



Did You Know?



January 1978

- ☞ The Swiss Telephone Dept had a very good idea of introducing a scheme, whereby a telephone conversation could be 'given' to a friend - a sort of telephone token. A form can be obtained at any post office and any amount above SFr.20 paid in to the recipient's telephone account. At the same time one received a postcard with which to inform the recipient of the gift. The card, with a forget-me-not picture on the front, is pre-paid with the usual PTT impression in red, but this time in letterpress, i.e. very clear.

Not only is this card an official 'Ganzsachen' but comes in all three languages. Genuinely used ones will be good to find, especially as the card is rather thin and easily damaged. Of course the French ones are only to be had in Western Switzerland and Italian ones in the Canton Ticino, so that is a difficulty.

- ☞ Another type of PTT postcard is also being followed with interest. It started with the 'Gansabhauet' in Sursee on 11.11.1977; not only did the PTT provide an attractive special cancellation, but also a postcard with an exact replica of the 35c stamp on the front, with space for a block of four and the cancel. But strangely enough there is no mention of its source, although sold only by the Philatelic Offices.

This was followed by the 'Escalade' 40c in Geneva on 10.12.77, but with the Mobile P.O.



cancel, and on 31.12.77 by the 'Achtringele' 50c Laupen. The two others which could have been done at this time, i.e. 5 and 20c, will perhaps come in a year's time. The 80c for the 'Vogel Gryff' in Basel on 13th January 1978 is already announced. A very attractive series, poorly handled.



- ☞ At last it has become law that the Federal Council alone, and not the whole Parliament, can decide on postal rates and changes.
- ☞ PEN has brought out a brochure on all machine cancellations of the UN in Geneva. Sfr.12-14, in French. Complete, and useful to UN collectors. A5 size, 18 pages.
- ☞ The 1977 supplement to the 1973 PEN catalogue of all Swiss special and MPO cancellations is now available at SFr.11, but he hopes you would prefer to buy a copy of his new up-to-date 1978 Edition.

PEN also publishes in March a French/German catalogue of all known 'Aushilfstempel', about 5000!

- ☞ The answer to Question No.66 is: that CEPT was founded in 1959 in Montreux (see Z.347-350), but for previous years of Europa common issues, Switzerland did not issue stamps in 1956 and 1958.
- ☞ With the great interest in gutter pairs these days, Question No.67 is: In which year did Switzerland sell to collectors the first inter-space pair, including the large punched hole?



Did You Know?



February 1978

☞ The PTT have explained why it is almost impossible to find un-smearred copies of the 1977 (25th August) 'Culture Protection' 40c used stamp. The stamps were test-varnished after printing and this impervious layer cannot absorb any of the cancelling ink. Apparently the test was made to check the effect when used on the forthcoming Pro Juventute stamps, to prevent the silver (and gold?) printing coming off. We will see.

☞ A new issue of the PTT postal codes (alphabetical) was issued in November 1977.

☞ A new cover design for the green SFr.5 stamp booklet had appeared. This uses the rectangular PTT signet, instead of the old post-horn, and, curiously, is stapled twice. The contents and rear cover advertisement for Zumstein remain unchanged.

☞ The popular set of PTT postcards "*The Messengers of the 13 Old Cantons*" has now come in a new edition; the cards have a beige background and are varnished. The packet too is beige and has another picture.

☞ The UN Geneva failed to inform everyone, including their New York office, that at the exhibition held last October in Paris they were selling a special new type of souvenir card for FFr.10. Each had a SFr.3 UN Geneva 'definitive' stuck on and cancelled with their ordinary date stamp.

Those not sold at the exhibition can now be bought from dealers, the well-informed ones that is; at a multiple of the original price. One wonders if they realise how much damage they do to their already shaky reputation by such completely unnecessary tricks.

☞ Although I'm not in favour of the UN PTT special agency stamps, UIT, UPU etc., as there is no real postal necessity for them, I must report that the PTT have a few left of a special version of their red presentation folder, containing only the recently issued stamps of these five agencies, i.e. 1973-76 at SFr.17.

All stamps of the earlier editions, 1956-60 are still on sale in Bern (except superseded colours) but not for long, so order if you still need them. CTO also available and is almost the only way to get used copies.

