



Did You Know?



January 1983

- ☞ The three 'figure only' coil stamps (Z.483-485) of 1970 are now being made on the new SSR 3 printing machine in the PTT's own works in Bern, as the original recess machine of 1936, the Goebels, or SSR 1, is now definitely pensioned off.

This means the number on the reverse of every fifth stamp is no longer upside down. Before this was generally known, some smart dealers were selling such 'errors' for SFr.25 a piece. So far only the 20c has been seen, but the 10c and 50c will soon follow.

Because the new cylinder diameter is larger, it seems that now every 16th stamp has perhaps a narrow or wide 'correction' tooth, instead of each 12th as before, but I have not yet seen this myself.

- ☞ The next NABA will be held in Zürich from 22 June to 1 July 1984, just 50 years after the first one. National Exhibitions are every six years in Switzerland.

- ☞ This year the 'TEMBAL', for Thematic collections, will be held in Basel from 21-29 May, another date not to miss.

- ☞ To send a wall calendar from Switzerland to the UK, 400g without commercial advertising, cost 38p, but the same calendar sent from UK to UK addresses costs 50p, but has less chance of damage.

- ☞ Fred Dolder is now 85 and still flying gas balloons all over the place, 570 so far, now mainly to raise money for children's charities, by taking special covers along for philatelists and others.

- ☞ Liechtenstein now gets 12% of its state income from philatelists via its sale of stamps. Which countries are now trying to do the same?

- ☞ I was not quite correct last month in saying that there are now six Philatelic Counters in Canton Zürich, as noted in the press on the occasion of the opening of such a counter in Winterthur, as it should have said "in the Postal Region VIII Zürich".

The six are (in addition to the main office in the Fraumünsterpost, 8022 Zürich), Zürich Airport, Zürich Main Station, Glatt Zentrum (Shopping Centre), Winterthur Main PO, Schaffhausen Main PO, and in Kreuzlingen Main PO, Canton Thurgau.

- ☞ The answer to Question No.126 is: that roses are shown on Swiss stamps on the Pro Juventute of 1964, and four times on PJ issues of 1972, 1977 and 1982: in 1971 the 20c commemorative showed a stylised rose as well, making fourteen in all.


- ☞ Question No.127 is: from a recent book by Dr. Schweighart of Austria, on all the stamps of the world illustrating ploughs, of the 273 stamps shown which came from Switzerland?



Did You Know?



February 1983







-  In the SBZ of January 1983 there is a warning that a large number of cheap (as mint) Sitting Helvetia stamps have appeared in strips and blocks with very nice clear cancellations - but applied in 1982!

Only the expert knows that the main body of the postmark did not exist at the date shown. So far:

Glarus Briefpost 2 XII 81 IX- and 22 VIII 83 XI-;
Winterthur 2 XII 81 IX- and 30 I 82 XII, and
Zürich Brf.Exp. 30 I 82 XII- and 16 X 69 IX-, have been found.

Note that the date block is separate to the method of postmark production chosen by the faker, so can appear in various combinations.

The PTT red-faced department has been on overtime because of the new SFr.2 Zodiac stamp for February 17th. The artist used an incorrectly printed illustration, so that the biggest glacier is flowing the wrong way!
The PTT has said this cannot be remedied in time. Another bad mark against this series.


-  The PTT is certainly sorry that this new stamp - with the mirror-imaged glacier - did not have a higher face value, as astonishing quantities have been ordered by the public, all banking on a later corrected reprint. Bad luck.
-  During a recent visit to the PTT Museum in Bern (20 frame thematic show on Dr. Koch and TB in general) I discovered some new (1980) booklets and postcards. Four A5, 25-page booklets, each available at SFr.1 in three languages (excluding English) describe the Post, Telephone, Telegraph and Radio communications.
-  Another booklet at SFr.7 was produced for 75 years of Postal Bus Services, with many interesting illustrations. Text in German/French only. A copy will be acquired for the HPS Library.
-  Zumstein has cleared up the coil stamp mystery in the BBZ of January 1983. As I guessed, the stamps are printed upside down now in relation to previously, and the correction tooth can now be every 14th stamp and not every 12th as before. Zumstein will now reduce the price of their 'number upside down' as this is now standard. The 10c has also now been seen in the new printing.
-  The answer to Question No.127 is: that a plough is shown on only one Swiss stamp, the 10c of 1941 (Z.252) when Switzerland was trying to reduce the import of German-permitted foodstuffs during WWII.
-  Question No.128 is: which other Swiss stamps show glaciers?





