



## Did You Know?



### 📖 January 1991

- ☞ For the third time the Swiss parliament is discussing replacing the 1940 Purchase Tax with the EC-compatible VAT system. If this is accepted by the voters it might mean that philatelic items will be excluded once again.
- ☞ The PTT is supplying another batch of SFS label machines to a large number of POs ahead of schedule, so that we have the inexplicable situation of small branch offices with two machines and the main PO still with the single machine they have had for years. Most peculiar.
- ☞ The new PTT logo is well suited to the large illuminated signs the PTT is putting up outside many POs, having a yellow background it is attractive by day and night. This was not possible with the old logo.
- ☞ The Day of the Stamp cancellation shown in the November 1990 issue of HNL has an interesting history as it refers to the coal mine Käpfnach in Horgen, with the first reference made in 1548, but only in 1663 was coal successfully mined. However, the high sulphur (smelly) content, and the cheapness of wood, closed the mine.

In 1708 and 1763 attempts were made to start again but failed. From 1784 to 1911 many hundreds of thousands of tons were mined. During both World Wars coal was again mined, with more than 200 men employed. Not exactly the conventional picture of Switzerland! Now the mine is a museum.

- ☞ In the PTT Official Bulletin for 17th September the PTT announced that the 35c stamp (showing the counter clerk and the special camera in the background for photographing all R-parcels) would be available in 10 000 rolls, as requested by the junk mail firms for normal (faster) printed matter now, and for the B rate from February 1991. Only a strip of 11 can prove the roll source as none will be numbered at the rear, as with the 25c a couple of years ago.
- ☞ The reprinted 40c Geneva Escalade stamp was available from Philatelic counters about the New Year, but as it was printed on the same SSR 3 machine as before it is on the old phosphor paper as is still used for all middle value stamps. The gum is also shiny, but the general front view is whiter when compared to the old printings.
- ☞ The repeated use of the number K1272 (see HNL, December 1990) should have raised a few eyebrows. The illustrations shown here tell the story.

On the 3.7.70 Schwanden, in Canton Glarus, started to use K531 until the Jubilee cancel, which was in use from 11.6.90 to 1.9.90 (usually special cancels run to the end of the year).



Then K531 was used again until the Jubilee cancel had its '750 years' machined out and put into use on 10.12.90. But in error the next free number K1272 was used, until put right by the SVP and K531a allocated, but without Official correction. Note that GL is now no longer in brackets, new rule!



## Did You Know?



### February 1991

- ☞ The A & B publicity is gaining strength, leaflets all over, stickers on all posting boxes. The new label "A Prioritaire" (French is the UPU language) has appeared with a new reference number, see the illustration. If anyone would like a new rates booklet, let me know.



- ☞ The 'stars' are gone, in use from 1.3.84 till 31.1.91, they indicated bulk "non-fast" delivery, now in effect the B rate (see my article in the March 1989 edition of HNL). If anyone would like examples my offer stands.

- ☞ For machine slogan collectors, a new dumb slogan "PP A" will be issued to all 320 odd POs having cancelling machines to use from 1.2.91. Who will use this rate, 80c for a minimum of 50 letters, is a bit of a mystery, so we consider this slogan will be a rarity, especially for the smaller places. See the illustration but it will be in three sizes as usual; anyone interested in a few FDCs?



- ☞ Contrary to all expectations Switzerland will not be issuing a special stamp for 700c or a banknote for 700 Francs, this super-Jubilee year of 1991, however there will be a surfeit of souvenirs.
- ☞ For the first time in more than 10 years the number of special cancellations used in 1990 was below 200, i.e., 190 against an average of about 250 previously. This is according to Jann Etter in the NZZ.
- ☞ There are 120 members in a Swiss club of phonecard collectors. About 100 different cards have been issued, mainly with private adverts on them. Some 200m cards have been made by Landis & Gyr in Zug who make the equipment. They have just issued their own, SFr.5 (PTT have 10 & 20 Frs.) in a run of only 500 for their guests.
- ☞ In the new PTT Museum in Bern the special exhibition is by Georges Schild of Bern on the POW, Red Cross and other charities in WW I. A unique show which runs until 10th March.
- ☞ I was astounded when I saw the new museum. One had got so used to the old one. Now to experience what can be done with the wonderful material they have had all these years. With good use of video shows and a modern concept I can only say it is really worth a visit, and not only once. Lots of cards and books on sale, most in English too. Entry is SFr.2 (SFr.1 for OAPs).



