



Did You Know?



January 1980

- ☞ The special 'Jura' stamp has broken all records for a 40c non-definitive with more than 40.3m sold, about 50% more than usual.

The most sought-after postmark on this stamp is the machine cancel of the first-day (25.9.79) in Delemont, the capital, with the publicity slogan 'Delemont, a coeur du Jura'. All items sent in by post were hand-cancelled days later in Neuchâtel, Head PO of Postal District IV.

- ☞ No postal changes have been made necessary by the new Canton, as the PTT, correctly, considers itself above political delineations. Only four cancellers had their 'BE' changed to 'JU' behind the village name.
- ☞ Liechtenstein had costs of just over SFr.1m for all stamp printing and distribution etc. in 1979. Ignoring the Fr.20, there were 18 stamps at 70c on average with a print of each of about ¾m (they issue sales figures about seven years later) means a sale value of nearly 9 million. Profit SFr.8m.
- ☞ Liechtenstein must be one of the few countries with more standing order customers than indigenous population!
- ☞ On 1st July 1979 the PTT unified the various cancellers used by the 100 odd tiny 'Letter Acceptance Offices' (not to be confused with Parcel Acceptance Offices) so that all became hour reels in a standard cds. Previously some had straight-line cancellers, with or without postcode, or else without time reels, or nothing at all.
- ☞ During 1980 (between 17.3.80 and 20.10.80) all 1700 small PO's still possessing cds without hour reels, will get replacement cancellers with the hour reels. What do the collectors of last day, and first day postmarks do?

The full list may be obtained from 'GD PTT PB 13, 3030 Bern. Unfortunately, there is no up-to-date list available of the above letter and parcel acceptance offices. I tried.
- ☞ Some philatelic firms are selling old 'worthless' share certificates, such as the bankrupt 'Brazil Railway Co.' of 100 years ago, etc. etc.
- ☞ The answer to Question No.90 is: the SFr.2.20 (Z.425) Liestal tower of the Historical Monuments definitive series.
- ☞ Question No.91 really belongs to 1979, the 'Year of the Child': How many children are portrayed on Swiss stamps?



Did You Know?



February 1980

-  The cancelled 1940 National Fete block is rising in price above the unused 'NABA' block of 1934, if one can take recent auction results as correct. Watch out for faked cancellations.

-  The 1600 Swiss PO's without the time in their datestamps, more than a third of all PO's, will receive new cancellers this year in the biggest standardisation sweep since the postcode was introduced in 1964/5.

-  Only three years after changing the designs of their four decorated covers for collectors, the PTT have recently introduced new ones, i.e. suitable for the following cancellations, mobile post offices, special events, local publicity and the four main national annual exhibitions (Auto Salon Geneva, Comptoir Lausanne, MUBA Basel, and OLMA St. Gallen. Very attractive, but difficult to illustrate.

-  At the sixth Coil Stamp Auction a FDC of 9.8.75 with all four machine labels A1-A4 fetched SFr.350, and a set of four FDC reached SFr.220.

-  The Swiss firm Frama AG, of Lauperswil (BE), who make the above vending machines, have supplied at least three to Norway and now six will come to Great Britain, in red, instead of Swiss PTT yellow, and suitable for all UK coins, except old sixpences. Get ready to send me FDCs!

-  As from 1st January 1980 the old PTT definition of 'a letter is something below 250g in weight, and a parcel if heavier' has been modified, in that now an envelope, if below 500g can be sent as a letter (and is quicker) for SFr.1, or SFr.2 if registered, but with a small 'R' label.

-  Due to the creation of the new Canton Jura the German-speaking Laufental (13 PO's) is cut off. They are now voting if they should leave Canton Bern and join Solothurn, Basel City or Basel Country. At the moment, in a complicated and long drawn out process, it looks as though the Basel Country is the favourite.

Postally there will be no change as they are all in District V since 1849. I doubt if there will be a new stamp for this.

-  Question No.91 is somewhat hard to answer as it is not easy to see which figures are actually children. My estimate is eleven in the definitives (three appear on the 50c 'Bergun' stamp), six in the Pro Patria, and only thirteen in the Children's stamps, the Pro Juventute. Multiple stamps counting as one. Making a total of 30. Any comments?






-  Question No.92 concerns the moon shown on the new Jubilee cds for Stetten. Why they chose such a subject I don't know, but which other stamp shows the moon?




Did You Know?




