



Did You Know?



January 1975

-  In 1973 the PTT issued a folder with twelve beautiful coloured postcards of old telephones, with descriptions in four languages.

-  Another little 'secret' publicity effort by the PTT has come to light. In the spring of 1974 a sales counter (really more of a drawer) was opened in the newly renovated main PO in Winterthur – the 8th largest town in Switzerland. Never a word to anyone in advance; and I use that PO regularly. They were surprised that sales were so low and after a month or two it was closed.

-  In 1959 the PTT issued an interesting booklet "*Formular-verzeichnis*" (separately in German, French and Italian). This lists all forms, labels, covers and other printed matter available from the main stores in Bern, in alphabetical and numerical order, as well as giving the old numbers, in many cases in use since the turn of the century, and which were being replaced at the end of the '50s by new longer numbers.


Now a new edition has been issued, PTT 001.10 dt VI 74, without the old superseded numbers of course, obtainable gratis from PTT GD in Bern.


-  I'm not suggesting every specialist should start collecting an example of every form the PTT has ever issued, but it is interesting to see how the various labels are grouped, i.e. those that can appear on an item delivered to the door. Naturally it is tricky to locate those that appeared and disappeared between 1959 and 1974. Sizes and colours etc. are not mentioned, nor printing dates.

-  The 'Internaba' miniature sheet is predicted as an item for the future with sales of 2,173,503. Of the so-called 'Black Print' 81,542 were sold. Here its future is more difficult to forecast. It may rise in value or may become a forgotten item. Who knows?

-  The promoters of winter sports in Le Brassus have used a slogan in Lausanne and a MPO cachet every January since 1967. Now all eight villages in the Vallee de Joux are using, from the 11th January 1975, an identical pictorial cds, only the name of the village varies.

The Lac de Joux is remarkable in that it has no visible outflow, however, the water does get to Lake Neuchâtel via underground passages.

-  The answer to Question No.31 is Zum. No.67 in the 'Pro Patria 'Rivers & Lakes' series.


-  Question No.32 is: Which stamps show three cantonal arms?




Did You Know?





February 1975


-  With the 30c. '125 Years Federal Posts' stamp of 19.9.1974; the PTT introduced a new paper, white without violet fibres. This was also used for the 15 and 50c Pro Juventute stamps, also without correct announcement in their publicity leaflets. At least they have assured collectors that no stamps have been printed on both types of paper.


-  The biggest changeover in machine postmarks since the introduction of postal code numbers, is now taking place. All the American machines, about 144, are now being fitted with new 22mm. diameter town dies, in which the fiddly time and date insert changes is now done with fixed reels (as with ordinary handstamps).


Experiments were started in 1968, with apparently satisfactory results. At the beginning of January about 50 machines had been changed over.


-  A BBZ reader has sent in the location of a third 'Basel Dove' letterbox still in use in Basel.

-  At the end of 1974 the Philatelic Society of Olten celebrated its 75th birthday by issuing a handsome 80-page brochure. This covers, in German, the whole postal history of Olten with all postmarks illustrated. Also included is an article on the 1870 'Gratis' stamp, which was 'born' in Olten, and details about the 'Tripolis bei Olten' cds, etc. etc.

-  PEN has published the 1975 supplement to his priced catalogue of all Swiss special cancellations and MPO cachets. SFr.6 from Editions PEN.
Also from PEN, an excellent booklet has appeared, in French, entitled "*Timbres de Remplacement du 1er Arrondissement Postal*", i.e. Geneva and environs. All known postmarks are listed chronologically from 1893, and also alphabetically.

-  The PTT has issued, gratis, a new edition of their numerical list of all postal code numbers. PTT No.310.05 I 75.

-  The answer to Question No.32 is the following four stamps: the arms of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden are shown on the Fr.3.- of 1938 (Z.216) and on the 10c. Pro Patria of 1941 (Z.13). Then in 1965, the arms of Valais, Neuchâtel and Genève **appeared** on the 20c stamp (Z.432), celebrating 150 years in the Confederation. The fourth stamp, the 50c of 1967 (Z.243) shows on the base of the statue (which stands in the Bundeshaus in Bern) the arms of Uri, Schwyz & Unterwalden. These can be clearly seen with a good magnifying glass. This stamp, by the way, is still valid.