## Did You Know?



### March 1991

- ☞ The PTT Museum in Bern has two 'catalogues' on sale, in German, for SFr.12. "*Das neue PTT Museum*" covers the historical development from the beginning, the planning, layout, and building. First mentioned in 1893, the first collection in the Bollwerk was opened in 1907. The building at the Helvetia-Platz was opened in 1936 and covered only two floors.

The second book is the guide proper, "*Das Schweiz PTT Museum*". Each section has a useful list of important postal & philatelic events.

- ☞ At 3 minutes past 9 a.m. on the 5th February the new station in Luzern was opened, exactly 20 years after the disastrous fire which caused the clock to stop at that time. The cancellation used at the MPO (see HNL, January 1991) shows, the clock.

The SBB at their information counter had the same cancellation, but in blue, and with which they cancelled everything put before them, ignoring all PTT rules.

A famous painting done some 50 years ago shows the station clock at 9.03!

- ☞ During my visit to Luzern I also viewed eight locomotives or complete trains that had been lined up as part of the celebrations, including the new "2000" locos, which I had also seen under construction in the SLM works during their Open Day last year.
- ☞ In the main Luzern PO, beautifully refurbished, I paid a visit to the Philatelic counter which they have, with its own K-cancel showing the old water tower. But don't forget that there is also the "official" Philatelic Bureau a short distance away, with its own K-cancel too.
- ☞ At the former counter I found a 'delightful booklet, in German, for SFr.10, with many coloured illustrations, on the history of the main PO in Luzern. There I learnt that Luzern had been the capital of the French-run Helvetian Republic for 6 months before the Austrians liberated the city 31st May 1799.

The government, including the Postmaster General, fled to Bern and obscurity. When all Switzerland regained its freedom they unfortunately fell back into their old ways of separate cantonal posts.

- ☞ Unheralded, the term CEPT has been removed from the PTT's new rates tables, so that Europe now stretches from Galway to Vladivostok!

- ☞ The village of Commugny in Canton Vaud has recently had a busy time, because of its postcode 1291. See the illustration, and note that '-18' stands for 1st August too.





## Did You Know?



### April 1991

- The 1200 Genève 'Office Temporaire' cancellation shown here was actually used in the annexe of 1218 Le Grand-Saconnex PO in the Palexpo building, site of the GENÈVE 90 EXPO. This annexe is used only during the larger exhibitions and the PTT does not announce this in advance, except when an explanatory cachet is to be used. The SVP catalogue number is OT5, as the cancel does not have a "K" number.



Another cancel shown on page 23 of last month's HNL, '1200 Genève, Salon de l'auto', was also used in this same annexe PO in the Palexpo building, so OT5 was not used during this show, although '1200' is again incorrect.

- The Schwarzenbach auction of 1/2 March was a great success, 1425 lots went for 117% above the starting price. The sensation was the 1953 Pro Juventute sheetlet with missing red on four of the eight beetles, which went for 35 000 SFr. (£18 000) A block of four with missing red was unsold at SFr.7000 at a recent Röllli auction.
- In the February issue of the SBZ, the Editor, Dr A Guggisberg, writes on the appearance at auction of numbers of imperforate Swiss stamps from the period 1934 to 1963 as the source is, shall we say, not clear. The PTT states that some could have been special presentations, but the rest . . . , so the feeling is that jury members should not consider them rarities, even though very expensive.

