice to have one or two thematic or heimat articles in the coming year.

Since Michael Rutherford ceased writing his monthly 'Did You Know?' articles we have had no information in our Newsletter on the use of modern technology to speed the delivery of parcels, cards and letters. I constantly read of Royal Mail's latest innovation, such as barcodes, 'Post and Go' stamps and labels, Horizon labels or Small and Medium Parcel services. Is any member particularly knowledgeable on such issues and able to bring us up to date on recent happenings in Switzerland – perhaps (with their permission) by translating one or two of the relevant articles produced from time to time in the SBZ or the journal of the Swiss Postmark Society? If you are interested please get in touch with the Editor as soon as possible. Thankyou. (Editor)

ADDENDA

Your Editor apologises to Werner Gattiker and the readers for an unfortunate error in the 'Good to Know!' article on 'The Different Types of the 1936/48 Landscape Definitives' in the August edition of the Newsletter (Page 65). The illustrations were positioned wrongly. From left to right the captions for each pair of the illustrations (as they were shown) should read: Type II Type I - Type III Types I and II - Type II Type I. I hope it did not result in too much confusion!

Our member Kit Jarman writes: "In my article "The Granite Paper Sitting Helvetias" in the June edition of the HPS Newsletter (Page 48): in Note 13, line 4 the word 'security' should have read 'scarcity'."

Werner Gattiker



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