



Did You Know?



January 1979

☞ On the 31st July 1978 the 'Lemanex' block was withdrawn from sale at all PO's (as had been originally announced), but it is now available again in the annual packs: price SFr.20 for 18.20 worth of stamps plus 1.80 for the attractive red hard-covered folder (155 x 215 mm.) This can be used as a swop booklet etc.

☞ At the same Röllli auction at which K.13 with cloud went for SFr.1600 (rumour has it this was found by the seller in an English circulation packet for £1 for the stamps on the cover) the same cancellation went for 10c.

In a stockbook lot there were about 500 odd K cancels of below average quality, but a bidder had seen a perfect K.13 there too; he got the lot for SFr.60!

☞ The first time that all Swiss stamps of the year were valid together and could be cancelled on the same cover, was 25 years ago, on 1 December 1955. I now have 25 such covers, although one now needs 2 large covers per year, excluding blocks.

☞ On the 4th December 1978, the ninth Philatelic Office was opened in Chur. A special cover was issued, with text in German, Italian and two Romansch dialects.

☞ When the main Philatelic Office in Bern reopened in the new Parkterasse (above the railway station) on 14.5.1964, special envelopes were issued in German and French and (not known in Switzerland) also in English, for English-speaking standing order customers. I bought one at 'Stampex' some years ago.

☞ A new philatelic magazine 'PHILAPOST' has appeared. Published every three months, it will contain articles of interest to the "politically interested collector", whatever that may mean, and for the collectors of Soldier stamps. Printed on art paper the reproductions are very good.

☞ The 1979 'Europa' stamps for all CEPT countries, will be devoted, to the "History of Posts and Telecommunications", with Switzerland putting in the Basel Dove post-box (three still in use) and the Jungfrauoch with its highest PO in Europe, and a mass of radio and TV relay aerials.

1980 will be "Famous People", rather uninspiring, and 1981 "Folklore".

☞ The answer to Question No.78 is: the number of Swiss heraldic stamps is 56, made up of: Definitives 8; Pro Juventute 56; Pro Patria 12, and of course many cancellations, making an interesting collection.

☞ Question No.79 is about the old Pro Juventute 'Arms' stamps, namely the 10c of 1925 (Z.34) - what does the 'VR' stand for?



Did You Know?



February 1979

- ☞ The new 'cut' booklets have an identical make-up as before, but have a salmon pink cover with new design. The stamp paper is fibre-free. There is a strong feeling amongst collectors that complete sheets should not be put on sale, as there would be far too many combinations available.

The German PO also discontinued the sale of sheets for booklets when they introduced cut edges.

- ☞ The PTT Philatelic Bureau have assured me that an announcement will appear in the PTA, when the next middle-value definitive stamps are to be released on the new fibre-free phosphorescent paper. The SFr.1 and 2 having come out on 24th August 1978.
- ☞ For three days before Christmas 21st-23rd), an 'old' custom was revived, following years of prodding, in that Bethlehem, the suburb of Bern, once again had a special Christmas cancellation. In the years 1956 to 1960 a special PO and cancellation were in use for the two weeks around Christmas. The custom was discontinued when the village got its own PO, Bern 27, in 1961.

The new cancellation (see December 1978 issue of the Newsletter) is a bit different from previous ones shown in the PEN catalogue, with fixed date.

- ☞ In 1978, a new club was founded in Geneva, "The Great Britain and Commonwealth Philatelic Society (Switzerland)", with a good number of members all over the country. A circulation packet has started and a new issue service is planned. Articles are required for their monthly 'News'.

- ☞ The new slogan used in Bern for the centenary of the Art Gallery has a nice humorous touch in that the Bernese bear is shown off his place in the town arms, when looking at it



- ☞ Last September the PTT introduced a new 'R' label for their packets to standing order customers. The printed invoice contains a field which shows through the window of the envelope, similar to a previous type used years ago. In this field is written '3000 Bern 1 Annahme', a large red R, then the computer printed five-figure number.
- ☞ The answer to Question No.79 is that in 1597, when the Canton of Appenzell split, with the Protestant 'outer' part leaving the 'inner' old Catholic part, the new half Canton was allowed to retain the original arms, but with indication of "Ausserrhoden" (= outer forest clearing), which in Swiss-German is written "Ussroden", but as Roman inscriptions used a 'V' for 'U', the result became 'VR' and has been used ever since.
- ☞ Question No.80 is: the new series of four 'Portraits', the last for the time being, was designed by Hans Erni, to be released around his 70th birthday. Which other stamps has he designed?