I would go a step further, from discussions with leading collectors that it is likely that juries will give minus points to all imperforate and missing colour stamps, unless normally used with machine cancel.

- As part of the 800 years festivities in Bern the PTT Museum will show until 2nd June "Die Republik Bern 1600-1850" by Paul Heiniger, surely one of the most important philatelic events this year.
- During the function in Bern for the release of the new stamps on 22nd February, in particular the 700 and 800 years issues, Adolf Ogi, the Federal Councillor, and head of the Railway and Posts Department, announced the new PTT policy in that only really important anniversaries will have a stamp issued, with no mysterious sets of initials, and more graphically attractive sets. We will see in 2 or 3 years time. It was he, who as an MP, pushed the Sport stamps through against the resistance of the PTT.
- In the latest SBZ our member M. J-C Marchand asks about regular use of the cancellation "Bern with date-bridge and cross below". Has anyone seen this not on a Pro Juventute fore-runner?



The date shown is 24 XII 12 1-. The canceller did exist according to PTT records, but why "1-" is my question, "-1" would be correct. As these PJ fore-runners were not stamps it was not illegal for them to be cancelled with a back-dated canceller which, by the way, turned a cheap mint stamp into a mint of money when cancelled. Often this can be easily detected as the canceller type was not in use in 1912 (called a 'premature birth'). The problem is how much information should be given in a cancel catalogue without helping the forgers to avoid such obvious mistakes.



## Did You Know?



### 📖 May 1991

- ☞ Work on the controversial Vereina tunnel has just begun, so that in a few years the Rhätische Bahn (RhB) will be able to take motor cars from Klosters into the Lower Engadine through the 19 km tunnel. No special postmarks, yet.

The SBB are doubling their line from Sargans to Chur.

- ☞ There is growing opposition to the A/B post in parliament and in the press. The number of very slow B letters is curious, but, of course, nobody complains when B letters arrive the next day.

- ☞ After the first-day do in Bern (see last month's DYK) Federal Councillor Ogi was reminded of the different values of the Swiss and US combined issues, for the same service. Anyway the PTT seem to accept the US stamp for letters to the US without a murmur, as in fact the USPO accept the Swiss stamp, but that is not good business for the US letter writer!



- ☞ Another Swiss stamp has come out with a reversed picture! According to the BBZ for March the 80c '800 years Bern' has the foreground reversed for that view of the Bernese Alps, i.e. the Parliament dome (see the Fr1.60 stamp above) should be to the right of the Cathedral.



Artist's licence again. Naturally this stamp has caused a fanfare of criticism, but not because of the reversal - "not as pretty as in 1941".

- ☞ The new 50c postcard is "laid out according to the new rules for addressing mail", so says the official text. At the local PO I got a copy of booklet No. 202.17dt of 1.91 "Briefpost Inland". This confirmed my suspicion, the underlining of the place name is no-longer allowed, see new postcard. But why: "to make machine reading easier" they say, and this is correct as the OCR electronic eye gets confused by the underlining when it reads the address.



- ☞ Something else caught my attention; for an extra franc a registered letter will be presented a second time if nobody is at home the first time, so SFr.4 for registered letters can now be looked for (inland only).

- ☞ Switzerland is not well-known for humour on its cancellations, but there is one for the Swiss Hang-gliding Championship, see right.





## Did You Know?



### June 1991

- ☞ The PTT are being hammered for their courage in showing modern art for this year's Pro Patria stamps to conclude the 4-year series on "Art during 700 years".

In the PTT Museum, from 14th May until the end of July, the PTT are showing the 38 drafts submitted by the contestants for these 1991 Pro Patria stamps. Report to follow.