☞ The answer to Question No.67 is: 1910 according to Müller.


☞ Question No.68 is: How many of the stamps just mentioned are available from the Philatelic Bureau in Bern, and at what face value, both old and new editions?





Did You Know?






March 1978


-  At the beginning of February 1978, a regional organisation of all philatelic societies around Zürich held their third annual non-competitive exhibition in the Glatt Shopping Centre. As usual with such shows one sees a lot of unusual exhibits that contain material which is not considered in a competitive (but boring) show. More than 60 varied exhibits in 356 frames, about half thematic. Bourse at the weekend too. Good publicity for the clubs taking part.

 -  At the above show I saw, in a very good Pro Juventute collection, a nice forged cancel on a 1912 vignette, in that a cancel had been used which could not have existed in 1912, i.e. postal district number in the lower segment was in roman numerals. This system started in 1915 at the earliest. Most places received either a new canceller or had their old one modified during the 1920's. Some places never!

 -  One of the difficulties of publishing information on postmarks is that one inadvertently helps the forgers to select the correct type when they turn a cheap mint stamp into an expensive 'used' one - from SFr.5 to SFr.175 in the case of the PJ mentioned above. That is also why the PTT does not allow the reproduction of postmarks (or stamps) within 30% of the correct size. The forger might get the type right, but not the exact diameter, thus revealing the forgery to the expert.

 -  For the first time since 1961 (Europa issue, 18.9.61) a French 'Jour d'emission' is being used for the special issues of 9.3.1978, instead of the usual 'Ausgabetag' of Bern, because of the LEMANEX being held in Lausanne this year.
(See illustration - note, no stops).
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-  At the last moment the SVP persuaded the PTT to issue the four LEMANEX slogan cancellations (one per language) on the day of issue of the stamps on 9th March, instead of the planned 15th.

 -  The answer to Question No.68 is: .42 old stamps (7 per agency) at a set price of SFr.22.50 and 20 new stamps (4 per agency, except BIE) at SFr.14.20. Note that the old ones are all the same values per agency, but new ones have slightly different nominal values.


 -  Question No.69 refers to the LEMANEX block: which other Swiss stamps show something of the lake steamers?





Did You Know?





April 1978


-  On the 11th March the SVP had a Club Auction of about 170 postmark items and very high prices were achieved for 'K' cancels; the highest was for K.259 Riffelalp, catalogued at SFr.250. A cover fetched no less than SFr.505. This post office above Zermatt was burnt down early in May 1961, together with the hotel buildings in which it was situated. As the publicity cancel had been in use only since the previous 1st September, not many cancels exist on letter. It is less rare on PTT sheetlet (catalogued SFr.150), because of the standing orders for these with the PTT.


-  In November 1977 Monaco issued a stamp commemorating 75 years since the first tests made there of "Goudronnage" or asphaltting, by a Swiss Dr. Guglielminetti. He was the first to use a mixture of gravel, sand and filler, held together by bitumen.


-  Another country has also produced a set of stamps with a Swiss connection, i.e. Grenada, with a set of four stamps showing ceiling pictures from the church in Zillis. They prove very well that one cannot just reproduce a photo, but must redraw the subject to make a successful stamp, as the PTT did with their 12 views of the same subject.


-  In addition to telephone, radio, TV and electricity bills, one can now have one's Philatelic Bureau standing order account charged directly to one's giro account automatically.

-  The PTT have now started to provide 24 hour 'Bankomat' outlets for their giro account holders.

-  The automatic stamp vending machine (A1) in Zürich main station has been changed back to the original one-button type (see DYK of December 1977). It seems that none of the other three were changed, but that the PTT has now ordered several hundred, each with its own number.

-  I have found out from the PTT that the 70c definitive showing the age-old procession in Mendrisio, had its original Hebrew text purposely modified, so that Arab countries would not refuse letters so franked. (See Question No.63 in September and October 1977 DYK).

-  The answer to Question No.69 is really none. It is quite incredible that such a subject, so popular not only with tourists, has never been shown until now. The 5c 'Transport Museum' stamp of 1959 comes nearest, while the 10c Pro Juventute of 1928 shows two anchors to represent the Sulzer Engineering Works in Winterthur, who built many lake steamers, including the 'La Suisse', 20c stamp of the LEMANEX block. The 10c Pro Patria of 1942 shows a boat of doubtful origin. However, many cancels and slogans show lake steamers.