Did You Know?



March 1979

☞ On 31st December 1978 there were 275 cancelling machines in use in Switzerland, including FL & UN Geneva (two each). Of these, 152 are American 'Flier' type and 123 German Klüssendorf. The eight largest PO's have 23 machines between them, including the two ALF units in Bern and Geneva.

In 1977 and 1978 only one Flier and one German machine were put into service, showing the downturn in business, when compared with the 40 machines put into use on 5th December 1967, 33 of them German table models, this day being a record.

☞ The PTT has turned in another bumper profit for 1978, SFr.450m, which has caused an immediate drop in prices for local and foreign telephone calls, so the telephone has brought in more money than the post! How many postal administrations count on slow delivery of the mail to push up telephone calls!

☞ From the beginning of February to 3rd June, in the Postal Museum in Bern, there is a unique exhibition of telegraph history, especially about the 'Telegraph' stamps. These were a complete flop, as it was much easier to pay for a telegram in cash at the counter than to work out the cost and put stamps on the form before handing it in.

Actually it's a wonder that they existed as long as they did, 1868 to 1886. At this time it was permitted to use ordinary stamps if one wanted to, and this is still possible today: A special field for specialists.

☞ In 1978 the number of standing order customers of the PTT Philatelic Service increased again by 10% to 160,000. Deliveries are post-free if at least two sets are ordered, and everyone gets a very nice New Year's card too.

☞ The Liechtenstein Philatelic Service has 95,000 customers, and the UN Geneva 25,000. By the number of printed stamps which have to be destroyed by the latter each year, they are not doing as well as hoped. But the extreme symbolism of all issues makes their stamps uninteresting in the long run.

☞ The answer to Question No.80 is: that Hans Erni of Meggen, near Luzern, had previously designed eight Swiss stamps, i.e. 1949 Pro Aero, 10c Water God in 1964, 20c Pegasus in 1969, and the five 'Portraits' in 1972. All outstanding designs.

☞ Question No.81 is: Who are the foreigners who have taken up residence in Switzerland and are shown on Swiss stamps?



Did You Know?



April 1979

- ☞ As their contribution to the 1979 "Year of the Child", the PTT have equipped twelve mobile exhibition vans that will travel around different school playgrounds from 30th April to 29th September.

The first 'PTT-Mobil' as they are called, was shown on TV one evening in late March, outside the Swiss Parliament building in Bern, with the PTT-responsible Federal Councillor Ritschard in attendance to a class of children - no doubt a dry run to discover what they broke first!



Not only can they practice cancelling letters (see the Romansch example above of the four different cancels to be used), but also use pushbutton phones, send telexes, use television cassettes etc. Only for organised school classes.

- ☞ Another flood of 'Spring' auctions is upon us. Where all this material comes from, and who has the cash to pay the millions asked, is a bit of a mystery.
- ☞ In 1978 the PTT delivered 756m stamps to post offices and collectors, of which 544m were printed in their works and only 212m by Courvoisier. In 1977 606m and 155m respectively.
- ☞ Zumstein discovered a neat error in a press release from Monaco in a six-stamp series celebrating the centennial of their opera house. The 70c value carries the name of the Swiss composer Arthur Honegger, but spelt Honneger. Zumstein complained immediately and we will see what comes next.
- ☞ 'Lemanex' had a loss of SFr.1.2m, but the profit from the block sales was just over SFr.3m, so that the net benefit to the "Fund for Furthering Philately" was SFr.1.8m. However, the low interest rates now being paid in Switzerland, about 2% has reduced the 'income' to the fund for various projects.
- ☞ In 1983 there will be a major International Thematic Exhibition in Basel, the "Tembal".
- ☞ The answer to Question No.81, as far as I can discover, is two men: Rousseau - 1962 Pro Patria (Z.108) and Einstein - 1972 (Z.514).
- ☞ Question No.82 is: Without looking up the catalogue, can you say when a Swiss stamp appeared showing the above Swiss composer?



