



Did You Know?



January 1987

- This is the first year when the PTT have not issued a few jubilee cancellations on the first day of postal business, either the 2nd or 3rd January, depending on the canton. We will see how many come during the year, as there were six in 1986.

- Not all jubilee cancellation: i.e., those with '800 or so years' in the text, become 'K' cancels, that is with this date removed during the year following its use.

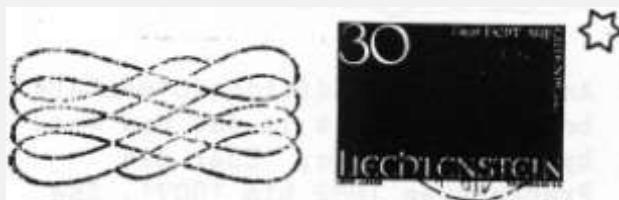
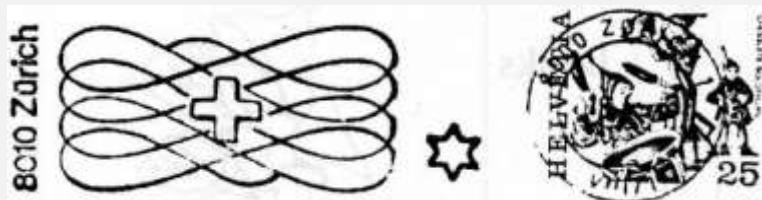
- In the new PTT standing order service for special cancels (S), the MPO cancels with cachet are included, I have been told, but a special cover is used. Has anyone seen these?

- According to an article in the December edition of the SBZ, a postcard has lain dormant for 80 years, after being thrown out of a Zeppelin over Luzern. Other cards are known to have been thrown out over other places, but this is the first to be found.

- The PTT has a rule that only 50 and 100 year anniversaries can be commemorated with a stamp, therefore there will be no miniature sheet for 75 years of Pro Juventute in 1987; only an additional stamp in the set.

- Many firms in the UK are not aware that Switzerland is not a member of the EEC (and can never be, but that is another story) and therefore put only 18p and not 22p on letters. HPS members are better informed, but no tax is asked for.

- The two illustrations show firstly a new version of the Swiss black private cancel applied to junk mail, and the new neutral flag used by Liechtenstein for the same purpose.




Note on the latter that the Swiss cross has been deleted but the curved lines are mirror-imaged. The 30c is included to give a variation from the usual 25c used by this philatelic house.




Did You Know?





February 1987


 The illustration shows the first of Liechtenstein's 'K' cancels, 9485 Nendeln. During 1987 the other ten PO's will also get theirs. The building shown housed the first PO outside Vaduz, and is now a farmhouse again.




 It was only in 1853, that the houses in each street in Zurich were numbered to aid postal and other deliveries. Previously only the house name and perhaps the street were used officially. In 1800 there were 1100 house names in use, many dating back to the Middle Ages and of great historical interest.


 Part of the immense amount of work being done by enthusiasts to get the Furka Oberalp steam trains back in service to Gletsch and beyond, has been to locate the four engines sold to French Indo-China in 1947. They have now found two, in poor condition, as left when the Americans destroyed the line 18 years ago during the Vietnam War.

 The Swiss Coil Collectors Club has issued an authoritative listing of the different types of ATM (Frama) labels of Switzerland.

 Ernest A Kehr, one of the great philatelic journalists, especially for aerophilately, has died in New York. He was an international jury member and an RDP. He will be sadly missed by his many friends.

 To those who have never experienced it, Nachnahme is the Swiss equivalent of Cash on Delivery and is widely used to collect things such as stamp club subscriptions.

Look at the new 80c stamp (Z.740) and you will see the postman has a bag; this also contains the 'purse' with change in case you have none.

 An unknown collector discovered this SFr.2.50 stamp (Z.542) on the usual white paper with violet fibres, but without the phosphor coating, which is applied before printing and is only visible under ultra-violet light.