Did You Know?



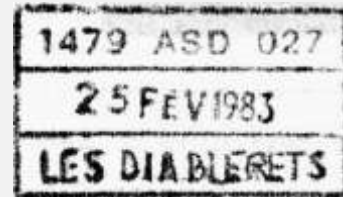
March 1983




-  In some American philatelic magazines last year, including 'TELL' of the AHPS, there appeared reports on a completely new procedure with Swiss UPU stamps which would enable anyone to have such stamps cancelled at the UPU PO, Berne 15, and that this would start in May 1983.

My enquiries to the PTT and UPU have brought only the vaguest of confirmations. I think the US reporters 'jumped the gun'. I suspect that this new system will start when a new UPU stamp appears on 22nd August 1983. Full details will follow as soon as I can establish them.

-  A certain amount of political humour has been released in Switzerland, with the issue of the 20c fish stamp on the 17th February this year, which shows an "Egli" fish (in English: perch). The humour is become Egli is the name of one of the two new Federal Councillors who took up office on 1st January 1983. The practice is that a living Swiss is not to be portrayed on a stamp, until now!
-  On a short holiday in the mountains I came across the private railway - Chemin-de-fer Aigle- Le Sepey-Les Diablerets (ASD), which is still using the electric locomotives and rolling stock from the time of the opening in 1913.

This railway, of great scenic interest, is apparently due for scrapping next year. Luckily I managed to get some station cancellations of Les Diablerets, and in the same office, the next station called Vers l'Eglise, because the Stationmaster let as do all my own cancelling!




-  The 16th Röllli auction held on 17-19 February attracted a lot of attention for a remarkable amount of interesting material (some obviously from the UK): further details of prices realised next month.
-  The answer to Question No.128 is: that I can find only two named glaciers: The Rhône glacier on the 15c stamp of 1934 and 1936, and the Tschierva glacier in the Engadine on the 50c of 1939.
-  Question No.129 is: which Swiss stamp was the first to show a specific person?





Did You Know?



April 1983


-  Max Hertsch of Zumstein's is to be the eighth Swiss to sign the 'Roll of Distinguished Philatelists' in October this year, an extremely rare honour for a professional dealer, but his research, publishing and jury work is also exceptional.


-  It now looks certain that on 1st March 1984 the PTT will have to increase the internal letter rate (for 250 g.) from 40 to 50c, but not as bad as the last rise on 1st January 1976. As the central government want at least SFr.150m. from the posts every year, politicians are saying the postage rise is just an indirect tax. We will see.


-  A 1981 press report, that mechanised sorting and coding of internal mail will be accomplished by 1990, has been confirmed, in that next year Geneva and Basel will get new equipment for line coding with ten desks each.

In 1985 the existing '2 out of 5' bars per digit desks in Bern will be replaced, and in 1987 Lausanne will be mechanised, also ten desks each. Zürich will receive 27 desks in 1990.


All this means that about 50 sub-offices will no longer have their own cancelling machines, as it is expected that all cancelling will be done centrally. Thereby this number of smaller POs will get machines for the first time.


-  Another famous stamp designer has passed away, Niklaus Stoecklin. Designer of 41 Swiss stamps, he is best remembered for the 16 Pro Juventute insects of the years 1950, 1952, 1954 and 1956, including the highest priced 'bee'. The background of each picture shows the favourite food of that insect.

-  I thank all those Members who have sent nicely cancelled stamps on their letters to me, by placing them 70 mm from the right-hand edge of the envelope.

-  The increasing interest in postal history is met by the new Michel 'Ganzsachen Katalog, Europa West 1983' in which 40 out of 600 pages are devoted to Switzerland.

-  This year it is hoped the seventh edition of Zumstein's 'Ganzsachen Schweiz' will appear (the sixth edition was in 1975), having been prepared with the co-operation of the Swiss Ganzsachenverein.

-  The answer to Question No.129 is: the pair of 1927 Pro Juventute stamps, 20 and 30c, showing Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, the first nameable person on Swiss stamps.