Did You Know?



May 1979

- ☞ This year's 40c 'Europa' stamp shows an old post-box with the Basel Dove motif. The post-box was the creation of Melchior Berri, who also designed the Basel Dove stamp. There are three of the original twelve post-boxes still in use.

This motive has been used before on the FDC of the SFr.1.10 stamp of 1975, and on a German stamp too.

- ☞ Sometime in 1978 the PTT started to use a 'whiter' paper for their 'R' labels, which is being collected by the few label collectors here. The number of post offices with old stocks of 'R' labels without postcode must now be about zero.

- ☞ The new publicity datestamp K.731 used by Feldis/Veulden not only has a text in Romansch, but in the rare Sutsilvan dialect, one of the five recognised Romansch written dialects. "*Sulegl ruos a beala vesta*" - "Sun, quiet and beautiful view" of the 3000m high Piz Beverin shown on the cancel.



- ☞ A third type of 'automatic label' will be catalogued by Zumstein. The first type was with the four trial numbers, A1-A4, the second type with no number (as in use everywhere). The third, with slightly smaller text, was first put into use in Zürich 23 in March; the new cliché is made of zinc and should wear less than the previously used plastic.
- ☞ The Swiss Thematic Club has brought out a second volume, also by Ernst Schlunegger, describing all the Swiss Local Publicity Datestamps, which continues where the first volume left off in 1969. Each is arranged alphabetically, and is complete up to 19th March 1979. In German and priced at SFr.15.
- ☞ The new Philatelic counter in Chur 2 (the old main PO in a lovely building in the town, i.e. not the station) has shown an extraordinary initiative in selling no less than 20 covers with the arms of various Bündner tourist centres, as well as some other special event covers etc.

Also their 'R' label says "7002 Chur 2 Wertzeichen" which is unusual, in that if located in the same building as a normal PO then their 'R' labels are used. Normally, a special 'Wertzeichen' label is used only if the Philatelic counter is situated away from a PO, as in Luzern.

- ☞ The answer to Question No.82 is: the 80c of 21.9.1972 (Z.515).
- ☞ While on the subject, Question No.83 is: which other Swiss composers have been shown on their stamps?



Did You Know?



June 1979

- ☞ Once again the impossible has happened, and again in connection with the new Canton Jura. Last year it was the unannounced issuing of a commemorative stamp, this year the non-use of an announced special postmark, which was to have been used on 11th April by a Mobile PO to celebrate the 'Day of Sovereignty' of the new Canton.

On the 8th April the whole festival was called off by the Jura politicians because they did not like some of the home truths pronounced by the Federal Councillor most responsible for supporting them in their "Fight for Freedom".

An unfortunate small-minded affair.

About 40,000 items had already been cancelled by the PTT, and it was announced that these would all be destroyed. One hopes that none have been kept as special souvenirs (to turn up in a few years' time). Only the stamp value will be refunded, so that this has caused a bit of a fuss, especially for the local Philatelic Society, which had 50,000 covers printed for sale at an exhibition of Jura Philately.



- ☞ The first and last time an event did not take place, and for which a special cancel (and a specially issued stamp had been announced) was in Feb. 1977 when the World Championship in Ice Speed Skating was cancelled at the last minute because the ice was too wet in Davos (see March 1977 issue of the Newsletter).

This cancellation was, however, made because cancelled items had already been sent on their way back to collectors, and so a precedent had already been created. But to have continued with the Jura "event" would not have been politically possible, so one can understand the PTT's dilemma, and decision.

- ☞ The answer to Question No.83 is: that in addition to Honegger, there is Othmar Schoeck on the 50c of 1969 (Z.474), Abbe Joseph Bover on the 20c of 1978 (Z.612) and Hans Georg Naegeli on the 5c Pro Juventute of 1936 (Z.77). The 5c Pro Patria of 1954 mentions Father Alberich Zwysig.
- ☞ Question No.84 is about the sixteen Pro Patria stamps showing castles, now that the series is completed. In which Canton are most of these situated?