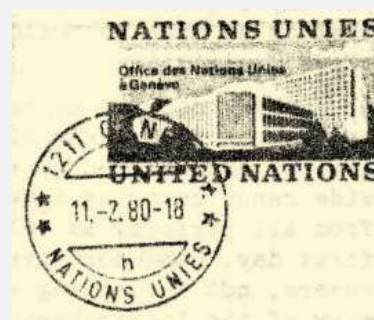
March 1980



-  The PTT had made another bumper profit in 1979 - now over SFr.1000m in three years, which shows that amongst other things the 33% jump in the standard letter rate (from 30 to 40c) was a bit too much in 1976.
-  The first supplement to the 1977 SVP Local Publicity cds Handbook ('K' cancels) is now available, covering the years 1977-1979 with all cancels illustrated, new alphabetical and numerical lists, additions to tables and the most important price revisions.
-  In the four years 1974-77 the average number of new 'K' cancels was 18, now for the last two years it is 40.. This shows the effect of the rise in interest in this type of cancellation amongst collectors which has been noted by publicity agents generally.
-  The 50th Automobile Salon in Geneva this year will celebrate not only with a special stamp and cancel, but also by showing the 50 odd thematic cancels from all over the world having transport as a theme. Nice idea.
-  The number of Swiss stamps printed in Switzerland dropped in 1979 from 756m to 737m. The PTT printed 531m and Courvoisier 206m. However, there were 4.1% more letters sent (and 5.5% more inland telephone calls, 11.7% more foreign calls).

The number of franking machines rose to 18,810 by about the biggest annual jump ever, over 1000, doubling the total in 11 years.

-  Corinphila is having its 63rd auction in March this year. 7400 lots at an estimated value of SFr.8m. The 390 page catalogue (free to potential buyers) has 16 pages in colour and 200 pages with b & w illustrations. Not only are all lots guaranteed for five year but the mark-up still remains at the old 10%

-  Once again the UN Geneva has issued a private cachet, announced at the last minute, for a small show held in Monthey from 7-9 February. PEN lists these but they are not mentioned in the Swiss PTA, so are not official, See illustration



-  The answer to Question No.92 is: the 50c EXPO of 1963 (Z.404) which shows something pretty near to the moon.
-  Question No.93 is suggested by the latest motor vehicle stamp, the 80c of 21st February. How many vehicles have been shown on Swiss stamps so far?



Did You Know?



April 1980

- ☞ A court case is pending concerning faked FDCs of 9.8.76 for DIY machine labels, as some have been found on registered covers which are not mentioned in the PTT lists, and also on the new post cards which came out three weeks later. Sad story.
- ☞ A study group has been formed for the Swiss Postage Dues, especially the very early issues. Contact Fritz Buchmüller, Sennheimerstrasse 14, 4054 Basel, if you have useful information.
- ☞ The PTT stealthily issued new SFr.5 stamp booklets in December 1979 or early January this year, cover colour blue, but contents identical to current salmon pink issue. Normally a change of colour indicates a change of content, but in this case denotes that the inside adverts are different, i.e. for the German 'new issues' giant Sieger, and Lindner albums. The former advert is in four languages, French, German, Italian and Romansch, adverts on reverse remain the same, i.e. twenty different.

- ☞ On 15th April all 65 postmarks in Liechtenstein are to be changed to include the full name. The event has been well publicised and twelve ordinary cds ('a' ident only) may be ordered from the Philatelic Bureau in Vaduz, but the true collector will also want the first-day and last-day of the others, such as three machine dies, four hand-rollers, Philatelic Bureau (seven all same) and perhaps the MPO.



- ☞ The 1980 Liechtenstein 'Europa' pair of stamps was sold out on the day of issue. As the majority of collectors have a standing order, the counter sheetlets (of 20) keep only the speculators happy, for a time.
- ☞ During the big garden show "Grün 80" in Basel (12 April-12 October) there will be a special cancelling machine in operation with its own die.
- ☞ On 18.2.80, Burgdorf 2 put a new 'K' cancel into service, and the last day of the old one, which was slightly damaged, was the 16th. But now an observant collector has found some covers with the new one, dated 14th February.

It seems that the philatelically-minded manager of the local bank sent out his annual report to 1500 customers with a Pro Juventute block of four on each cover. These were carefully cancelled, twice, by the postmaster, who used his nice new canceller!