-  Question No.130 is: which Swiss stamps show designers' errors?





Did You Know?





May 1983


-  The SVP "Machine Cancellations Handbook" in French and German, with all slogans illustrated, and all dies of all towns shown, is now ready for printing, and the negotiations for the subsidy from the Fund for Furthering Philately have started. Stand by for further details.


-  A listing of all 'R' labels (Registration) used in Switzerland has died at birth. The Swiss Ganzsachenverein does not have the members who could or would tackle this immense task. Pity, I would have thought that a start could have been made with Exhibition and then MPO labels at least.

-  On 20th April, San Marino issued two stamps honouring the Swiss explorer Auguste Piccard. As the PTT issued a stamp in 1978 (Z.620) it is doubtful if the centenary of his birth in 1984 will be noted by another stamp.


-  There will be no special Swiss stamp in 1983 to celebrate 200 years of manned balloons, only a special cds in Mürren on 18th June, during the annual balloon meeting.


-  A rather unusual collection is to be seen in the Postal Museum in Bern from 19.4.83 to 26.6.83, i.e. "China and Mongolia on Letters" by Peter Holcombe of Luzern. Some of the interesting covers are shown in the April SBZ.

-  The Philatelic Bureau in Bern now distributes 'business reply' envelopes to all customers in Switzerland, so that orders can be sent in free. Nice idea.

-  The SBZ financial guru Alfred Iteel (ex Philargus) tips the overprinted 70c Sitting Helvetia of 1915 (Z.135) in which the right-hand '8' (of 80) has a broken line. Mint/Used price is now SFr.375/650, and he says there was a print of 3000 such damaged overprints, and that many were lost but still turn up somewhere.

I note that the mint price of the original 70c stamp is higher at SFr.400/10, even though the number printed was six times greater.

-  The answer to Question No.130 is: seven - see the May issue of the Newsletter for details of these design errors.

-  Question No.131 is: which Swiss stamp shows the same subject as the new 80c 'Europa'?



Did You Know?



June 1983

- I was overwhelmed with surprise when W.Cdr Bulstrode told me over the phone I was to receive the 'Rauch Trophy'. Thank you and I hope the pen will do its job for our Society.
- The 1983 stamp booklets (only SFr.5) appeared in May with an attractive new light-blue cover. Picture on front and basic layout same as before, except for the Zumstein advert which is now inside the front cover. Only five different stamp subjects, all new, but text only in German.
- The new postal rates in 1984 will certainly mean new booklet stamps, meaning that the 'narrow space' selvedge crosses have only been on sale for only two years. See my article in the June 1982 edition of the Helvetia Newsletter.
- With only 12,000 tickets sold the 'TEMBAL' in Basel did not reach the expected 20,000 visitors from the region of southern Germany and & eastern France



but it was a superb well-organised show for thematic beginners and specialists alike. With 40 postal administrations taking part, a lot of information could be picked up. Excellent catalogue – copy in HPS library.



The Swedish stand were selling a very nice maxi-card, their new SKr.3 stamp of a horse, cancelled with their special cds, but the main picture is the 20c Pro Patria stamp of 1965 showing one of the Three Kings, on his horse, taken from the Zillis church ceiling.


- A unique book "*Motivhandbuch Schweiz*" was issued by the SMV (Swiss Motive Society) in time for the 'Tembal' show. No.20 in their booklet series, A5, in German only, it describes on 390 pages the content of each and every Swiss stamp, postcards etc. The compiler, Dr. Schlunegger, drew on the services of 24 Society specialists for information from their study areas. Copy obtained for the HPS library.
- From the excellent "Postgeschichte" (H. Schwarzenbach) house have come the first two facsimile booklets on the old posts of Bern 1849 and of the Graubünden 1853. Similar ones will be published when worthwhile originals are found. Do HPS members know of anything suitable?
- Not many collectors noticed that the new 'K' cds of Sent, issued on 30th May, because of change of PLZ from 7551 to 7554, also had the slogan text changed from German to Romansch.
- The answer to Question No.131 is: that the cog-rail locomotive on the latest 80c 'Europa' stamp was designed by N. Riggerbach, who is depicted on the 5c Pro Juventute of 1942 (Z.101)
- Question No.132 is: which stamps can be associated with the latest 20c Pro Patria stamp?