-  Question No.33 is which Swiss stamp appeared in slightly different form on both plain and phosphor payer, not counting the well-known PJ & Buildings stamps?





Did You Know?





March 1975


-  The reason why only the three princes are depicted on the new Liechtenstein stamps (issued on 13th March), and not also the princess, is because women still do not have the vote there. So says the philatelic editor of the "*Basler Nachrichten*". The official rejoinder is that she is too young to be photographed - at 2 years of age!


-  The new Swiss stamp issue programme does not include the expected new SFr.3.50 value, already numbered 541 by Zumstein.


-  After a life of only four years the French-Swiss monthly "*La Bourse aux Timbres*" died at the end of 1974. Pity.

-  Joseph Bühler celebrated his 80th birthday at the end of January. Deservedly one of the best Swiss philatelists, he not only organised the first big Swiss stamp exhibition, the 'NABA' in Zürich, in 1934, but was also the driving force behind the establishment of the Swiss Postal Museum, and initiated the 'Fund for Furthering Philately', which now runs practically everything philatelic in Switzerland.

-  I noticed in January several red franking dies with a numbers in the 15,000's, meaning a 50% increase in the last five years, and fewer stamps in circulation!

-  About three times a year, the PTT issue a publicity leaflet called "PTT Brief" to all big firms etc. I have read there of quite a few interesting items. For instance, that the 500th firm has gone over to punched card giro in-payment forms; that giro forms are now available suitable for OCR (Optical Character Reading) i.e. the computer can read directly; and that the postcode 'book' is now ready on magnetic tape for computerised customers.

-  The answer to Question No.33 is the BIT 30c with 'overprint for the visit of Pope Paul VI to Geneva on 10th June 1969. The normal version is still on ordinary paper, but this issue (7,726,000 copies sold) was on phosphor paper with violet fibres, Z.104.


-  Question No.34 is: which were the first Swiss stamps issued with Chinese characters on them?






Did You Know?




April 1975


-  In 1951, 300 copies were printed of a booklet on Swiss stickers issued for exhibitions and other events. Entitled, "*Katalog der Ausstellungs & Gelegenheits Marken der Schweiz*", it is based on the main work of P.F. Rampacher of Budapest.


 -  A small miracle has taken place in Tagelswangen. At the end of January the PTT closed the Paketannahmestelle at the local grocery shop. Now following a petition and consequent pressure from the Cantonal authorities, the PTT has reinstated the service, as from 3rd March, for the 400 households in the village, which was started on 1.6.1959
- Paketannahmestelle
0307 Tagelswangen**
-  Most, if not all, large Swiss daily newspapers carry at the weekend a ¼ page or so of philatelic news, opinions and pictures of new issues. Often MPO and special postmarks in advance of issue. The '*Thurgauer Zeitung*' of Frauenfeld goes even further by mentioning the coming slogans to be used by the six machines in the Canton of Thurgau.


 -  The Swiss Postmark Society has issued another up-to-date list of all Swiss cancelling machines, combined with an alphabetical list of all local publicity slogans, as well as tables showing the distribution of machines according to canton and postal district.

A copy has been placed in the HPS Library, 9 pages A4.

 -  A special exhibition of philatelic material and collections will be opened at the MUBA, the main Swiss industrial fair. Called 'Mubaphil', it should prove of interest to all who can come to Basel from the 12th to 21st April.

 -  A full set of eight covers for the opening flight of Swissair to China will cost a minimum of SFr.20.-, including FL and UN, as SFr.2.- is the rate the PTT is charging for a 20 g. letter.

 -  The answer to Question No.34 is the set of four official stamps for the UN World Health Organisation on 13.2.1975. The abbreviation letters are shown in the four official UN languages Chinese, Russian, English and French.


 -  Question No.35 is: Which Swiss stamps show the Union Jack?




Did You Know?



May 1975


-  On the 26th June the UN Geneva will issue two stamps for their 30th anniversary, and a miniature sheet at same price. Standing order customers are warned that the computer program has not been updated to cover miniature sheets, and means that none will be delivered automatically; a pity for those who expect a FDC.