-  Question No.70 is: Which ship on the LEMANEX block is doing something peculiar?



Did You Know?





May 1978


-  The PTT is out of the red, and has been able to pay back its debts from the deficit years of 1971-3. This means that all plans for raising the postal rates have been shelved. Swiss inflation is running at about 1% per year.

-  The 'Lemanex' block comes packed in two versions. The first, obtainable only from the Philatelic Bureaux, contains a set of six, numbered 1-6, i.e. one rotation of the printing cylinder. Sale price SFr.30 with label in red, in clear plastic sealed cover. The second type is for ordinary counters and contains 20 blocks more or less with same number, Sale price Sfr.100 with label in black, also in sealed clear plastic cover. So one has to be careful if one is in the habit of sending the wife down to the local PO for a 'packet of blocks!

-  Packets of ordinary and special stamps also come in two different packs, both of 500 or 1000 stamps. Those at the Philatelic Bureaux are unfolded and specially sorted out for good perfs of those printed by the PTT in Bern.

-  The number of stamps printed for the PTT has dropped by a quarter in the last 15 years, due to the doubling of the number of office meters in use. The PTT prints in recess about three to four times the number provided by Courvoisier in photogravure. About 750m total printed in 1977.

-  The total production of Courvoisier, for almost 60 postal administrations, is delivered to the PTT printing works for checking, including all waste, as the weight must be exactly that of the paper rolls used, less the weight of the perfs! All checking is done, therefore, by the PTT only, for all countries. The PTT inspector permanently at Courvoisier seals all machines, printing cylinders etc. to provide the high security needed.

-  The eight special, and very attractive, official 'Lemanex' covers, one per stamp of the block, show not only the ship in question, but also a plan view, of the lake and the badge or pennant of the operating company. The small initials 'USPS' in the lower left corner do not stand for 'United States Postal Service' but for 'Union Societes Philatélique Suisse'.

-  Opinion is hardening here towards collecting blocks only as a unit, as sold by the PTT, and not splitting them up into all sorts of combinations. Therefore, only for se-tenant counter sheets would pairs and blocks of four be considered.

-  The answer to Question No.70 is: that the 'Verbano' has its sails filled, but with the wind blowing the smoke the other way. After a lot of discussion the consensus is that the wind is blowing from the side!

-  Question No.71 is: Which other stamps show the same buildings as this year's 'Europa' pair?



Did You Know?



June 1978

☞ During 'Lemanex', as with all previous exhibitions, a vast number of old but still valid stamps held by speculators large and small, were used to make all sorts of combinations with the 'Lemanex' stamps, e.g. 25c 'Lausanne', stamps of other exhibitions etc. The PTT happily cancel them, glad to have them permanently removed from the possibility of postal use.

☞ The small post office at 1234 Vessy, near Geneva was inundated on 5th June with requests for cancellations to give 1234 5.6.78-9, but I doubt if it has a time reel in the cancel.

☞ Liechtenstein has done it again. On 1st June, Duke Franz Josef II celebrated 40 years' reign by having four values showing views of his castle in Vaduz. However, these very attractive stamps were issued only in sheetlets of eight stamps each.

Dealers were loath to break up sheets, and they were right as the issue was sold out in a day or so. Now a set of sheets cost about four times nominal of SFr.19.20, and singles are also difficult to find.

The above stamps were also issued on postcards having the same picture, but as they were cancelled with the First Day cancel the term used by the FL Philatelic Bureau "Maximum Cards" is clearly wrong. Sold out on first day.

☞ The double stapling used for the 'new' SFr.5 booklet (see February 1978 issue of the Newsletter) was also used for last printing of booklet with the old PTT signet. I think this must be a very rare type, as I have seen a few in only two POs here. At least I found out from the PTT that the reason for this double stapling is to prevent the booklets becoming jammed in vending machines.

☞ Zumstein brought out the 22nd edition of their "Specialised" on time for 'Lemanex'. I was unfortunately too late with my suggestion that the 'table of postal rates.' which they printed some years ago in the BBZ, should be up-dated and included, but they promise to do so next time.