Did You Know?




July 1983


-  An interesting series of A5 booklets is being produced privately by P. Meier & T. Diggelmann, on plate flaws and retouches: the first covers the photogravure (i.e. Courvoisier) Swiss stamps during the period 1940-1950. In German only, 72 pages, many illustrations, detailed description of the printing process and its difficulties.

-  There seems to be an increase in rumours that the PTT intend to re-issue the recent SFr.2 stamp showing the glacier in mirror image. So perhaps stock up on sheets, or at least some nicely used stamps, before the right ones come.


-  In the March Bulletin of the SVP, the editor Dr. J. Etter included one of the four 'K' cancels showing the Aletsch glacier, with the glacier drawn mirror image, as per the stamp, saying that the KX' cancels were all being changed over in combination with the stamp.


In his illustration he inserted the date 1.4.83. Some members sent in covers for the new cancellation and then complained to the PTT that they had been given the old 'wrong' ones. A very successful leg-pull!


-  As reported elsewhere, Josua Bühler, one of the most important men in Swiss philately, has died at the age of 89. He put the collecting of covers into postal history, which 50 years ago, was not easy, so we all have him to thank a great deal.


-  During a recent tour of the main Zürich post office, the Sihlpost, I learnt that in 1985 the complete parcel handling side will be in the new centre at Mülligen (a part of Schlieren) just to the west of the Zürich city limit.

Automatic parcel sorting will be concentrated here for the entire eastern part of Switzerland. After renovation of the 35 year old Sihlpost the new 27 desk MLO will be installed to handle all letters of the region in about 1990.

-  An extensive show of covers and documents on 200 years of ballooning started in the PTT Museum on 27.6.83 and runs to 4.9.83.

-  The 'REGIOPHIL XVI' in Chur, from 8-11 September 1983, is going to be an important event. A lot of new ideas are being tried out, especially to help juniors and new-comers. The first of a series of books on the cancellations of Graubünden, namely that for Chur, will be issued for the event, loose-leaf style.

-  The answer to Question No.132 is: that the latest 20c Pro Patria stamp shows the old coat of arms of the House of Kyburg, with one lion only. When they achieved more freedom they were allowed to have two lions, which are shown on the Pro Juventute 5c stamp of 1926 and 10c of 1928. The family castle itself appears on the 20c Pro Patria stamp of 1976.


-  Question No.133 is: that the latest 40c 'Europa' stamp shows a marvellous clock which, by the way, still works. Which other Swiss stamps show clocks or time?



Did You Know?





August 1983


 Swiss philately, and Basel in particular, has lost a stalwart in the recent death of Walter d'Aujourd'Hui, just after his 79th birthday. Every exhibition held in Basel during decades has profited from his help, and his latest book on the re-classification of the 'Strubels' is a milestone in Swiss philatelic research.

 I learnt a lot from Mr. D. M. Slate's excellent article on 'Trial Prints' (published in the Newsletter throughout 1983). My 'collection' of such items now has even more holes than before. These 'stamps' fetch large sums from unsuspecting collectors in Germany, especially when they have been 'expertised'!


This has made the PTT somewhat reluctant to hand out quantities lately, but that should not stop them giving out information on them. However, our type of detailed question probably poses problems which their sketchy records could never cover, therefore their reluctance.

 The August issue of "Switzerland", the four-language monthly of the Swiss National Tourist Office, has Altdorf and Tell country generally, as the motif. A lot of interesting photos and background information, also on postal coach routes. The July issue covered the Great St. Bernard, with a photo of the original of the 20c stamp of 22nd August, in the wonderful museum in Martigny.

 The Fund for Furthering Philately has agreed to support the SVP "Handbook on Swiss Machine Cancellations". More details later.


 In the September 1983 issue of the BBZ, Max Hertsch announces the discovery of another inverted background to a 1933 Pro Juventute stamp, this time on the 5c girl from Vaud. The 20c inverted was found ten years ago.

Who will find the 10c girl from Bern with the beige background inverted - remember there are 100 stamps per sheet? This was the first printing by Courvoisier when they used a sheet-fed press, which allowed such errors to occur, and they were still learning.