- ☞ The Bern publishers Hallwag have issued a new version of their map showing the Cantons and their Districts, but instead of the previous list of all communes, they have now used the back to print their panorama of Switzerland. Price SFr.14.80 with "700" signet. Full details of all Cantons given as before. Scale is now 1:303 000.
- ☞ On page 32 of the April HNL the new K-cancel No. 1288 was shown with the text "Pizol Park". Now that is a motorway shopping centre and the PO is situated in it, so is the address also (unlawful) advertising?
- ☞ The "Bern" cancel referred to in the April issue of DYK could be from the long-sought-after 'hand cancelling machine' mentioned in the 1924 Zumstein Handbook as being unsuccessful during the comparative trials made in 1911 with US electrically-driven cancelling machines. A record copy has been found in the PTT archives with the date 13.VIII.11.12-. The diameter of all copies is 25mm. Please keep looking.
- ☞ Another item of PTT humour is to be found on the new 50c postcard. Under UV light can be seen the usual 7 x 23mm fluorescent bar to the left of the value impression and the cat's eyes glow in the dark!

- ☞ The K-cancel No.1271, issued in November and shown here, would be very suitable for the new 50c postcard illustrated in last month's DYK.



- ☞ The new PTT Souvenir booklet is most attractive, with about Fr.8 of usable stamps and illustrations of the old Pro Juventute set of the cantonal arms, also a useful summarised history. In English as well as German, French and Italian; at SFr.11 a good buy.

The above set of cantons and the two postcards issued on the 15th January, lead to the "Swiss Path" around the Lake of Uri. I have completed 2½ Cantons and more will follow.

- ☞ The illustration show right is the latest in the 'Tax' story. Now PO Box holders have the accumulated fees charged to their account.

**Falsch frankierte Sendung**  
**Taxe Fr. 2.20 verrechnet**  
**8401 Winterthur 1 Fächer**

- ☞ If you post a letter with insufficient stamps on it the PTT now return it with the label shown (PTT 236.16). It is self-adhesive along one edge and unless you add the stamps there is no point in putting it back in the box. No T-dues for the recipient though!





## Did You Know?



### July 1991

☞ Under parliamentary pressure the PTT have to make a special study on the A & B post, as too many customers are unhappy. Will these customers be less unhappy at the higher rates of a return to the old system?

☞ The new exhibition in the PTT Museum, from 4th June to 13th September, is called "Helvetia Worldwide". Letters and postmarks to document Swiss settlements in the USA and other countries. Felix Ganz was one of the initiators with his extensive US postmark collection, with no less than 56 Bern's, 49 Geneva's, 36 Luzern's, 3 Zürich's, 2 Basel's and many others.

The other exhibitors are E Schmoker of Chicago and A Zeller of Prêles BE. The latter has a worldwide collection including Nova Friburgo, in Brazil, and Helvetia, in Hungary. I am looking forward to seeing it.

☞ The PTT have issued figures for the number of new franking machines put into operation. These are the surprising results:  
1983-716, 1984-1082, 1985-1271, 1986-1417, 1987-1520, 1988-1544, 1989-1700, 1990-497  
A combination of recession and saturation. Hasler appears to be the main loser.

☞ The Zumstein Specialised will appear in September. Completely new, computer set, it contains a wealth of new information plus the existing. The price might appear high, but it is worth it.

☞ The "cat's eyes" postcard appeared in booklets of four for SFr2 with a blue cover, dated 1990/91, otherwise the same as the previous cover, yellow, dated 1988/89, but some PTT adverts are different. This confirms that no postcards were issued in 1990.

☞ The Bern-Lötschberg-Simplon (BLS) railway has issued a number of brochures lately, e.g., "Flotten-parade", the ships of the lakes of Thun and Brienz, 90 pages, only b&w photographs, and "Lötschbergbahn", 64 pages of facts and figures, and pictures. About SFr.5 each, write direct to: BLS Werbung, Postfach, CH-3001 Bern.  
(Note it is unusual to give the actual PO Box number in Switzerland.)

☞ Those who want an Ortsverzeichnis should order soon, SFr.2- plus postage. I have not yet seen the 1991 Postcode booklets, but they will come no doubt, they are free, alphabetical and numerical.