- ☞ The answer to Question No.93 is: nine stamps, which show eleven motor vehicles.
- ☞ Question No.94 is: when did Liechtenstein last use their MPO cancellers?



Did You Know?



May 1980

- To celebrate the visit of Queen Elizabeth II to Switzerland (29th April to 2nd May), there is an exhibition of UN special stamps, illustrating her reign, in the PTT Museum. This collection, by Kurt Rolli of Lyss, will also show many of the philatelic curiosities of these issues.

It's a pity the PTT didn't issue a special cancellation for this very popular and successful visit, for instance for her opening of the new train line under Zürich airport, which comes into service on 1st June this year, giving direct mainline service onto the Geneva-St. Gallen line.

- The long-awaited "*Sankt Gotthard - Via Helvetica*" by Arthur Wyss of the PTT Museum, Bern, has at last appeared. 262 pages, large-sized, 50 of the 300 odd illustrations in colour, packed with information on the political, transport, and postal history etc., of this major Alpine pass.

Every cancellation type on the places en route, from Basel to Milan, is shown on oversize reproductions of old covers. There are editions in German, French, Italian and English but rather daunting at SFr.96 each.

- Another long-awaited book has appeared, following a first edition in 1946: "*Freistempelkatalog Schweiz/Liechtenstein 1980*" by Heiner Durst of Rüschtikon. This covers in full detail practically all there is to know about Swiss franking machines and their impressions. 178 A5 pages, innumerable illustrations, with pricing to show relative scarcity, SFr.18.

This catalogue-cum-handbook should assist and promote the collecting of these cancellations, a fascinating area untouched by speculators and 'philatelic' managers. However, where does one find the rare ones?

- By his find-of-the-century, Heinz Katcher has shaken the Swiss philatelic world with his 5c postage due on 'rays' of 1878.

- The answer to Question No.94 is: only in 1956 and 1962 did the Swiss PTT loan one of their Mobile Post Offices to Vaduz. As the text of the canceller already includes the full name, these have not been remade.



- Question No.95 is: that as the new 40c Europa stamp shows J.K. Kern, one of the founders of the U.P.U., which stamp shows a Swiss contemporary also concerned with this event?



Did You Know?



June 1980

- ☞ It is interesting to see that a well-organised Philatelic Bureau such as that of Liechtenstein can make a classic error, in that they destroyed all their Olympic stamps (due for issue on 9.6.80), but can hardly expect dozens of journalists all over the world to send back their blocks of four, which they received in advance of issue for comment.

The perversity of philatelists will now send the price of these 'labels' through the roof. It was courageous of the Principality to join the Olympic boycott, but now they are in trouble. For three days following the announcement they didn't answer the phone!

- ☞ The 90th Congress of the Association of Swiss Philatelic Societies was held in Weinfelden, in the building shown on slogan No.3.1.57. There was also a small exhibition, mostly of material from Canton Thurgau, and on the Sunday a bourse. The PTT MPO was in attendance on both days. These affairs give a boost to the local Club. 283 delegates were present, with simultaneous translation, German-French and vice-versa.

At this Congress the new Exhibition Rules were approved. This and other items had been discussed at the Meeting of Presidents held in Bern on 3.5.1980. About 90 Clubs were represented.

- ☞ Another small exhibition is being held in Thurgau's capital, Frauenfeld, in the house of J.K. Kern, on the various stages in the production of this year's 40c 'Europa' stamp, as well as other items of interest connected with philately in Thurgau.
- ☞ Four slogans came out on 2.6.80, publicity for writing postcards. In the three official languages and also in Romansch, but with a German text as well. This is because in Chur, where the slogan is being used, they are mainly German-speaking.



The official Romansch dialect, Sulsilvan, is not used where a suitable cancelling machine is available, so this is the new solution.

- ☞ The answer to Question No.95 is: the 30c of 1976 - E. Borel.
- ☞ Question No.96 is about the next rarest Swiss stamp which could exist twice, but has not yet been seen. What is it?



Did You Know?



July 1980

The PTT has had to postpone the introduction of the new cancellers with time reels, to the small post offices of the Zürich postal district (VIII) from 16.6.80 to 20.10.80, because the supplier cannot cope as there are nearly 1600 new ones to make.