 The answer to Question No.133 is: that time is shown on six Swiss stamps:

20c Pro Juventute of 1923 (Z.27),
60c definitives of 1960 (Z.364) and SFr.3.50 in 1980 (Z.613),
20c special of 1967 (Z.450), and 15c clock museum (Z.545),
80c 'Europa' of 1976 (Z.577).

Include some of the many slogans and quite a nice little collection can be made.


 Question No.134 was asked by Dr. Ganz: which Cantons do not drain any of their rain into the Rhine?





Did You Know?





September 1983


-  The number of stamps printed has risen by 3% in 1982, against all predictions, 308 million from Courvoisier, 517m. by the PTT in their printing works. In 1982 the number of Frama machines for 'automatic' stamps rose from 380 to 450, and the private franking machines from 19,519 to 20,153. New issue customers rose to 193,100, but the PTT still refuses to say how much cash they extract from philatelists.


-  The exhibition in the PTT Museum is now devoted to Forests & Forestry, part of a 1000 sheet collection. Appropriate because of acid rain damage in all forests, including Switzerland, but also because the surcharge on this year's Pro Patria stamps went largely towards forests and their upkeep.

-  Following his RDP award, Max Hertsch of Zumstein is to receive a similar honour from France, the 'Academie de Philatelie'.

-  The Swiss Parliament has again spent time discussing sport stamps with surcharge. The Pro Juventute and Pro Patria organisations feel they will get even less support, and the PTT is against it. It is possible that perhaps at odd times a single stamp will be offered with a surcharge, as for the Pro Aero.


-  Followers of the ATM, i.e. 'automatic' stamps from Frama machines, will be interested to learn that in the future the PTT will not exchange value reels when small differences in size and shape are noticed under the microscope.


-  For the first time, an MPO (No.5 Trailer) was set up for the first-day of a 'K' cancellation, i.e. for Cormondreche on 16.5.83. Pity the picture is not very exciting.

-  The illustrated slogan "900 Jahr Dalbenloch" used in Basel 2 during August is a nice example of Swiss-German and in typical Basel version too.



Dalbe means St. Alban, loch being the low ground near the Rhine where this monastery was started 900 years ago. "Spalendor" is also difficult to translate, it means St. Paul's gate, and is shown on the old 50c stamp, which we will soon be able to use again for normal postage.

-  The answer to Question No.134 is: Geneva is the only Canton that does not send some of its rain water into the Rhine, and that was difficult to prove but detailed maps showed it clearly. This might be of interest to 'Rhine' thematic collectors.


-  Question No.135 is: the new 20c stamp shows an object now on show in Martigny. Which other Swiss stamps show another famous object found there?





Did You Know?





October 1983


-  The new catalogues have appeared on time at the end of August. Expensive items up, cheap down, with exceptions. The discount per set is now generally lower. FDCs now listed by Zumstein, at tremendous prices for old, virtually unique covers.


-  Müller has capitulated and now uses Zumstein (& Michel) Nos. instead of his own. His catalogue is now identical to that issued by the Swiss Dealers Association, called the "Helvetia".


-  On the 11th September, Laufental voters decided to stay with Canton Bern and not to be integrated into Canton Basel Country. So postally nothing will change.


-  In an old 'Philatelica' of 1969, I found a note about yet another error on a Swiss stamp. If you look carefully at the SFr.2.20 Liestal of 1964 (Z.425) you will see that the artist removed two strokes of the VIII when only one could be covered by the narrow minute hand of the clock face.

-  The PTT has confirmed that they will not change the date on their definitives when a reprint is made, which can happen several times a year. The date will remain that of the year of original issue. Good.

-  If anyone has a good idea for a new subject for a Pro Juventute, Pro Patria, or definitive series, then they should send it in now to the Philatelic Bureau, CH-3030 BERN. Some recent suggestions have been mushrooms, specific locomotives, small villages etc.

-  The 'REGIOPHIL XVI' in Chur, was a great success, with a varied range of collections. The NABA card 2 was given away free, showing two old letters from Graubünden, with text in Romansch too.

-  The answer to Question No.135 is: the 30c Pro Patria of 1974 (Z.163) showing the Roman Bull diety, with the middle horn missing, and his left ear too. One of six parts found of an over life-size group of bull and warrior. All these and a lot more are excellently displayed in the new Museum.