☞ Zumstein also brought out for 'Lemanex' a new book on the "Standing Helvetia" stamps. By Georges Valko, in German, entitled "*Ueber den Druckprozess & die Abarten der stehenden Helvetia 1882-1907*", 78 pages, 180 illustrations, at SFr.20.

☞ The answer to Question No.71 is: the 40c shows the same building as the 10c of 1956 (Z.325), and the 80c was shown on the 1924 pair, 20 & 30c (Z.167/8).

☞ Question No.72 is: If a twelve-stamp Pro Patria series had been made using the lake steamers of the 'Lemanex' block, which other lakes would you have used?



Did You Know?



July 1978

- ☞ 26th June was the first day of sale for "Do it Yourself" labels from the four test vending machines without the numbers A1 to A4. Those in the know managed to get FDCs.

During the next five years 500 of these new units will replace some of the 3400 machines now in use. They will be put up mainly at railway stations and main PO's. The labels will carry no identifying number, thank heaven!

- ☞ The Swiss Aero-Philatelists have issued a new edition of their 'Luftpost' catalogue, giving details of all first flights, etc. SFr.32. Essential for those interested in this field.

- ☞ On 1st July the Albula line of the Rhätian Railway celebrated its 75 birthday. The special cancel will not have been used often on Z307, taking up my previous remarks in the Newsletter into account, i.e. SFr.9 mint, 10c used!



- ☞ PEN also brought out his magnum opus on the 500 'Aushilfstempel' of Switzerland in time for 'Lemanex'. Price: SFr.43/46.

- ☞ As well as the above, the fourth part of the new "*Stempelwerk*" appeared at 'Lemanex', consisting of loose sheets only. SFr.30. This is now complete.

- ☞ The answer to Question No.72 is: Swiss lakes in order of size (with value of stamp in 'cents' from 'Lemanex' block. Geneva. (20, 40), Constance (40), Neuchâtel (40), Maggiore (20), Luzern (40), Zürich (80), Lugano, Thun, Biel, Zug, Brienz (70) and the Walensee.

- ☞ Question No.73 is: Now that we have twelve castles of different types shown on the last three years of Pro Patria stamps, a very nice mini-collection of castles and fortifications could be made. Which other Swiss stamps do you suggest?



Did You Know?



August 1978

☞ In a recent BBZ there was an article "*Brief aus Chicago*" by Felix Ganz, in which the American Philatelic Society have put the Lemanex block on their long list of unnecessary issues, too big and too expensive. Quite right too, but for the PTT to be put into the same list as those countries which produce virtually nothing else, is a bit unjust.

☞ The Fr.1.30 "Sun" of the 1973 Architecture series is likely to become the key value. Only to be found in sets of singles at the Philatelic Counter, but perhaps at some small PO's still. Used examples are difficult to find in good condition.

☞ The 50c airmail stamp (Z.2) had been given the first-day of 30.4.1919, i.e. before the 30c value, until now; when an article by Hr E. auf der Maur, in the latest BBZ throws the whole matter open!

Almost sixty years late he has discovered that five previous flights were made by the Swiss Air Force from Dübendorf-Bern-Lausanne, and back. The reason being that the SBB was short of coal, also strikes were holding up the trains, so that delays of up to three hours were being felt in post deliveries, such as Zürich to Bern. Shows what can still be discovered to-day in an area thought to have been thoroughly researched.

☞ All the exhibitors at Lemanex received a copy of an 80 page A5 book in French "*Les Postes du Valais*" by Louis Vuille, of which one hears excellent reports, but I cannot yet say where a copy may be obtained, as it was published by the Lemanex Organisational Committee.

☞ Michel has also brought out a "Specialised Swiss/Liechtenstein" catalogue at DM16.

☞ On 3rd July this year two further automatic label vending machines were installed in Basel and Luzern.

☞ The answer to Question No.73 is: that there are quite a number of castles and fortifications; sometimes ruins only, shown on Swiss stamps. In the Pro Patria group: 1938 Laupen; 1942 Geneva; 1944 Mesocco. In the Pro Juventute group: 1930/1941 Schaffhausen; 1930 Fribourg; Sion 1934, and also on the 1953 MPO issue. Among specials I can find only two: 1948 Neuchatel and 1958 Nyon. In definitive series there are some interesting ones, but often the military-to-civil relationship is difficult to determine. There are the 5 and 10c values in the old 1935 Landscapes issue. In the Historical Buildings series are Basel, Lenzburg, Bern, Luzern, Neuchâtel, Schaffhausen, Porrentruy, Frauenfeld and Liestal.