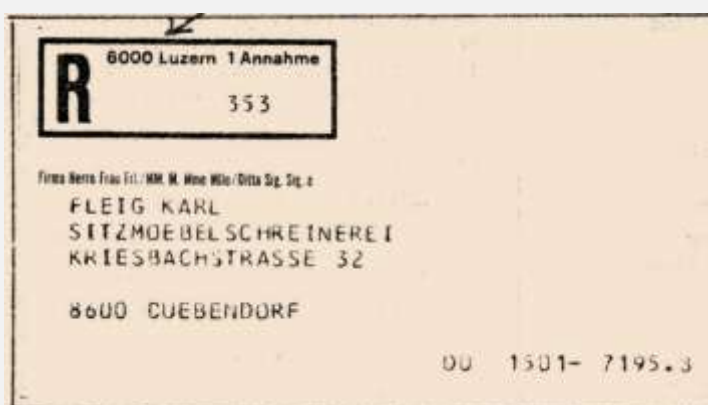
Several members have asked me about the long-promised SVP edition of the Slogan Catalogue, the 'M' Handbook. Well it is progressing, most of the periods of use are done, variants fixed, town die register virtually finished, all illustrations are available, but it has still to be put together. Publication this year is likely. This column will bring the good news to you in time.

Unexpectedly, not many foreign owners of the 'K' Handbook' have bought the 1980 Supplement.

Another anniversary is being celebrated this year: 50 Years of Courvoisier. The PTT can be pleased they've supported this firm during the difficult years of the early thirties. Now they deliver regularly to about 25 foreign administrations, on and off to about 60 all-told.

As the Swiss PTT check the whole printing process and the shipping for these foreign customers, it is almost impossible for a pirate firm to have their 'labels' printed by Courvoisier.

I have come across the first Swiss combined Registered & address label (with red border), from the State-run Employees Accident Insurance Fund, the SUVA, in Luzern, see illustration left, showing how the number is put in by computer at the same time as the address is written. There are likely to be other users of this system.



The answer to Question No.96 is: that just before the Katcher 5c 'rayed' postage due was announced, the NZZ carried an article on the then rarest stamp in their view, as follows: On each sheet of 50 of the 1924 Fr.1.20 (Z.164/1) the error 'HFLVETIA' (with 'F' instead of 'E') appears twice. The next year 2400 sheets were overprinted 'Société des Nations', but one sheet got inverted. Therefore the combination 'F' and inverted text must exist, twice, somewhere!


Question No.97 is: which Swiss stamps have been issued in connection with the SUVA?





Did You Know?




August 1980


 The 70c PTT Jubilee stamp is the only one of the set with an explanatory test, and that in German. Probably, at the last moment someone realised it was the only one that would not immediately be recognised by the housewife next door.


 In connection with this 50th anniversary there will be a special display at the PTT Museum in Bern, starting on 5th September. I hope to see it, and will report on it.

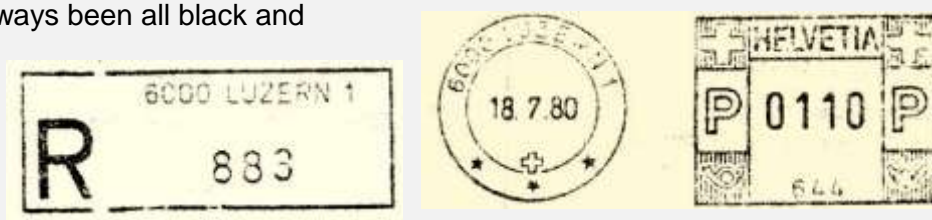
 The new special Souvenir No.3 pack, will be issued on this day for the same reason and will contain not only mint blocks of each of the four PTT commemoratives, but also a special recess printed multi-coloured miniature sheet (postally non-valid) at SFr.10 in any of four languages, including English.


 It costs SFr.5 to have one's holiday mail re-directed, but this year one is given a colourful postcard with publicity matter. On this card, in colour in the top left-hand corner, is printed the symbol and text shown in the June issue of the Newsletter, but in four languages, with English "Make friends - write cards" replacing the Romansch.


This card, with one of the four slogan cancellations, will be a collectable item.

 On the 2nd June a Telefunken ALF machine was put into service in Basel 2. So far only the wavy line 'slogan' has been seen, having the same small size as used in the similar machine in Geneva 1, i.e. 34 x 17 mm.

 Once again a small surprise comes from Luzern, another Registration variation, in that the 'R' is a wider shape, and the number is only three-figure. So far this type has had four figures (six in a couple of places). The two colours seem to be difficult to handle. Lugano has always been all black and Winterthur 1 all red, with many variations in other places.