The PTT admitted that, without telling collectors, they had printed about five million stamps in July 1984 on paper left over from an order for Luxembourg (where no stamps are tagged). The reason given was that stocks of this parcel value were getting low and the replacement stamp in the Zodiac series was still seven months away, so a short run was made. Secret until now!







It will be difficult to get a fine used copy as this value was seldom used on letters. You might spot it by the duller, less reddish look of the new stamp, but the only reliable way is with a UV lamp. Good hunting, you may be lucky!

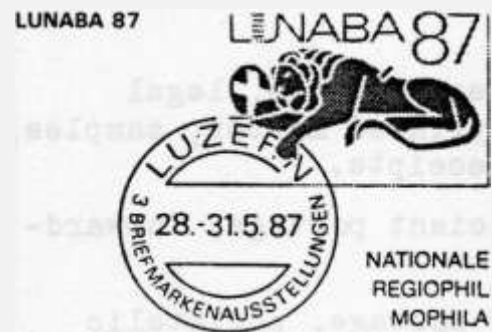




Did You Know?



March 1987

-  The president of the Swiss Coil Collectors Club, Herr J. Schalch, has issued a second edition of his ATM Handbook and Catalogue, as the first edition of 500 was sold out. For about SFr.35, all one can want to know. In German, A5, loose-leaf pages.
-  AHPS member Gene Kelly's Catalogue of the Fiscal stamps of the Cantons of Thurgau, St. Gallen, and Schaffhausen is the most researched book on the subject. His highly personalised listing will help collectors for years. In English, SFr.30.
-  Herr H. Dürst has brought out a third, shortened, edition of his catalogue of the Meter Franks of Switzerland. In German at SFr.10.
-  The biggest event between the NABA ZURI and the GENEVE 90 is going to be the LUNABA 87, in which a National and a Regional, together with a new development, 'Mophila' for modern philately, is being combined, with the Germans coming in as well at about 10%.



-  On the 12th March there will be a special cancellation used in Geneva for 50 years of MPO's. The first of a series of articles on the Swiss versions and types has appeared in the BBZ.
-  In the January Did You Know, I was not clear about the Zeppelin cards. These were from LZ 4 on its flight over Switzerland in July 1908.



Did You Know?



April 1987

- ☞ On the main TV News the other night there was an item, against a background of stamps that Purchase Tax was to be charged on all stamp sales. I think this is aimed at the big auction houses as 9.6% would dampen their sales.

We will see what actually comes of this as there is no VAT here.

- ☞ There is a special exhibition of old and new, Swiss and some foreign TPOs in Baden, with the slogan illustrated here:



- ☞ Until 31st May, the guest exhibition in the PTT Museum in Bern covers the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/1, i.e. the postal history, by R Pittier.

Many of the items shown would not be allowed in a 'proper' exhibition, such as documents, maps, and engravings.

- ☞ For the first time a large town, Neuchâtel, is supplying all its eight PO's with 'K' cancellers, all having the same picture; a cheap solution, as the PTT charges SFr.700 per canceller, but the artwork is common to all.
- ☞ The 10c coil stamp has now appeared with the control number in black, but the paper used is still phosphor. This means the PTT did not change the paper at the same time. The 50c is probably also affected. The 20c will not be reprinted as it is no longer used, except for a couple of odd places.
- ☞ The special stamps of 10th March were printed by Courvoisier on the same mat gummed paper as the PTT have been using for some time now.
- ☞ A useful and well-illustrated book "*Les Timbres Fiscaux Cantonaux de Fribourg*", by Denis Gainon & Robert Hürlimann, is now available and is the first complete and up-to-date study of the Fribourg Fiscals.

Without some knowledge of the legal basis for the various taxes it is difficult to appreciate the different issues, so the first four pages explain this and the corresponding nomenclature in easy to understand French.

Many previously missing issues have been added, along with ten new ones never before described, bringing surprises to revenue collectors.



Did You Know?



📖 May 1987

☞ The printing firm of Courvoisier in La Chaux-de-Fonds has been sold by the family owners to a group of publishers and watch-makers. The interest is in offset printing now, also for stamps, to remain competitive in world markets.