☞ During my recent trip to Geneva with US member Charles LaBlonde we investigated the names on the Head PO (see DYK, September 1990) and found that six are permanently obscured by a built-on annex. They are Egypt, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Rumania, and the USA, so I hope the Swiss PTT made suitable apologies to the countries concerned, the USA being a major initiator of the UPU too. The renovations are now complete, and well done.

☞ This Bulgarian stamp was featured on the front cover of the BBZ, with a note of praise, and on the cover of "Thema", the Thematic Club bulletin.





## Did You Know?



### August 1991

☞ After nearly 130 years, the UPU, with FIP, IFSDA, ASCAT and AIJP, convened a Symposium on Philately in Bern on the 24th April. The main issues being: Harmful Issues, and Promotion of Philately. This is an important step forward, but it is to be noted that of 167 member states about 66 refused to co-operate.

☞ Innumerable books are appearing under the impetus of "700 Years". One to be recommended (but a heavy one) is a new edition of the 1938 "*Great Swiss*". The new title now includes ladies; both in German, covering 100 persons each, now 752 pages. I have not checked exactly but quite a few have never appeared on a postage stamp.

One of the difficulties in a book of this sort is that potential customers are seldom interested in someone of another Canton, and the political system does not allow strong national figures to develop.

☞ The A & B drama continues, now affecting the re-direction of holiday mail. For SFr.5 mail can be held back, or sent to the holiday address inside Switzerland. This works very well, single items receive a yellow label with the new address, or a number of items are put in a B5 cover. Now with the B post taking an indefinite number of days the last day of re-direction is difficult to define. Perhaps re-direction will have to be for 'A' post only in future.

☞ I have found only four PPA slogan machine cancellations in five months, and three of them in waste paper baskets. This confirms my earlier suspicion that this will be a rare postmark in future. At least fifty items at 80c each have to be sent at the same time.

☞ The Transport Museum in Luzern is getting a new PTT exhibit dealing mostly with new developments, leaving the past to the PTT Museum in Bern.

This Museum now has room for more than one special exhibit at a time. Now until the 3rd November 1991 there is also a show on the Fischer Post, 1675-1832. I think this is the same as at GENÈVE 90.

☞ For those members who have unsuccessfully tried to reconstruct the Battle of Morgarten (15th November 1315) on site, I have learnt that because of very heavy rainfall that year the Lake of Aegeri was much larger and the extent of swampy land was extensive, so that one can therefore now envisage the Austrians being caught between the devil and the deep blue sea.

The subsequent pact between the three original cantons on 9th December 1315 was long considered the Date of Birth of Switzerland, until the document of August 1291 was found.







☞ The Swiss, i.e., the one third that voted, have for the third time refused a VAT system, to the chagrin of the government. This can delay a possible joining up with the EEC, but even this is very uncertain, especially in the German-Swiss part.



## Did You Know?



### September 1991

-  Swiss philately has lost another great collector, on 31st July, Wilifried Epprecht, Professor of Physics in Zürich, passed away. His main interest was franking machine cancels (he was the co-author of the Dürst catalogue on these) and other associated fields. He did not seek the limelight, but was always helpful to collectors.
  
-  Picture postcards are printed by 60 different firms in Switzerland, with a total sales price of about SFr.36m annually, of which SFr.25m goes to the PTT. The drop in sales this year is expected to be from 2 to 5%, due to fewer US and Japanese tourists. However there is hope that the new tourists from Eastern Europe will make up some loss.
  
-  In July, for a few years now, the SBB issue a small timetable, free, for Railway Friends. This gives a great deal of information, especially on which trains one can stand behind the driver, a spotter's list of numbers of engines and other useful information.
  
-  Six international couriers are active in Switzerland with a total turnover of about SFr.200m. DHL, and Federal Express, are both larger than the PTT EMS, followed by TNT and its three subsidiaries. These six employ about 1000 people, but market saturation is pulling down profits. The service is very expensive, and outside the eight largest cities, forget it.
  