-  Sensational is the only word for the 58th auction by Corinthila, to be held in Zürich 28-31 May. They also celebrate their 50th year of auctions, being about the first in Switzerland.


Amongst the most interesting items are eleven Zürich 4's, and no less than seventy Zürich 6's; also a cover with a vertical pair of Geneva 4's; and a cover with eleven 30c air stamps dated 23.11.1920.


The 336 pages of the free catalogue contain about half black and white illustrations, and then eighteen pages in perfect colour.

Corinthila guarantee their stamps for five years from date of sale.


-  The publication date and price of the new "Ganzsachen" catalogue cannot yet be given by Zumstein. Pity.


-  The sale of 2.2 million INTERNABA miniature sheets brought in a profit of SFr 2.2 m. to 'help' offset the costs of the exhibition of SFr.1.8 m. This additional income, plus interest on the capital, puts the Fund for Furthering Philately at SFr. 5.9 m. various books, publications and films were supported during 1974.

-  The Swiss Transport Museum in Luzern is promoting a flight by hot-airship on a flight from Luzern to Zug and back. Although no special cancellation is available, no less than SFr.3.60 is the minimum fee, plus 40c for a special cover, per direction. Include me out, as the saying is.

-  The special overprinted aerogramme for the 'LUPO', held in the Luzern Transport Museum from 25-27th April (see Helvetia Newsletter - November 1974) was rationed at the exhibition sales counter at 3-4 a time, but the 50,000 lasted.

One wonders where another 40,000 aerogrammes could come from, with a 45c impressed value, so that with a 90c. 'Ville de Lucerne' they could be used for the special first flights to China at SFr.2.-. The dealer in question sells them at SFr.19.50 per set of 4.

-  The answer to Question No.35 is: the Union Jack appears on two stamps; the 50c stamp issued for CERN in Geneva (Z.441), and the 20c EFTA of 1967 (Z.447).

-  Question No.36: In which year were Pro Juventute stamps valid for all countries?



Did You Know?



June 1975

- ☞ The third edition of the 'Rollenmarken Katalog' (Coil Stamps) by Rene Amrein has just appeared. Greatly improved and enlarged, it now covers in 150 pages the history of coil stamps and vending machines from 1910 and includes illustrations of all coil stamps known, with and without numbers on reverse, together with prices for mint and used stamps, strips, blocks, and even more exotic, combinations and flaws.

Swiss coil Pro Juventute and Commemoratives, as well as those of Liechtenstein and U.N. in Geneva, 'Ticket' booklets and red private franks in coils are also shown. Quite an eye-opener to those who have seen 'everything'.

- ☞ The PTT recently opened a philatelic sales counter for current stamps, mint & cto in the sub-office Zürich 23 main Station. This is similar to that at Zürich 58 Airport and probably other places too.

- ☞ At the Corinphila auction the vertical pair of half-double Geneva's went for SFr.220,000 having started at SFr.100,000.

- ☞ The first major modification to the SBB network in 50 years, the Heitersberg tunnel, by-passing Baden on the express line from Zürich to Bern, was ceremoniously opened on the 27th May. A very nice special cancel was used.



The next event of this nature will be in 1980 when Zürich Airport will be connected to the express line from Zürich to St. Gallen.

- ☞ The booklet on 'Aushilfstempel', mentioned some time ago, can still be obtained from the author, Herr F. Berger, for about SFr. 3.- plus postage.

- ☞ The answer to Question No.36 is: 1922. Until the UPU Conference held in Madrid in the autumn of 1921 allowed the general use of surcharged stamps internationally, only the following countries would accept such stamps as valid: Bavaria (!), Denmark (from whom the idea came), Italy, Portugal, Russia and Hungary.





- ☞ Question No.37 is: Which Great Britain stamp shows the Swiss national flag?



Did You Know?