☞ The first PTT agreement with the Federal Railways was made 65 years ago, in that Express letters were accepted and cancelled by the SBB/CFF if correctly franked.

Two year's later this service was extended to all letters, outside PTT hours. However, the number of stations closing, or becoming self-service, is rising very steeply, so that it is now difficult to find many of the well-known station cancels.

☞ On the 24th April, the Day of the Aerophilatelists was held in the main concourse at Zürich airport, with a small exhibition of suitable objects and a bourse. (See April issue of the Newsletter)

☞ 9000 lots were sold at the Corinthila auction in Zürich at the end of March, at roughly double the start prices.

☞ A special St. Gabriel exhibition will be held from the 8th to the 10th of May. This is the patron saint for philately, and Christian themes will be seen.



☞ Publicity cancels for the LUNABA exhibition in Luzern.



☞ Another special cancel, this time for the TPOs exhibition in Baden, mentioned in last month's DYK.



☞ And finally, a special cancel for the opening of the rail connection to Geneva Airport.








Did You Know?





June 1987

-  The SFr.2.50 weathercock of Solothurn (Z.542v) without phosphor, has now reached SFr.60 mint and SFr.30 used, if you can find one. The name in German, "Turmhahn", i.e. tower-cock, is not correct, as a few phone calls confirmed that it can rotate with the wind. The church, or rather the cathedral of St. Ursanne is catholic, so it is rare for the protestant symbol to be used.

-  The SBB have issued a new edition of their excellent map of all railways in Switzerland, scale 1:300 000, price SFr.12.80. It shows the cantonal boundaries very clearly, which is useful to collectors.

-  The show of ten TPOs in Baden consisted of old and new French, and new German, Austrian and Italian coaches, and the following five Swiss, Nos.223 of 1894 from the Transport Museum in Luzern, plus 301, 386, 955, and 961.

-  The Pro Patria organisers are trying a new sales method this year. Households have been sent a coloured leaflet showing all the four stamps and a green Giro payment form to order a wide variety of packets of mixed stamps. If successful, I guess this will be used by the Pro Juventute as well.

-  Mr Katcher's find, the 5c rayed Postage Due stamp, is prominently on show at the Lunaba. The first day, a public holiday, Ascension Day, had large crowds. Report to follow.



Did You Know?



July 1987

- With a credit card (of the big four) you can pay for: stamps etc. at the nine Bureaux; Postbus tickets at the larger places, and telephone or telegraph calls from the manned telephone offices. This means that the PTT are selling stamps at a discount which is not allowed.
- On the 27th April 1987 the foundation stone of the new PTT Museum was laid by Dr Hans-Werner Binz, President of the GD PTT, near the existing museum in Bern Kirchenfeld. The opening is planned for 1990.
- The present exhibition in the PTT Museum is part of the Gold exhibit on 'Birds' of Herr Fernand Martenet of Monthey. He is showing about a quarter of his 20-year collection based on ornithological families etc.
- Frama machines are about to be tested whereby a PTT telephone credit card can be used as well as coins. Plastic money is creeping into everything.
- It was in 1893 that the Swiss Private Railways (6 years before they became the state SBB) opened a ticket-cum-tourist office in London. Today they are only 5-10 in private hands, and special legislation has just been passed to handle their enormous deficits by state, canton and village. Because of 'Green' pressure even extensive renewal and conservation projects are now acceptable.
- Every year the 16 Official Union of Swiss Philatelic Societies experts handle about 7000 cases, of which about 20 are fakes. However the main difficulty is finding candidates for the future.

- In Switzerland a village becomes a town when it has 10,000 inhabitants, but Kloten, where Zürich's airport lies, has taken 26 years to accept this fact in its cancellations, as it's 'K' cancel was issued on 23.12.61, 3 months after passing the critical number.



Even in 1970 when this was superseded by a machine cancel the opportunity was not taken, only the plane was changed.



Now in July the slogan reads 'Flughafenstadt' instead of 'Flughafenort', but the plane has not been modernised this time.





Did You Know?