Did You Know?



July 1979

☞ The PTT are still in trouble over the non-use of the "Jura" special cancellation of 11th April. All 40,000 unsealed covers have been apparently destroyed, senders receiving the stamp value only in return. But before sealed covers can be destroyed they have to be opened in order to return the contents, and for this they need the written agreement of the sender. It seems that some senders are not giving permission to let the PTT look at the piece of cardboard stiffener inside. There will be some genuine letters as well of course.

It would have been much easier to have cancelled the lot, and then added a cachet in French 'Event not held'.

☞ A correspondent to the Neue Zürcher Zeitung's weekly philatelic column has suggested as so many rare stamps are being re-gummed these days (to please those who feel the gum more important than the stamp itself), that the remains of a hinge actually should be taken as proof that the gum is genuine.

☞ The 1980 Zumstein pocket catalogue will have all FL stamps in colour as well this year. A new feature is that for an extra SFr.1.50 one can have a spiral binding. This useful 'lay-flat' version is copied from the Kottelat catalogue, which has been doing it for years.

☞ In 1978 a number of sheets of the 40c 'Escalade' definitive were dated '6.IV.88', forms 2 and 4 only.

☞ In connection with 'The Year of the Child' the PTT are having a special show in the PTT Museum in Bern, in which toys with a PO flavour are on show; old children's telephone sets, etc. In addition children are being asked for their ideas for a new PTT Museum, and also half-day courses on stamp-collecting.

☞ Last weekend I visited the newly arranged PTT section of the Transport Museum in Luzern. Not only were all the stages of steel-engraved stamp printing on show for three-colour printing (of a new printing-trial stamp), but a lovely model of a complete printing press also, and partially working too.

☞ It is claimed the Rapp auction held on 23-28 April in Zürich was the 'biggest philatelic auction ever held anywhere. 10,630 world lots were all sold. Also the total reserve was SFr.9m; the price achieved was over SFr.25m, plus 12%.

☞ The answer to Question No.84 is: that the Canton of Vaud has the greatest number of 'Pro Patria castles', i.e. four: Grandson; Aigle; Chillon and Oron.


☞ Question No.85 is: which other events were not held on the published date and received an excusing cachet?





Did You Know?




August 1979


 To put the record straight the PTT did pay 40c per cover, plus the stamps, for the aborted 11th April 'Jura' cancellation.


 Schönenwerd has had its cancelling machine taken away (it has gone to Menziken) due to falling business caused mainly by the decline in the fortunes of the local Bally Shoe Factory, sold by the family to a financier, Bally certainly had a meter canceller, but smaller secondary firms did not.


 Luzern has recently had some interesting machine slogans. The one for the 50th National Shooting Festival was in the four national languages, while the other is in Esperanto, to welcome the 64th World Congress on 28th July. There have been a number of Esperanto postmarks over the years in Switzerland.





 The 1979 edition of the alphabetical and numerical Postcodes have just come out, with a special section in the former on the recent changes, to list all the post offices in the new Canton Jura, their postcodes not having been changed.

 In the June issue of "Tell" (voice of the American HPS), I found something I had not been able to discover in Switzerland, i.e. that there were twelve PTT 'Mobile' in use in the summer: seven in German-speaking schools; three in French and one each in Italian and Romansch areas. These units are fitted-out containers without wheels.

 Collectors of Switzerland on foreign stamps will be delighted with the Fr.20 stamp to be issued by Liechtenstein on 6th September, as it shows St. Luzius and St. Florian from frescoes in the old church in Waltensburg/Vuorz near Ilanz in Graubünden. It is interesting to note that the Philatelic Bureau in Vaduz will take back these stamps from standing order customers who find the amount too much.

 Winkler's classic 'Vorphilatelie' will not be revised and extended, but only corrected and reprinted for the next National Exhibition in 1982. First editions reach about SFr.200 at auctions these days.

 There will be an International Meeting of UN Collectors in Geneva on 5/6 October to celebrate 10 years of UN stamps from Geneva.

 The answer to Question No.85 is: the Julier Alpine Winter Post of 1935. Those from St. Moritz to Chur are rarer than those in the other direction.

