






Did You Know?





January 1988

-  Two new Federal Councillors have been elected to join the team of seven. One is Herr Adolf Ogi, the sport-minded Member of Parliament who forced through the 50+20c Sports stamp in 1986. He wanted a set a year, now he is in a better position to get his way.


-  The 'Bahn 2000' project was accepted by the voters in December and will lead to an even greater integration of the rail system and the PTT.


-  More and more articles are appearing in the philatelic press on the advantages of using a home computer for philately. In the SVP the alphabetical and numerical lists are being fed into a PC for the next 'K' Handbook supplement, to come out about Easter 1988, for the years 1985-87. The illustrations will be as before.

-  Until 28th February 1988 the display in the PTT Museum in Bern will be '100 Years of Stamps' by T Haefeli of Corseaux. The first part has all the Jubilee stamps issued in 1940 and the second part covers all the stamps in use at that time in 190 countries and regions of the world.

-  A new book on soldier stamps has come out, reminiscences more than a catalogue, 96 pages, 32 colour plates, in German. The authors are given as: Prof H R Kurz, military historian, Dr Massarotti, ex army staff and H Sulser, editor of the well-known soldier stamp catalogue.

The stamps alone cannot be exhibited at an official affair, but on cover, with postage stamps, used, they can form an interesting addition to many special collections. SFr.59 from Ott Verlag Thun.

-  In 1988 France and Switzerland will issue a combined stamp for the Swiss-French artist Jean Tinguely (80c Europa, 1987). At some future date Switzerland will print a stamp for France in compensation.


-  Every month the PTT Library issues a list of all philatelic articles that have appeared recently. From the December issue I see, among many items of interest, a publication by the PTT & BID, Bern on Hotel Posts in Switzerland, two parts each some 300 pages long. Books loaned cost nothing. Photocopies of articles are made, as well as free searches.




Did You Know?




February 1988


-  To celebrate its Centenary, the monthly magazine SBZ has a golden cover this year and it seems more colour is used inside.

-  Rather belatedly, I have found yet another surprise in the fluorescent saga. The red ink used for business franking machines has had a fluorescent-reaction chemical added. This is cheaper than using phosphor and is the basic reason for the change due to the increase in such machines.


The earliest date I have is 24.4.85, a few in 1986 and many more towards the end of 1987. It is only occasionally visible under ordinary light as a brighter pink.


-  In the latest edition of SBZ, Jakob Gnägi of the PTT reveals the plans for the new PTT Museum just south of the present one. This has been used since 1936, although founded in 1907, and in 1949 telephone and telegraph were added to the original 'post only' coverage.

-  I have on occasion mentioned a foreign stamp or postmark commemorating a Swiss or Switzerland. Now the Swiss Thematic Society have published a booklet (No.23) with all these items, Some 200 persons or firms, collected together. In German, SFr.19.

-  The artist Alex Diggelmann has died in Zürich. He designed five Swiss stamps, the 5 & 10c of the 1948 Olympics at St. Moritz, the Piz Palü in 1970, and in 1971 the pair for Youth and Sport.

-  About 800 small places in Switzerland will get individual post codes, as they were in groups before. This means that about 90 K-cancels will be re-issued with a new number and many will take the opportunity to use a new picture. The change will be on 30th May and will affect all the handstamps as well as registration and other labels.

-  A 72 page brochure has been issued by the Cultural Commission of the Canton of Schwyz (No.43) on the history of the posts. A previous brochure covered the stamps of Schwyz.


-  The PTT publicised a new item on their programme late in 1987 and invited standing orders. They called it Year Set Type 3, without any descriptions, but with UN Offices stamps. I have now discovered these sets were also available, for export only, for 1985 & 1986, but no one here knew of them.





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



March 1988


-  The PTT made a record profit in 1987, to be reflected in lower phone charges but no postage reduction. At least we know it won't be going up soon.


-  The exhibition in the PTT Museum from 1st March to 12th June will be the well-known top collection of classic stamps that has always been exhibited as 'Winkelried'.

-  At this year's Mustermesse there will be a follow-up of the TV series in that at 'Lubaphil', youngsters, and others, will be taught the basics of philately.


-  There was a TV talk recently about women on Swiss Stamps; only four, against 94 men; leaving aside Helvetia and other folklore figures. The speaker then presented a list of candidates; we will see what the PTT does now.

-  Joseph Schalch has issued a supplement to his ATM (Frama) catalogue (SFr.13.). Very useful as it has a new, unified and simplified numbering, a compromise between his and Zumstein.