August 1987

-  The new gum, colourless and mat, introduced generally this year (but already tried in the 1984 booklets) has given the PTT a lot of trouble as it was not evenly applied. The reason given for the change is that the new SSR IV printing machine runs very hot to fast-dry the inks, therefore a heat-resisting gum was needed. The amount is 10g/m². Pity it is not flavoured.

-  There will be a series of talks on TV this winter to give a boost to philately. A number of new publicity leaflets have been issued, in English too.

-  The Fund for Furthering Philately still can't spend the interest on the capital each year, which is now well over SFr.8m. SFr.55,000 went for Youth groups and SFr.31,000 for help with various publications, but they will not support any supplements or up-dates of handbooks, catalogues etc. Pity.

-  The LUNABA was the last exhibition under the old FIP rules, now one of the main changes is that 'research' gets 35% points. For 'presentation' there are only 55, so expensive, complicated what-nots, so beloved in Switzerland, will not in future compensate for lack of philatelic knowledge. We will see.

-  Both the Pro Patria and Pro Juventute organisations depend mainly on the stamp surcharge to finance their good works, so therefore the 'stamps sold' statistics are of the greatest interest to them, and to collectors too. The Pro Juventute sells about twice the Pro Patria ones, and gets about SFr.2m and 4m respectively, but the Pro Juventute is continually falling, while the Pro Patria is more stable.

-  The number of stamps actually produced is still climbing, 1.7% rise in 1986, in spite of a 5% rise in numbers of franking machines (to 24,600) and 20% rise of FRAMA dispensers (to 650). Courvoisier printed 228m and the PTT 565m stamps.

-  The number of standing order holders has slightly increased inland, but continues to drop outside. The PTT does not say so but the number of stamps per order has dropped considerably.


-  The PTT were more than glad that the official French prize for the best stamp in Europe in 1986 was won by the two Hans Erni 'Europa' designs.




Did You Know?





September 1987


-  The PTT have stated that the postcard type 3 mentioned in my article “Another Phosphor Incident” (see April issue of the Newsletter) does not exist, i.e. the old phosphor bar on unwatermarked paper.


-  All six definitives of 1986 have now been put on sale printed on the new fluorescent paper. The earliest printing dates I have found are:


5c	3.2.87
10c	18.5.87
25c	2.7.87
35c	12.2.87
80c	23.2.87
90c	9.3.87

-  The Tourism stamps of 4th September come in two versions; those from sheets are on the new fluorescent, mat-gummed paper, while those from the block are on the old paper, phosphor with shiny gum, using up old stocks for this special print run. At least the perfs are the same at 11 $\frac{3}{4}$.

-  The eight Philatelic counters outside Bern now also have proper K-type pictorial cancels. Attractive FDCs have been issued for each. However, the old, plain 28mm cancels can still be obtained on demand, and will be used for ordinary duties, as ordinary date stamps are used in POs which have a K-canceller.

-  In 1988 Switzerland will follow the fashion and issue a common stamp, with France, for the artist Jean Tinguely, a Swiss who lives in Paris. This year's 90c Europa stamp was also devoted to him.

-  The Röllli Auction in September included a number of collections of foreign stamps, for the first time.

-  In the June issue of Hans Schwarzenbach's “Postgeschichte” are two articles of particular interest, the introduction of the Federal stamps in Zurich in 1850 and a listing of the first discovered dates of use of the Tax stamps.



Did You Know?



October 1987

- ☞ The new 'Floods' 50+50c stamp was conceived, printed and distributed to all Swiss POs in less than a week, incredible. The date of 7.9.87 on the stamp is the day of issue, and not the day of the flood.

It would have been better to have had 1987 only as the floods were on 18th July and 24th August, and were the worst this century. Poschiavo was hit twice and the Gotthard railway line was closed for the longest period in its history.