☞ Question No.74 is: which stamps show military uniforms and arms, to make up an interesting thematic-type mini-collection?




Did You Know?





September 1978


 The latest sub-office to be opened in Zürich is "TMC", as it is situated in the new seven-storey "Textil and Mode Center". This complex, on the clearway to the airport, houses about 200 textile and fashion wholesalers, so deserves its own P.O., which will also serve this new developed area. (see illustration)




 In connection with the issue of the Fr.1 and 2 on plain phosphorescent paper (see details in September 1978 issue of the Newsletter), although a first-day of 24.8.78 was announced for sales from the Philatelic Counters, no New Issue service was provided, but sent-in collectors' FDCs were still being first-day cancelled on the 31st. It was not stated if all future reprints of other values will be announced.


 With the reprint of the 40c Geneva 'Escalade' stamp on the same date, violet-fibred paper, we have just the opposite to the above. No other values will be reprinted on this paper.

 28 years after the Air India plane "Malabar Princess", on its way from Bombay and Cairo to Geneva and London, crashed on Mont Blanc at a height of 4747 m., one of its post bags has been found at the foot of a glacier and the contents distributed to eleven different European countries. I wonder if the covers were stamped "Delayed by Glacier Mail"!

 The answer to Question No.74 is a bit difficult. Should one include the Tell and Tell Boy with their crossbows? I suggest the Fr.10 of 1938 with a helmeted soldier, and of course the 1941 Historical Figures, and the 20c girl of 1965, but the 40c of 1974 shows a target pistol (not a military weapon).

The Pro Juventute 30c of 1921-25 depicts soldiers in different uniforms, but should one include the Pro Patria frontier guard of 1948, the 1950 target shooting and the 50c daggers of 1975?

 I don't think the PTT would have decided to issue the 40c SUVA se-tenant sheet on 14th September, if they had known at the time what a fuss would be made about the 'Lemanex' miniature sheet with all its combinations, or would they?

 This brings me to the inevitable Question No.75: How many stamps are needed to obtain a full set of single pairs, strips of three, blocks of four and six?



Did You Know?



October 1978

☞ Quite without warning the Swiss PTT issued a 40c stamp on Monday, 25th September to celebrate the birth of the new Canton Jura. On Sunday there was the official referendum and when the positive result was announced on TV news at 8p.m. that evening, they also showed the new stamp. No first-day special covers or cancels.

☞ Another Swiss-German MPO cachet has appeared. See Illustration right.



☞ 'Philatelica' has a regular 'Post Office of the Month' feature, for which readers send in a report of good philatelic service and decent cancellations. Recently the PTT house magazine started to reprint these articles, and created quite a lot of interest amongst postmasters, and a further spur towards better service to collectors.

☞ Another watermark has appeared on Swiss (and Liechtenstein) postcards, type V, in 1978 on the 'old' issue and now on the new one issued on 14th September. This is an 'L' for Landquart.

On this new card the 'all-over' phosphor of the bus issue, and previous, has been dropped in favour of a fluorescent bar 7 x 28 mm. to the left of the value block. This is to give a better effect in the ALF machines, as a third one has now been installed in Geneva, following Bern and Lausanne.

☞ The number of PTT New Issue subscribers increased by 10% during 1977, to a total of 147,300. Philatelic sales are about SFr.25m.

☞ The answer to Question No.75 is: 63 stamps, nearly 1½ sheets: three singles, three vertical pairs, three horizontal pairs, three vertical strips of three, three horizontal strips of three, three blocks of four, three horizontal blocks of six.

I have not included vertical blocks of six, as the standard PTT strip of three, as on the FDCs, is horizontal, but this would then make the total 81, or SFr.16.20.

☞ The next Question - No.76 - on this interesting sheet is about the blocks of four. The three types can be given the name of the language of the stamp in the top left-hand corner, and a total of ten blocks can be obtained from each sheet. How would one divide up three sheets into thirty blocks to give the lowest number of Italian blocks and equal numbers of German and French blocks?