-  The municipality of Wohlen, Canton Aargau, opened their new PO on the 9th November 1987 and produced a 24-page booklet on their history, complete with all handstamps used but no machine dies. Free from KPD CH-5000 Aarau I.

-  The PTT have issued a new postcard, with a 50c frank impression, to advise recipients of a gift payment into their phone account. But perverse philatelists will find the card suitable for machine and other cancellations.

Perhaps because of this experience with the previous card this one is 210mm long, i.e. not suitable for putting on an album page. The fluorescent bar is to the left of the frank.

-  The quarterly "*Der Aushang*" originally only for Zug Philatelic Society members, is now available on subscription from the editor, Thomas Galliker. The title translates as the advertising poster and covers all sorts of things.



Did You Know?



April 1988

- ☞ It has taken 70 years for a philatelist to discover a new stamp variant. Max Hertsch in the March issue of the BBZ reports at length on this important new find.

In October 1918, 25c stamps were on sale at the Langnau (Bern) PO with light green toning instead of light blue. Probably caused by a sheet of a previous printing of the 30c, 50c or Fr.1 value, having the first sheet of a run for the 25c being printed with the uncleaned colour roller of a previous run of either the 30c, 50c or Fr.1 value, which used light-green toning.

Only four such errors have been found so far. The LH illustration shows the block used for the dark blue of the picture, the RH that of the light blue toning; Z.109 of 1908.



Note: A translated copy of the BBZ article appears in the December 1988 issue of the Newsletter.

- ☞ Ernst Müller (founder of the firm) now about 83, has given to the City of Basel his unique reconstruction of all 1040 stamps of all the printing plates of the Rayon II.

- ☞ The third Supplement to the SVP Handbook of Local Pictorial Datestamps (K-cancels) is now available. In German & French, 17 double-sided pages with clear illustrations of all 224 cancels from 1985 to 1987, including a few of 1988.

- ☞ By coincidence, the SMV (Thematics), have also just issued the third booklet in their series "*Die Motive der Schweizer Werbestempel*", to cover, in German, a description of the places shown on each K-cancel. This is No. 23 and costs SFr.25. Nos. 3 and 15 are in the HPS Library.

- ☞ Of the 800-odd places that are taking a new postcode at the end of May, 95 have a K-cancel in addition to their ordinary date-stamps, but only four of these have a new picture. Only these four will be illustrated in the PTT Gazette (and in the Newsletter).

There are also two places having 'Leihkronen', i.e., their town die is actually used in the machine of a nearby, larger, place. Usually for the floods of tourists' postcards, sometimes for business mail as well.


- ☞ Charles LaBlonde and I visited the PTT Museum in February and found, among many other items, some new publications had appeared. A new set of postcards, 12 old posters showing postal coaches, and a colourful 62-page brochure, in German, on the old posts of Luzern.





Did You Know?





May 1988


-  The PTT pays the SBB more than SFr.100m annually to draw their TPOs around the country and to take their postbags in SBB baggage wagons. The actual figure is not published.


-  In Egg (near Zürich and pronounced 'Eck') a special exhibition was held over the weekend 30th April/1st May on 'Philately and Literature', with the PTT Library taking part. A 'special show was devoted to '100 years SBZ'. Also various philatelic subjects such as 'Heimat' collections of the Zürich region etc.


-  The definition of a philatelist is someone who is not interested in philatelic material!

-  Instead of updating Winkler's classic work, the tendency is to have a comprehensive definitive book on the canton or area. A start was made with the Cancellations of Chur, and now such a book has appeared on "*The Posts of the Canton Schaffhausen*", in German, covering not only the Thurn and Taxis era, but also the connections to Zürich. SFr.59, written by Rudolf C Rehm, 312 pages with numerous illustrations and 25 covers shown in colour, up to the end of the 19th century.

-  The PTT is losing staff at a great rate. With unemployment practically zero, and the government's policy on wages for its staff, the PTT and SBB cannot replace leavers. This is particularly serious in Geneva and Zurich. Poor service to philatelists and poor postmarking is becoming noticeable.

-  Dr. Jann Etter has issued a catalogue on the black private franking marks. This is a valiant attempt to catch a moving target of unrecorded data. Vital for a heroic band of enthusiasts.

-  The SBB has reissued its very successful A4 booklet of 1976 on their Steam Locomotives, all illustrated in 80 pages, in German and French, SFr.18.

-  For the impending flood of 94 places to get a new PLZ, and therefore a new 'K' cancel, the PTT have provided a special cover, for their subscribers mainly.