- ☞ FIP rules state that the surcharge on a stamp must not exceed 50% of the face value, but there is a clause exempting surcharges for a national disaster.
- ☞ The present exhibition in the PTT Museum shows the cancellations of the Canton of Fribourg from 1789 to 1900, collected by Dr. M. Kottelat over a period of 40 years.
- ☞ Herr Jacob Gnägi of the PTT Stamp Dept. in Bern has an article on Hotel Posts in the latest issue of the SBZ, covering the comprehensive collection in the PTT Museum. The best information one can have on them.
- ☞ The new Tourism block is the first Swiss miniature sheet issued without a surcharge, so is to be found in the main part of the catalogue (1988 issue now out). Most collectors, it seems, would have preferred different pictures on the block, instead of repetitions of the sheet ones.
- ☞ Without any warning MPO No 3 made its last trip on the 11-13th September, to the 75th Anniversary of Schaffhausen Philatelic Society.
- ☞ No collector of Liechtenstein stamps can afford to be without the excellent book for "75 Years FL Stamps", 146 pages, numerous illustrations and a bargain at Sfr.25.
- ☞ According to the BBZ some stamps have appeared with a colour, usually the red, chemically removed. Courvoisier are very worried about this apparent threat to the quality of their printing and warn all collectors to be careful.
- ☞ The PTT and SBB are running into trouble; they cannot pay staff enough under present government rules and so cannot keep or attract new staff. Service firms, banks and others are absorbing more and more people. This is affecting the standard of PTT and SBB service to all.



Did You Know?



November 1987

- ☞ Switzerland has the world record for the number of parcels received per person per year via the post, namely 28; the figure for W Germany is 4 and France only 0.1.

Most parcels will be less than 2 kg, which cost only SFr.2. More packets can be handled more cheaply by the PTT, and there are few private carriers in the country.


- ☞ The TV news has just announced that the UPU meeting in Bern is to discuss the EMS, (the Express Mail Service, Datapost in the UK, Priority Mail in US), for International parcels where the competition from the large number of private carriers is great, but they are probably too late.
- ☞ The UPU is celebrating the 30th anniversary of its Consultative Council this month. The lettering on the special cancellation is the smallest I have ever seen.
- ☞ Sales of the 50+50c stamp for the disaster relief have dropped to a disappointing level as not enough publicity is being given to them. I have visited all four main regions recently and the clearing up continues, but it will take years to clear the mud and boulders from these narrow valleys.
- ☞ Many collectors are complaining that the new mat-gummed stamps cannot be easily washed and dried, the gum is too strong.
- ☞ The new catalogues are out, mainly the Zumstein and the Müller, both in full colour. Either of these are a must for collectors of Swiss stamps.
- ☞ Zumstein have taken over the PEN catalogue, following the sad loss of Pén in 1982. As there have been no annual supplements lately the demand for a new edition has increased. The New Zumstein Pén will appear before Christmas, another 'must'.




Did You Know?





December 1987


 Pitney Bowes have put the first two-colour business franking machine in operation. Date and value marks in red as before, but slogan in blue. Inking is no problem and impressions can be made without the blue part.


As is usual in Switzerland, but unique in the world, the date die can be 'lifted' so that the letter must be cancelled by the post office. In the early days, 1922, Hasler machines had no date die at all.


 Every year the PTT issues a 'Year Set' in booklet form with descriptions. Now they are also offering all stamps on one Hawid sheet; but it is already in some trouble as it, and the booklet were printed before the Floods stamp. This will now follow in the 1988 set. Both can be put on a standing order.


 A neat way of using the four-figure Swiss postcode is now on trial. Railway ticket coin machines; punch in your destination postcode and out comes the ticket.

 Another surprise in 1987 is the set of maximum cards from the Pro Juventute Organisation, but only direct from them (see November issue of the Newsletter).

 By the time you read this it will have been decided by the Swiss voters, on 6th December, if the SBB/CFF is to be modernised with high-speed trains and other improvements.

 The first statement from the sporting body reveals that a provisional amount of SFr.2.4 million has been made on the 1986 sport stamp.

 FDCs of the Floods stamp are now on sale at Philatelic Counters, certainly not 'cancelled' on the 7th September, but still quite attractive, four-language text in violet.

 Arthur Wyss, former head of the PTT Postal Museum, has brought out a book "*Die Post in der Schweiz*", 300 pages with 100 colour and 250 b&w illustrations. German text only, SFr.79.