July 1975

-  The Corinthia Jubilee Auction was a big success. The total estimated price was SFr.8 million and the actual realisation SFr.11.7 million.
-  The hot-airship has flown but was not able to get to Zug, so the covers are waiting somewhere in Luzern.
-  I have been looking at fiscals here. A little while ago interest would have been zero, but now there are a few people who admit to collecting them, but not really as anything to do with philately. Two dealers have advertised recently in the 'Ganzsachen' Monthly: R. Hürlimann of Biel, and Mme E. Wagen of Lausanne. Don't expect bargains.
-  On 13 February 1975 (by coincidence the first-day of the first commemoratives) the largest shopping centre in Europe was opened. Leaving out all the superlatives relating to the shops, there is one record figure of interest to philatelists. The full name of the new P.O. in the building has no less than 24 letters, the longest I can find in Switzerland, not counting sub-offices, like 'Neuhausen am Rheinfall 2 Zollstrasse' or 'La Chaux-de-Fonds 12 Rotorama Horloger' or 'Spreitenbach 2 Einkaufszentrum'.

Luckily, on 30.10.74, '8301 GLATTZENTRUM b. WALLISELLEN', with 24 letters, was closed. (See illustration right)
The Glatt is the river giving its name to the valley to the north of Zürich in which the village of Wallisellen lies.




-  There are quite a few self-service PO's in use now, with their own cds, used when staffed for a few hours a day, i.e. one cannot stamp one's own mail. A nice long one is 'Schlieren-Lille Selbstbedienung', but these must be classed as sub-offices.
-  There are five of these self-service PO's in Zürich now, but opposition is so great politically all over Switzerland that the PTT has said no more will be established. No doubt with an eye on the rising number of unemployed.
-  The answer to Question No.37 is: S.G. Nos. 715 & 716, both celebrating EFTA. Note that on these two, and on the two Swiss stamps mentioned last month, the proportions of the Swiss flag are shown incorrectly as it is a square flag, not oblong.
-  Question No.38 is: which Swiss definitive, still valid, would lose you most money if used on a letter to-day, based on 1975 Zumstein prices for mint/used?



Did You Know?





August 1975


 From 27-29th June 1975 the tenth 'REGIOPHIL' was held in Porrentruy – SFr.1.50 Porte de France (Z.422). There were 171 exhibitors with 955 frames, of which 9 with 40 frames were members of the SVP Swiss Postmark Society.


G.A. Nicolet and F. Berger received Silver for Postal Automation and Aushilfstempel respectively. Other postmark entries did not do as well illustrating the battle still to be won in getting postmarks recognised by the 'classic' judges. Postmarks have the disadvantage that they are not expensive enough, even though many are much, more rare than Basel Doves, Rayons, etc.


Silver at a Regiophil is necessary as minimum qualification to exhibit at a National.


 The next two Regiophil will be held at Dietikon (near Zürich) in 1976, and Lugano in 1977.


 On 30th August the usual annual Zumstein catalogues will appear, and the long-awaited 'Ganzsachen' catalogue in its 6th Edition. More than twice the size of its predecessor, but at SFr.19.- not cheap.

 As the decision of the Swiss Parliament to raise internal postal rates from 1st January 1976 is still held in the referendum period (and therefore may be rejected by the people) the Pro Juventute committee are not sure what will be the most suitable values for 1976, i.e. during the second half of their sales period. So they have decided to issue the same combinations as last year, but with an additional 10+5c value. This will be printed by the PTT and have an interesting connection with 'The Day of the Stamp', to be held at Sarnen, Canton Obwalden, on 1.12.75.

 The above mentioned postal rates change will mean 40c instead of 30c for letters up to 250g, and postcards & printed matter from 15 to 20c. This will mean the reintroduction of a 20c value in the definitives.

 A dangerous German cancellation faker is on the job again. After being declared not guilty in Düsseldorf in December 1974, "as his customers suffered no loss"!! He is now happily advertising for Swiss unused stamps with damaged gum. "These he will wash and cancel to sell"!!

 The answer to Question No.38 is: Z.244, the Hodler 'Tell' of 1941. This 60c is still valid stamp and costs SFr.25 unused, but put on a letter its cancelled value is only 5c., i.e. 1/500th!


 Question No.39 is: In which Canton is the highest Swiss Post Office situated?





Did You Know?