These have a printed-on star to get the discounted rate of 25c, which is normally 35c. The covers sold at philatelic counters do not have this star, but it can be put on if you have 50 or more covers.



Did You Know?

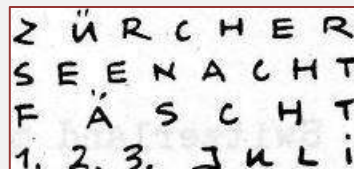


June 1988

- ☞ Many people are asking “is an over-franked Last Day Cover worth as much as SFr.29 000?” Apparently yes, when it has a set of the UPU 1900 Anniversary stamps, all type C, is registered and in auction at Röllli in Luzern.
- ☞ The SBB has laid 60 000 tons of granite blocks between Erstfeld and Bodio to prevent the floods of 1987 being repeated.
- ☞ This year the number of pages in the weekly PTT Bulletin devoted to 'Situations Vacant' has risen to record levels.
- ☞ Someone in the philatelic column of the local Zürich paper has calculated that the ratio of men to women on Swiss stamps has shown a steady trend toward unity lately, and more than other countries, especially Austria which has an opposite tendency.
- ☞ Also in the same issue is the suggestion that ‘50 years of Swiss Publicity stamps’ should be celebrated this year, as the first to appear for a forthcoming event were those of 1938 for the National Exhibition of 1939.
- ☞ Since the 15th of May a new type of sorting system has been operating in the Zürich Main PO, for large covers only; I do not yet have full details.

A number of girls operate in parallel, reading off the postcode, typing it into the electronic memory, then putting the cover on to a conveyor belt. When it reaches the appropriate slot it drops into the bag for that place. No coding of the covers themselves is needed. Supplied by AEG Telefunken.

- ☞ A new slogan running on a Zürich cancelling machine has the text shown. Note the Swiss-German "Fäscht" and not the German "Fest". In any case they both mean "Festival", with fireworks from barges on the lake.



ZÜRCHER
SEENACHT
FÄSCHT
1. 2. 3. JULI


- ☞ All makers of private cancelling machines are requested by the PTT to supply only red ink with fluorescent additive. Old ink can be used up, but the new type will soon be compulsory.




Did You Know?




July 1988


 The PTT are considering re-introducing limited validity for all special and definitive postage stamps, but are meeting with great resistance. It is likely that they will make only the oldest stamps of the 1930s and 1940s invalid, i.e., the 1938 high values, 1941 medium values, perhaps the 1949 low values, and, of course, the post cards of 1935 and the Edelweiss newspaper wrapper of 1938.


 As the Post and the Railways have always been combined in the same Ministry in Bern, they were always mutually dependent in many ways. When the Railways introduced Central European Time about a century ago, with morning (a.m.) times in Roman figures and afternoon (p.m.) times in Arabic, then the Post had to do the same.

When the railway timetable changes from winter to summer, and vice versa, all sorts of postal changes are also implemented, only some of which are noticed by the collector. This year postmark collectors have certainly noticed the change of postcode in 900-odd places on the 30th May, i.e., when the Summer Railway Timetable came into force.


 The present exhibition in the PTT Museum is combined with that in the Alpine Museum in the same building, for 125 years of the Swiss Alpine Club, a British idea.

The well-known Winterthur thematic collector, Max Walter, is showing his Gold Medal collection 'The Alps' until October.

 On the 8th of August there will be all hell let loose in a tiny village, Heiligkreuz, east of Sargans, all because of its postcode - 8888. Special covers will be available and a K-cancel will make its debut.

 We have a very nice small sheet for 50 years Pro Aero but the stamp shows the German JU 52, the paratroops plane. Anyway Zumstein in the SBZ now asks why 75 years of the first airmail of 9th March 1913 has not been celebrated, at least with a cancellation, and they blame themselves for not noticing it before.

Those first flights were also made to finance the purchase of military aircraft, for the same reason.

 The PTT have just announced stamp sales figures for various issues from the 1970s with the following of particular interest:

| | | |
|---------|-------------|---|
| Fr.2.50 | Weathercock | 47 823 000 with phosphor, 5 017 000 without phosphor; |
| 50+20c | Pro Sport | 13 001 000; |
| 50+50c | Floods Fund | 8 278 000. |



Did You Know?



August 1988

- ☞ On the 8th September, that is 5 days before the first-day of the Specials II stamps, a new style of Fr.5 booklet will appear. As sales of the present Folklore booklet have dropped to nearly zero (too many odd values) the PTT now has a double strip of five, i.e. ten 5c stamps showing the usual postman, but with cut edges, and glued in as in the UK and Sweden, with the strip folded over.