 The answer to Question No.97 is: in 1968 the 10c (Z.457) and in 1978 the three se-tenant 40c (Z.609-611). There were also slogans used at these times.

 Question No.98 is: which of the implements shown on the 1980 Pro Patria stamps could have been useful in connection with a certain 5c stamp?



Did You Know?



September 1980

- ☞ The issue of the PTT Souvenir No.3 booklet has been thoroughly mismanaged by the PTT's usually efficient Philatelic Bureau, as they did not realise that there would be big interest in the perforated un-gummed vignette shown right.

To keep dealers out, this souvenir sheet was not mentioned in the PTA, or in press notices, so they are all annoyed as well.

It's not known where the price will end up, in our perverted land of philately. At the moment everyone is waiting for the doubtful news that a reprint will be made by the PTT.

I ordered a small quantity of booklets on 30th July, only to be told on 1st September that the English version was sold out in Bern. However the Philatelic counter in Zürich had them, but would only sell two per customer, all languages together!

My daughter in Lausanne got the last five in English for me, but one could buy as many of the others as one liked.

This was also the case at the actual sales counter in Bern, except for English and Italian. St. Gallen on the other hand rationed from the beginning. Very annoying.



- ☞ No less than 20 different machine slogans in even more places were available for suitable cancellation of the new stamps, as well as two for the new postcard. Usually the PTT section which organises the circulation of the slogans has no idea what new stamps will be issued, so many a chance is missed. However, this was not too bad as they usually cannot do a good clean machine cancel in any case. Too many Swiss machines have been far too long in service.
- ☞ The new Gibbons catalogue for Switzerland (with Italy) is not a good buy at £6.50, when compared with the Amateur Collector Catalogue, or the all-colour small Zumstein at half the price.
- ☞ The Swiss Fund for Furthering Philately has a capital of SFr.7.8m, but to-day's interest rates of 2-3% will provide little income for daily use. They intend to increase radio and TV promotion.
- ☞ In the latest issue of the BBZ is an interesting article on "50 Years PTT Stamp Printing Works". The PTT head said on TV that modern methods of communication and franking were reducing the demand for stamps and that this tendency could only increase in future, but that the PTT was still trying to improve its standards.
- ☞ The answer to Question No.98 is: that the 5c of 1961 (Z.375) shows a brick wall which could be built with the tools shown on the new 20c Pro Patria stamp.
- ☞ Question No.99 is: the new 70c stamp shows a stamp engraving being transferred to the printing roller, but what stamp is it?



Did You Know?



October 1980

☞ The saga of the Souvenir No.3 sheet continues, in that the PTT were completely sold out by the day of issue, and dealers are now asking between SFr.30 - 55, depending on language. The vignette alone from SFr.20 - 30. The number printed will not be published.

☞ The PTT has published a book in German and French, on "50 Years of Swiss Printing Works". Lavishly illustrated in colour, it sells at SFr.18, which includes a copy of the above-mentioned vignette!

☞ The Gotthard maximum card was also sold out on the day of issue: Although this is only the second, there are a number of interesting forerunners. In 1954 the PTT issued two for the World Cup football matches, one for the first-day and one for the last-day, selling at SFr.140 and 160 each to-day. Another card, issued in 1956, was for 50 Years of Autopost, now selling at SFr.75.

These two were 'discovered' by readers of 'Philatelica', complete with the official PTT announcements. The others are the six Folk Customs postcards, at about SFr.180 the set. These were sold by the PTT at SFr.15 the set with blocks of four stamps.

☞ At the recent BPE, I thought that HPS member Ivan Tillen deserved better than only a Diploma for his interesting "Retourzettel" display, especially when one looked at some of the 'Bronze' thematic entries.

☞ Schwarzenbach in Zürich has published a catalogue of all FDCs "*Ersttag-Katalog, Schweiz - UNO Genf*", at SFr.7.50. This covers more than the well-known Tanner catalogue, in that single stamps with first-day cancel are also covered. Of note is his statement that FDCs made before the PTT started in 1959, which are unaddressed, are worth more than those with an address. This is because there is the illogical attitude in Switzerland that an FDC should not have an address!

☞ The only place still selling some of the old poster reproductions as postcards is Zürich Airport, Terminal B main bookstore. They now want 90c a piece, so it would be worthwhile to find other places, further away from Zürich.