-  Question No.136 is: the new special stamps show on the 40c two Swiss dogs, but are not the first shown on Swiss stamps. Which are the others?





Did You Know?





November 1983


-  The long-awaited "Handbook of Swiss Machine Cancellations" has finally been issued by the SVP, in two A4 loose-leaf volumes, in French and German, containing an astonishing amount of information, with all cancellations illustrated.
Price is about SFr.50. A copy will be placed in the HPS Library soon.


-  My note in the August issue of the Newsletter on the Locarno-Arona lake steamer cancel produced an immediate reply from Dr. Ganz, in which he drew my attention to a three-part article in 'TELL', March-May 1979, by Laurence Moore, on all the markings of Lago Maggiore, including extensive lists answering my naive questions.

-  To celebrate the 2nd centenary of the death of Leonard Euler (born in Basel in 1707) the DDR issued a 20pf stamp in November, in view of the 25 years of his very active life spent in Berlin. Another nice "Swiss on a non-Swiss stamp" for collectors of such things.

-  The first slogan cancel showing a cat has appeared, for an exhibition held in Neuchâtel. No Swiss stamp shows a cat as yet - only lions.

-  I have not yet found a vending machine that produces the 1983 blue SFr.5 booklets, still the old grey ones in stock. However, the 1983 pink 'booklets' of 5 x 40c postcards have appeared in Winterthur, instead of the previous grey ones. This is the first time that the PTT has a different colour for the stamp and postcard covers, in recent times anyway. It seems booklet sales are slipping below their estimate, perhaps because of the more versatile Frama machines?

-  The answer to Question No.136 is: the 5c Pro Patria of 1948, a Customs dog, and then the little dog accompanying the postal messenger of Schwyz, shown on the 10c definitive of 1960.

-  Question No.137 is: inevitably, which Swiss stamp shows Leonard Euler, mentioned above? You should get very close without the catalogue!



Did You Know?



December 1983

☞ According to the latest BBZ, someone is forging the 40c definitive. The colour is well matched, but the offset printing and line perforation is an immediate give-away to a philatelist, also the very white non-phosphor paper. Who would do such a thing? The BBZ suggests, perhaps, a manufacturer of postally used 'unique' items for philatelists with more money than sense. Watch out.

The last such known forgery case was in 1919, of the 25c. The missing blue and red fibres, and the watermark, helped the PTT discover the forged stamps.

☞ The new SVP "Handbook of Swiss Machine Cancellations" includes the slogans used in Liechtenstein and UN Geneva, in all, over 20,000 combinations of slogans and town die are given. The slogans and town dies are all illustrated. The former according to the PTT number, the latter alphabetically, up to the end of 1982.

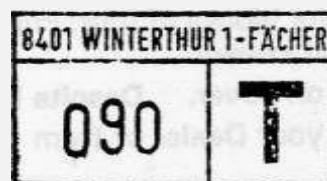
Because the Fund for Furthering Philately has subsidised this Handbook, all 142 Philatelic Clubs in Switzerland, if in the Association, get a free copy for their Library.

☞ Alfred Itel, of Basel, well-known author of the monthly commentary on the philatelic market in the SBZ, has died at the age of 65. For decades he wrote under the nom-de-plume of 'Philargus', but more recently under his own name. He helped the SVP for years in various capacities.

☞ An attentive philatelist has discovered yet another error on a Swiss stamp. According to the BBZ, the 80c value of the 1974 'Internaba' block shows the same belt buckle error as the 10c postal messenger stamp. Both subjects from Canton Schwyz, funnily enough!

☞ The Swiss National Tourist Office has produced a new 1:500,000 map of Switzerland, showing all roads, railways and towns etc. This map is virtually free and is essential for every collector of Swiss stamps. Of the various language combinations available, German/English is likely to be the most popular.

☞ My source of 'T' cancelled stamps has now dried up, as Winterthur main PO introduced, about the middle of July, a franking machine (old Hasler) in their 'Box' delivery department. As illustration, it is in red.



☞ The answer to Question No.137 is: that Euler, well-known to all students of engineering the world over, is also shown on the 5c Pro Juventute of 1957.

☞ Question No.138 is: when was the 25c stamp mentioned above first issued?