The cover is white with PTT adverts. Being thinner more can be stocked in the machines.

- ☞ In the PTT Museum (see last month's DYK) there is also a unique display by Walter Grob of photos, cards and private cancellations of all SAC huts.

- ☞ Someone has found that the original of the security background used for all Frama labels is that of the luxury tax stamps used during the last war. Now ridiculous prices are being asked for such 'forerunners'.

- ☞ On the 2nd July the new building housing the Air Force Museum, next to the military airfield in Dübendorf, was opened, with a special flight to Munich of a Swiss JU 52.

Now on 2nd August a publicity slogan will be used in Dübendorf 1 cancelling machine for the first time, and will be used for alternate months in future.



Shown are: a Swiss fighter prototype of 1918, the DH 4 (not to be confused with De Havilland); the Mirage III; and the JU 52. The old K-cancel of Dübendorf 2, near the museum, shows a Bleriot.



- ☞ From 19th to 20th October the 'AD ASTRA 89' will be held in Zürich, covering all aspects of aeronautical philately.

- ☞ It is amazing that for 50 years of Pro Patria stamps no special block has been issued. Generally, sales are falling, as for Pro Juventute.

- ☞ Samoa shows in their Expo 88 set for 200 Years Australia, a Swiss built monorail as used in the expo. Canada also showed a similar train for their Vancouver show in 1986.

- ☞ Michel issued their Switzerland Special catalogue in June; it can be recommended for all collectors, and will help them to learn German too.


- ☞ The PTT have asked that all addresses should not have the post town underlined as this confuses the OCR machines (at present only one in Bern, but more planned for Zürich). They also said that only 1% of letters have hand-written addresses.




Did You Know?





September 1988


-  The great event of 8.8.88 was celebrated in 8888 Heiligkreuz with champagne and full media coverage and a team cancelled 200 000 items in the space of a week or so; a record for a cancel first day.


The attractive special cover had to be reprinted twice, making 30 000 in all, and a rarity value of 0.


-  The high court has decided that Purchase Tax, at 6.2% retail and 9.3% wholesale must be charged on all philatelic material, e.g., stamps for collectors, FDCs and auctions. The complications are untold, more to follow. Starts on 1st January 1989.


-  The most recent PTT service is called Telegiro. From your home or office you can make payments direct by phone. More useful for firms as not many homes have the interconnection facilities, it is one computer talking to another.


-  Four important collections have been given recently to the PTT Museum by collectors, making a total of 33 since 1943. They will be on show in the new building in a year or so.

-  Georges Schild has pulled another plum out of his historical researches, namely covers sent by doctors of the Red Cross team despatched to help Finland in 1940. No stamps but a 5-line cachet stating the origin. Details in the September BBZ.

-  In the same BBZ, Walter Eigenmann reveals some new factors of the 'Postage Free' stamps of 1927 & 1934. Fascinating for specialists.

-  Collectors are getting tired of the unimaginative centenary issues with which we have been blessed, and are to be totally immersed next year. The trouble is that once started with A then B, C & D have also a 'right' to the same privilege, and most have the political muscle to get it. But does the result please anyone?
The attractions of a holiday in Switzerland, say?

-  Hans Schwarzenbach (Postgeschichte and auctions) notifies a change of address to Oberdorfstrasse 8, CH-8001 Zurich from the 1st of October.

-  Alfred Müller of Bern died on the 23rd June. A remarkable collector, he is perhaps best known for his work on the 'Handbuch der Abstemplungen', and for his Ambulant research.



Did You Know?



October 1988

- The Purchase Tax problem is becoming a little clearer. Liechtenstein stamps will follow Switzerland, as they are in a common customs area. UNO Geneva position is not clear. Cancelled modern stamps, cancelled and mint non-valid stamps, FDCs, sheetlets etc. will be liable to tax; all foreign stamps too. An 8-page 'clarification' is available.
- The SBB has issued two new sets of postcards, on new locos, and on the Brünig railway. About SFr.11 each; order direct.
- The PTT postal coach office in Bern has just published a new map of all their routes, large size with text in four languages, including English. Post-horn tunes are given for saying in advance how many horses need to be changed at the next stop, for instance.
- The new booklet which came out on 8.9.88 poses some queries, which I have not yet been able to answer. Fig 1 shows outside view of opened booklet, same size as before. Fig 2 inside view, without pane of stamps, also white. Note marks, type B, LH on cover, RH on selvedge, which is not perforated through. Fig 3 is the green slip at the top of each packet of 25 booklets.