 Question No.86 is: which other Liechtenstein stamps show St. Luzius?



Did You Know?



September 1979

☞ Both Müller of Basel and Kottelat of Bern have issued their 1980 catalogues, in colour too, and as with Zumstein for Switzerland, Liechtenstein & UN Geneva. Kottelat has been able to use the same colour blocks as Müller, which are somewhat deeper in tone than those of Zumstein. All are priced at SFr.8.50, but with Kottelat this includes the useful spiral 'lay-flat' binding.

☞ As last year I was too late to buy the first delivery of the Michel 1980 Specialized Switzerland/Liechtenstein Catalogue, which shows the interest given to this annual.

☞ Only 40,244 "progressive prints" of the 'Lemanex' 20c stamp were distributed or 'sold'. This big miscalculation by the organisers will hopefully inhibit future souvenirs of this kind.

☞ In fourteen main PO's, the parcel counters have been using, since June 1979, FRAMA automatic (cancelled, i.e. dated) label issuing machines. This time-saving system has been in use in various other countries for years. Brazil and South Africa come to mind, so is not as new in conception as the 'stamps' of similar appearance. The latter have been catalogued by Zumstein, for all three types, together with FDCs, but the former will not be catalogued, a moot point. (See illustration)



Note that "11/1" denotes first machine in second postal district.

☞ The SVP has bitten off more than it can chew with their ambitious revision of the PTT slogan catalogue, started after the very successful 'K Handbook', published in 1977. A supplement to the latter will most likely appear this year. It is hoped that the slogan 'Handbook' will come out in 1980, covering all slogans used up to the end of 1979. HPS Members will get definite news in this column as soon as possible.

☞ A Women's Lib group has complained, correctly, that the PTT has not shown any Swiss women in their recent series of portrait stamps.

☞ The answer to Question No.86 is: that St. Luzius was also depicted on Liechtenstein stamps in 1942, 20c (Z.166), 1966 Fr.10 (Z.206), 1959 Fr.1 (Z.344) and 1968 Fr.2 (Z.632).


☞ Question No.87 is: which Swiss stamp (it comes in four versions) commemorates a famous battle which took place outside the present borders of Switzerland?











Did You Know?



October 1979

-  The new SFr.3 stamp showing the baptismal font of the church in Saanen, Bernese Oberland (or bare-knees Oberland as someone once said) is the first stamp of the Architectural series to be printed only 'on the new fibre-less paper.


700,000 SFr.3 stamps are needed per month, therefore as the new stamp is half the size of the old one, only half the printing time is needed. The Express fee is SFr.3.
-  The SFr.3.50 stamp showing the Benedictine church in Engelberg is the last of the historical monument series still in service, and is therefore to be replaced next year with an Architectural motif.
-  The PTT have said that the three remaining 'Evangelists' will not be replaced by a new high-value trio before 1982.
-  A new philatelic publication on postal history etc. will appear in 1980, by H. R. Schwarzenbacher and printed in German. A sample has been sent to all those on the distribution list of the "Interphil" auctions.
-  The Swiss PTT has now followed Vaduz (and hoping for the same financial success) in issuing a so-called maximum card for the ESA 80c stamp on 6.9.79. As with FL the Swiss postmark has no connection with the subject shown on the stamp and card, and is therefore not a 'maximum' at all, but look at the prices in the new Tanner catalogue.
-  Under "philatelic" pressure the PTT is going to change its rules in 1980 to allow maximum cards to be cancelled on the address side with another postmark.
-  A large supplement to the Sulser "Soldatenmarken" catalogue is to appear in October, with new areas covered, such as military postcards etc.
-  The answer to Question No.87 is: the Battle of Calven 1499 sited about 6 km. from the Swiss border in the Müstair valley, in the German-speaking part of Italy. See Pro Patria stamps and miniature sheet of 1940 (Z.5, 7 and 10).
-  Question No.88 is about the latest set of commemorative stamps which have just been issued. Two are horizontal, two are vertical, a unique layout for Switzerland. When last did two vertical stamps come out on the same day, commemoratives that is, not Pro Patria, Pro Juventute or Europa?





Did You Know?