September 1975


-  To my surprise the PTT is not only putting up the inland postal rates from 1st January 1976 but also the foreign rates. Originally these increases were intended to take place alternately, but even though Switzerland has the lowest rate of inflation in Europe, rises of 30% or so are apparently justified.


-  Another 'last' cds without PLZ has been found by G.A. Nicolet, in use by the GD PTT in Bern until 4.3.68.


-  So-called "Heimat-Sammelungen" postal history collections of a specific canton, region, district, valley or a single village (home town), are becoming so popular that a special exhibition category is being considered. My area is everything postal within a 6 km. radius from Bassersdorf, but it takes a lifetime of searching for such material.


-  The popular Pro Juventute booklets have their panes hand-separated and hand-assembled, so that no edges are machine-cut. They are often used as a small Christmas present, but as they are not on sale at ordinary post offices they are sold by school children door-to-door, together with the stamps.

They are naturally on sale at the Philatelic Bureaux; also for standing orders, and at the PJ secretariat in Zürich. From the latter also can be obtained the booklet, in German or French, describing the stamps of that year, but unfortunately the secretariat takes no standing orders.

-  Until the price of sets rose above SFr.2, Pro Patria and Pro Juventute stamps could be obtained from vending machines for a SFr.2 coin. These machines now give only three stamps of the set, plus a couple of commemoratives to make up the value. As this is not very satisfactory it has led the PTT to experiment with SFr.5. machines, giving a set of each, plus a few others.

-  Soon - when the rates go up - one will be able to obtain five postcards at 40c each (30c to-day) from vending machines for SFr.2. At present, cards cannot be obtained from such machines since the rate went up from 20c to 30c.

-  The answer to Question No.39 is Valais. This highest Swiss post office, on the Jungfrauoch, is politically in the Canton of Valais, but postally in District III, Bern. There must be only a few feet from the office to the cantonal boundary!


-  Question No.40 is: which GB stamp shows a Swiss monument incorrectly?




Did You Know?





October 1975


 I visited Heimisbach last Sunday, and after photographing the Post Office had a chat with the postmaster and found that there is no village of Heimisbach, only a post office, which lies between the two hamlets of Kramershaus and Thal. The old name of Dürrgraben represents the whole valley, as does Heimisbach.

In the upper village of Thal, the old wooden schoolhouse has been converted into a museum containing the books, manuscripts, photos, etc., of Simon Gfeller, who attended school in these very rooms from 1875 to 1884. His 80 year old son has an exhibition of paintings in another classroom. All beautifully presented. (See Helvetia Newsletter - July 1975).


 There is still no news of a 20c stamp needed for printed matter from 1.1.76. A 35c and a SFr.1.10, for 2nd step printed matter and registered letters respectively will come out in November with the Pro Juventute. There was only one 'spare' Wetli design available and this was used for the 35c. (Wetli having died recently).


 Just before the Zumstein Ganzsachen Catalogue appeared, a special loose-leaf edition of the Swiss section of the Dr. Ascher Ganzsachen Catalogue was published in Düsseldorf at approximately SFr.7. The prices are 1975, but the postcards are only up to 1969.

 The Müller 1976 Catalogue introduces a new system, in that in addition to the usual bound booklet at SFr.7.90, loose sheets are also available at the same price, but the ring binder costs SFr.13.,90 and stiff index sheets SFr.6. It is not clear if for next year only the additional and corrected sheets can be bought,

 Once again a Liechtenstein stamp has been badly printed (they have extremely high standards in Vaduz) so that only a limited number were on general sale after all standing orders had been met. It is the Fr.1.30 issue on 4.9.75 and printed by the Austrian Govt. Printer, Vienna. (The previous incidents were caused by Harrison).

 The new SFr.2.50 'Solothurn Cock' is printed on the 'old' thinner phosphor paper with violet fibres. I wonder what paper the new SFr.1.10 will be printed on.

 The answer to Question No.40 is the 3d violet of 1949 showing the UPU monument in Bern. The lady at the right is flying round the wrong way! (S.G.500)


 Question No.41 is: Which Swiss stamp shows the oldest man-made object?