Fig.1



Fig.2



Fig.3

- The PTT gave out this postcard free at the special show at this year's Comptoir Suisse in Lausanne. The picture side is black and yellow. It does not need to be cancelled, as it is 'PP', but if it goes in the new coding system, at present on test in Lausanne, it gets the reddish bars which prove postal usage.







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
November 1988


-  Zumstein has used a new idea in their 1989 catalogue in that adjacent to every price change there is a little arrow to indicate if the change is an increase or a decrease. Most of the high items have come down. The additional Fr.2 for the spiral binding is well worth it, as the pages lie flat when opened.


-  From the coding bars on letters date stamped in Zürich 1 it is clear these have been sorted either in Bern or Basel, as Zürich does not yet have a sorting machine, but due to shortage of staff they cannot cope with the mail. Most pillar boxes are being emptied only once a day, instead of twice or three times at least.


- Parliament will not agree to an increase in wages, so many staff are leaving in Geneva, Lausanne and Zürich. The private mail couriers are glad to take them.

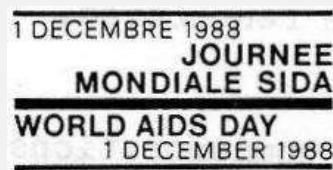
-  The SVP have issued the first supplement to their 1983 Handbook of Swiss Machine Cancellations. Only the new issues are illustrated, including town dies, but no corrections are made. Price is SFr.21; post free in Europe, or from Vera Trinder.

-  The next exhibition in the PTT Museum in Bern is by the well-known specialist Karl Probst, who shows his unique collection of coil stamps, perfins etc., for roughly the last 100 years. From 4th October to 18th December.

-  The 50c Sport stamp of 1986 brought in SFr.2.345m for the promotion of sport generally in Switzerland. However, 67% of the 13m stamps sold were bought by sports clubs.

-  The SBB/CFF have computerised the numbering of their locos now, to line up with the coaches and wagons. Instead of Re4/4IV 10101 for instance, it is now 440 101.

-  As there are more AIDS victims in Switzerland per capita than anywhere else in Europe, extreme measures have to be taken. A machine slogan, No. 4.6.215, is to be used in each of the three language areas, but uniquely each one has the text in English too.





Did You Know?



December 1988

- ☞ Although not directly philatelic, it is a sign of up-to-date PTT thinking that I now have a Postomat (Automatic Teller Machine) 'Plus' card with which I can pay in three (at the moment) supermarkets.

By inserting it in the machine at the checkout I can have the amount directly charged to my Giro account. In 1990 the PTT plan to equip all retailers in Biel with this system, perhaps with a slogan for philatelists.

- ☞ I was wrong to mention last time that letters from Zürich were being sorted in Bern, as shown by typical Bern coding. The truth is that Zürich now has two Telefunken OCR machines, so that letters with machine-readable addresses are now coded with the same 'desk' number, 28, as in Bern.

This was not the only surprise. Since about January 1988 Basel also has an OCR machine as an addition to its 12 video desks, and when Lausanne opened its MLO in September it also had video desks and an OCR machine. Geneva will get one in October next year, and one is planned for Luzern too: The confusing thing is that all five OCR machines use the desk number '28'. This fooled me.

- ☞ The 45c is the least-used of the present definitives, closely followed by the 60c. Both can be used alone only for some of the printed matter steps. Stamps of the old folklore series are still to be found at smaller POs, a long time after the first-day of 10th March 1987 of the present Postmen series.

- ☞ Ten times more postcards are sent inside Switzerland than letters; to foreign countries there are 20 times more. The inland cards are, I guess, more answers to competitions on PTT cards than Picture postcards. Inland rate is 50c for both cards and letters.

- ☞ The 'Verband' of Swiss Philatelic Societies have issued an A4 loose-leaf book, in colour, for those taking part in a course of philately, either as an adult or teenager. All facets of philately are divided into 13 categories. Very good effort to get more members.

- ☞ On the 12th December, Thundorf (Toondorf; 'Th' as in Thames) will celebrate 1100 years of recorded history. The name suggests that in all likelihood it was founded in the 8th century by settlers from the north in Charlemagne's time, as many -dorf villages in northern Switzerland were started like that, but only much later recorded in writing.

Thundorf has nothing to do with Thun (BE), as it lies in Canton Thurgau, just east of the capital, Frauenfeld. The special cancel will run until the end of 1989, a record.