November 1979

 The Swiss Philatelic Bureaux are selling an attractive booklet for SFr.5 called “*Swiss by Choice and Ancestry*”, containing the eight mint portrait stamps issued in 1978 and 1979. The title should read “*or Ancestry*”. Available in German, French, Italian and English, with potted biographies.

 The SVP internal auction held in the Transport Museum in Luzern on 27th October (together with three short talks on exhibition sheet layout) was a big success, proving that good quality 'Italian' slogans are going up and up in price. A well-known error slogan "Grosser Preis der SCWEIZ", i.e. without 'H' went up to SFr.54 (No.4.5.78a of 1951).

 The second volume of the pair “*Die Schweizerischen Privatbahnen*”, by the Avanti Verlag, is available at SFr.12. Together all non-nationalised railways are dealt with in detail, including rack and rope railways. Maps of each region show the exact route of each line, excellent photos show rolling stock against typical landscapes. Technical data includes, in many cases, last year's profit.


 A typical 'private' railway is a limited liability company with the greater part of the shares held by the Canton, villages served and other public bodies, with only a very small number of shares in the hands of individuals today. Increasing support comes from Federal funds. A list is given of the railways that have been replaced by motor buses, or vanished.

 For the first time in a Swiss town, the HPO got a local publicity slogan (No.3.209) and the sub-office an LP cancel (K.755), on the same day. The glider





represents the well-known gliding-club nearby but the exact historical significance of the Swiss-German saying “From Grenchen by Jove”, I have not yet discovered.



 Early next year the PTT will have 32 'Postomat' 24-hour banking dispensers in service for their Giro customers. Philatelically, not of great interest, but it does indicate their marketing attitude and desire to keep abreast of latest commercial developments

In the latest Röllli auction catalogue an S13 Villars reached Sfr.2000, plus 10; it was a de luxe cover, but still....!

 The answer to Question No.88 is: the pair of stamps issued in 1924 to commemorate 50 years of the UPU (Z.167/168).


 Question No.89 is: what was the period of validity of these stamps?





Did You Know?





December 1979


-  Many a tourist has ambled along the Carl Spitteler promenade in Luzern, and now the Swedes have issued a stamp in his honour, as he received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1919. The background of this stamp shows his 1845 birthplace, Liestal. He died in Luzern in 1924. A pity Switzerland was not the first to honour this Swiss poet.


-  The PTT has supported the Pro Juventute Committee very well with new and special cancellers for the arms stamps, a special for Schwamendingen and two new 'K' cancels for Cadre and Ferrey, with first-day being the same day as the stamp. But with Rüte they have slipped, there is no such place. It is a district in Canton Appenzell IR. Nearest cancel is the 'K' for Weissbad.


-  A German dealer has apparently bought up all the Folklore 'maximum' cards the PTT put on sale with blocks of four matching stamps. In this way he can hold the market if these six can be called forerunners to the official No.1, the ESA 80c maximum card sold by the PTT on 6.9.79. He will do even better if the latter gets the number 7 with philatelists.


-  An interesting error has turned up after 17 years: the 1960 Pro Patria miniature sheet without the red signet and decorations at the top. There were eight blocks per printed sheet, so where are the other seven?


-  In February next year the new SFr.3.50 definitive will appear, showing the Astronomical Clock in the Zytglogge Tower, Bern. This looks like the end of the 1960 Historical Buildings set.

-  There has been a lot of comment recently that too few children are shown on Pro Juventute stamps, and that the arms series would have been better on Pro Patria stamps.

-  The new Pro Patria sets will have Tradesmen's Signs as the subject, a nice idea and suitable for many thematic collections.

-  On 24th November 1979 the Saas Fee K.32b was withdrawn, as somebody in the PTT discovered that they had also had a local publicity slogan 3.147 since December 1971, and double publicity is not allowed!

-  The answer to Question No.89 is: from 9.10.24 until 30.11.24, but by special decree any letters posted in a box on the last day, too late for collection that day, could be cancelled for the first collection only on the 1st December, i.e. with the Pro Juventute stamps. (See illustration).

-  Question No.90 is an easy one: which Swiss stamp shows the birth place of Carl Spitteler?