Did You Know?





November 1975


 With reference to the July 1975 edition of Did You Know, Dr. Ganz has found a Swiss Post Office with an even longer name than '8301 Glattzentrum b. Wallisellen' (24 letters), i.e. "3361 Röthenbach b. Herzogenbuchsee" (26 letters). See illustration




 In contrast to Germany and France the sale of Swiss stamps with a charity surcharge has dropped very little. Reasons are varied but appear to be that Switzerland has only two such items a year (excluding blocks to finance important exhibitions), both with a long tradition: a large proportion of households is reached as school-children sell these stamps from door to door and there is no need for negative publicity to warn people that the value paid is not the postal value, since at least two generations know this from personal experience of selling them as children.


 The excellent show of 'Fischer Post' sheets in the PTT Museum (by A. Rauber) has been superseded by 'Cancellations on Old Swiss Stamps' from the collection of Dr.W.Roth of Basel (until 19th January 1976), Many unique and fascinating covers are shown with Sitting Helvetia perf., but mainly on Strubels, together with many mixed frankings.

 I'm reminded of the collector of classic stamps who, on returning from a lengthy business trip, found that his wife had a nice little surprise for him. He had once said that stamps without teeth were usually more valuable than those without, so she had trimmed them up for him! Moral - never tell your wife too much!

 At the end of August, Ernst Müller celebrated his 70th birthday. At 17 he started his own stamp business, Marken Müller, and sold it 40 years later. He organised Youth Contests from 1929, brought out his first popular album in 1938, and did the plating of the Rayon II. He was also President of the Swiss Stamp Traders' Society for 15 years.

What many do not know is that he was also a founder of the Balair charter firm and President of the Basel Air Training School. He has also initiated the building of houses, especially for pensioners. Truly active in many fields.

 The answer to Question No.41 is on the Pro Patria 10c of 1972: the harpoon points found in Burgäschi Lake are the oldest man-made objects so far found in Switzerland.


 Question No.42: Where is this lake?





Did You Know?





December 1975


-  Following the good experience with two stamps of the same value in the same issue, practiced during 1974, the PTT are now doing it no less than 4 times in 1976: for both special issues, the Pro Patria and Pro Juventute issues, with the 40c for inland letters up to 250g. The other two values of each set of four will be: 20c for inland printed matter up to 50g, and 80c for letters up to 20g, for CEPT countries.


-  In February next year an illustrated postcard for 40c (sold at 70c) will be issued to celebrate 50 years of the Swiss "Ganzsachen" Society. They are holding an exhibition in Burgdorf in the spring and there will certainly be a special cancellation of some sort as well. Nice to see this appreciation by the PTT.

-  A new gag for UN collectors is to have a letter cancelled on the first-day in Geneva, then sent by Express (or taken) to New York to have the US UN stamps put on and cancelled on the same day, thus having the Geneva and New York issues on the same FDC. It does not work the other way, not because of the sun, but because the Swiss PTT will not cancel a cancelled letter.


-  The new SFr.1.10 has the "old" paper with fibres. Have a look.

-  In addition to the usual stamps and coins, the annual "*Liechtensteiner Briefmarken Katalog*" published by Phila-Verlag, Vaduz, introduces another special area in 1976, which has been researched in detail, namely telegraph covers and special postmarks, so-called signets.

-  None of the SFr.20 million material exhibited by Swiss exhibitors at the badly run 'ARPHILA' show in Paris this June suffered permanent damage. This was due to the personal efforts of the Swiss commissar Max Guggenheim and in spite of the organisers!

-  The answer to Question No.42 I quite unwittingly had given at the top of the article last month! The Burgäschi Lake lies only 4 km. south of Röthenbach bei Herzogenbuchsee, and the nearest village, Aeschi, has the same postcode No.3361.

This tiny shallow lake lies on the border between the Cantons of Solothurn and Bern.

-  Question No.43 is about First Day Cancels: On the 27th November 1975, a special cancel was used for the two new definitives issued on the same day as the Pro Juventute stamps, which have their own cancellation. On which day previously were two special FDCs used?

The FDCs in three languages used from 1948 to 1959, are not the answer.