Did You Know?



November 1978

☞ On the 9th October the PTT announced in the PTA that 2,009,378 copies of the LEMANEX miniature sheet were issued, i.e. sold; lower than I had expected, considering that the last one (INTERNABA, 1974) went to 2,173,505. As so many sheets were split up because of the combinations, the number of complete sheets in speculators hands must be small.

☞ A Society is likely to be formed in Switzerland for collectors of First Day Covers. Some years ago, a similar specialist society was created for collectors of blocks of four. I'm thinking of forming a club for collectors of upside down postmarks, or downside-up as they say in Australia.

☞ Genuine old FDCs, i.e. from the time before the term existed, are much sought-after. Lot 249 of the first auction by a new firm "Interphila Monatsauktion AG" of Zürich, held on 30th September, was a cover with both 1918 Pro Juventute stamps cancelled on the first-day 1.12.18, to Copenhagen and correctly franked. Bidding started at SFr.3250 and ended at SFr.10, 000 + 12%. Fantastic or ridiculous - what can one say?

The above firm has postmarks on cover as their main feature. So has Rölli in Luzern; for instance in their seventh such auction in September, a K13 on cover, Villars-sur-Ollon with the cloud, went for SFr.1600 + 12% - incredible!

☞ The famous Dr. H. Faucherre collection sold by the Rapp auction firm, brought in SFr.1459, 455 for the Basel Orphanage. Mostly a postmark collection in depth.

☞ The 3 x 40c. se-tenant strip carries the initials of the State Insurance Accident Organisation in the three languages, as follows:

SUVA	= Schweizerische Unfallversicherungsgesellschaft
CNA	= Caisse nationale suisse d'assurance en cas d'accidents
INSAI	= Istituto nazionale svizzero di assicurazione contro gli infortuni

☞ The answer to Question No.76 will be given next time, as a sketch.

☞ Question No.77 is: which countries did not accept Swiss Pro Juventute surcharged stamps on letters and postcards, etc., and until when?



Did You Know?



December 1978

- ☞ About 200 people knew about the 'secret' Jura stamp, and kept it to themselves. A cover was quickly placed over the old flat-bed machine, used for first-day cancelling sheets of stamps in the PTT Printing Works in Bern, during a visit of foreign journalists a week or so before issue.

Each of the eleven Postal Districts were sent all the stamps for their PO's in advance in sealed cases, the contents known only to the directors, As soon as the result of the referendum was clear at about 5 p.m. on Sunday, the packets were distributed, so that all PO's had a sufficient supply on Monday morning, ready for the rush.

If special FDCs had been made and distributed, too many people would have been involved for safety.

- ☞ In 1976, 250 postmen were bitten by dogs. However, the PTT can legally refuse to deliver letters to owners of unfriendly dogs.
- ☞ In November the Briefmarken-Tauschclub of Bern celebrated its 75th birthday. Not only did they have a cachet issued with a special PO cds, but they published an excellent brochure on the posts of Bern. All known handstamps up to about 1900 are listed. A copy has been obtained for the HPS Library, but all the articles are in German.
- ☞ In a leaflet publicising the Giro service the PTT say there are no less than 19,022 post boxes in Switzerland, However, as far as I know there is never any pre-selection made, e.g., town, country or overseas slots.
- ☞ In the October issue of the Newsletter I made a small mistake by saying that the luminescent bar on the new PTT postcard was fluorescent, but a careful check in darkness has shown that there is a slight afterglow, i.e. definitely phosphorescent.
- ☞ There is a proposal afoot to introduce a three-star designation in stamp catalogues: "gum without stamp"!
- ☞ The first 'K' cds with a Swiss-German text was K.700 EGGERSREIT with the text "äschöns Gebiet", 7.8.78. Now another has appeared, K.709 on 28.10.78 for GEROLDSWIL.
- ☞ The answer to Question No.77 is: that until the issue of 1921, only Bavaria, Denmark, Italy, Portugal, Russia and Hungary would accept letters bearing Pro Juventute stamps.
- ☞ Question No. 78 is: How many stamps with heraldic arms will have appeared by the end of 1978, excluding the Swiss cross in all its forms?