☞ The answer to Question No.99 is: that I think it shows the SFr.2.50 definitive of 1975 (Z.542).

☞ Question No.100 is: which Swiss stamps, other than SUVA issues, shows workmen?



Did You Know?



November 1980

-  The set of four Souvenir No.3 booklets is now running at SFr.200 at some dealers but I am not so sure that dealers are buying; they would rather exchange two German for one Italian or English booklet. A side effect of this run is that two previous Souvenirs are now sold out, following practically no sales for a year or so. So the PTT is pleased.

-  The Postal District VI in Aarau has decided to open three Philatelic Counters at Aarau, Baden and Zofingen. Usually, the full range of items is not offered at these counters, for instance blank FDCs are not sold.

-  The Office in Chur has about twenty covers of different resorts etc. on sale showing their coats of arms in colour, or similar.

-  During the recent annual UPU Consultative Meeting in Bern, for the first time, they would not cancel their own special stamps, even if on a card or loose. Almost the last legitimate method of getting such UN Agency stamps cancelled now removed. Pity.

-  On the 1st October the truly world-famous philatelic firm of Zumstein & Cie in Bern, celebrated their 75th Anniversary. Their authoritative house magazine, the Berner Briefmarken Zeitung (BBZ) came out all in gold and carried articles on the history of the firm, photos of all staff, descriptions of the instruments they have for examining stamps and other items. Also pages in colour of beautiful items on sale.

-  PTT Standing Order customers for special cancellations on cover got a pleasant surprise recently when they received the Liechtenstein special cancel of 24.5.80 celebrating '50 Years of the Ring of FL Collectors" on a Swiss PTT cover and on Swiss stamps!

-  For the first time the 25 Swiss Giro offices were allowed to cancel, by hand and machine, covers with a stamp, i.e. that for their own Jubilee, on 5.9.80. One does occasionally see covers cancelled with a 'Checkamt' hand cancel, but these are all 'under the counter' private efforts.

-  The answer to Question No.100 is: that workmen are also shown on the 50c of 1969 (Z.470) and on the 5c Pro Patria of 1947 (Z.34).

-  Question No.101 is: when did the Swiss PTT change the colour of their letter boxes from dark green to yellow?



Did You Know?



December 1980

☞ The PTT is in trouble with the Fund for Furthering Philately because their Jubilee book on "75 Years of Swiss Printing Works" was heavily subsidised by the Fund, as it is a handbook for all collectors on methods of printing, but now because of the "rare" Souvenir No.3 sheet, the book costs SFr.75 from dealers, who bought it for as little as SFr.10 from the PTT in bulk!

Some dealers in Zürich are asking for SFr.280 for a set of four of these Souvenir booklets. However, they don't seem to be so keen on buying.

A number of specialists got their Souvenir sheetlets first-day cancelled by putting either a small coil 10c stamp in the middle, or a stamp alongside. Silly I think to trick an unsuspecting girl at the counter into this illegality.

☞ The 40c. Geneva definitive temporary issue with fibres is no longer on sale in Bern, but Zürich Philatelic Bureau still has them. I have not seen many used ones about. Very often they are somewhat lighter in colour than those without fibres, but there is always a big range of colours in popular definitives as they are reprinted several times per year.

☞ Not many people take an interest in the printing dates and form numbers here, nor which machine has been used, as shown in the relationship, date to sheet number.

☞ After 40 years of continuous service the PTT underground railway, running only 340m from the Main station to the Main PO in Zürich, has been taken out of operation. However, a new trackless wagon will be put into service soon. This will have an electronic device which will follow a cable buried in the concrete floor.

☞ Liechtenstein has coil machines which issue stamps made up from sheets, so that collectors go after the joins. Now special issue stamps will be used instead of the previous definitives, giving more variety, and certainly more sales. Switzerland did this too, but only for the 'Landi' in Zürich and Expo in Lausanne.

☞ The answer to Question No.101 is: and a surprise to all persons I have asked -1939, for the 'Landi' held in Zürich. In 1949 the colour was changed slightly from a straw-yellow to the present orange-yellow. However, yellow was introduced in 1850 to unify the colours previously used by the separate Cantons and to establish the right of way for PTT vehicles on all roads, but letter-boxes were all dark green until 1939.

☞ Question No.102 is: that although 'offset' has never been used to print Swiss stamps, a recent item was produced this way. What is it?