-  Only 16 000 people visited the GENÈVE 90 exhibition last year. This, with low sales figures for the block, has required that the loss has to be taken from the Fund for Furthering Philately, for the first time. Geneva it seems is just too far away, but it was worth it for all those who made the trip.
  
-  Stamp rolls of 10 000 are now available for the 45c stamp, lake steamer post. Even though a nice stamp, who needs it? Well the junk mailers, for covers 50 to 100g and 51 to 3000 mailed at the same time, and (theoretically?) also for 100 to 250g items of which 50 000 to 250 000 are sent off together.
  
-  Henry Ratz, of California, reports on peculiar patches in the blue background of the SFr.1.60, the CH-US joint-issue. He thinks the flecking of the paper is caused by the new, non-toxic, ink solvents now used by Courvoisier. Has anyone seen anything?
  
-  Another toxic problem is that the Swiss (and others) Phonecards are made from PVC. As this should never be burnt with household waste the PTT try to collect them at source and deal with them properly. That means fewer lie around for collectors. (I found one of the rarest, SFr.1, private, in a Geneva PO waste paper basket!)

The PTT have caught on to one good idea, put pictures of stamps on them! The first were apparently the two Europa stamps of 1986 by Erni, but issued only this year. And now two of the current definitives, the rabbit and the owls, with three further values in preparation. Note that the mark shows how much is left on the card each time it is used.


Only the SFr.10 version has been seen with stamps so far, and first-day cancels are not available, they say.



## Did You Know?



### October 1991

-  The auction season is now on in a big way starting with Corinphila from the 21st to the 28th of September with three major Swiss collections. Then on the 29th of November David Feldman in Geneva has one of the greatest Swiss collections on the table, bigger than Burrus they say. Schwarzenbach comes on the 6th & 7th of December and Interphila of Wil from the 8th to the 10th of December.
  
-  As with the compulsory X-raying of luggage for the aircraft's hold, which allows "special handling" in a dark corner, so VAT-required information on the outside of mail allows targeted action by certain Post Office persons, somewhere, to remove the letter. Any such missing items should be reported as soon as possible to the sender.
  
-  When a renovated, rebuilt or new Post Office is opened, special postmarked souvenirs and chocolate samples, with PTT adverts, are usually handed out to the locals. Sometimes a well-documented history of the PO: old photographs; lists of postmasters; chronology of post; telegraph and telephone happenings, and lists of postmarks, is produced.  

Very difficult to find as not even the PTT Library is always given a copy, but of immense interest to philatelists and 'heimat' collectors.
  
-  The present exhibition on the Fischer Post in the PTT Museum is much more extensive than my note two months ago would indicate. A wonderful collection of paintings, original documents, maps, timetables and equipment gives a picture in depth of the times and activities of this family in Bern. An extensive catalogue, in German and French, covers the main features well.
  
-  Previous to the new 'Bridges' issue there are 30 Swiss stamps showing bridges, mostly named, some symbolic, but making a very nice mini-thematic collection. The most often pictured are the Pont du Mont Blanc in Geneva and the wooden bridge in Luzern.
  
-  The next National Exhibition will be held in Basel in 1995, the "Basler Taube". Zürich tried but fell out for 1993, but there will be something going on for 150 years of the classic Zurich 4 and 6 rappen.
  
-  For the XVth Regional held in Sion in 1982, Pierre Guinand wrote an article in the catalogue, in French, on the "Helvetta" flaw to be found on some Standing Helvetia issues. This interesting article on an important variety has now been translated into German. I have sent an illustrated copy, in both languages, to the Society's Librarian, as some specialists might be interested.  
  
 Pierre Guinand and Dr E Schlunegger have received the 1991 Awards for Literature, for the Aushilfstempel Catalogue and the Motivhandbuch respectively. The Youth Committee also received an award for their booklet on Swiss postal rates, Volume 1. All well deserved!



## Did You Know?



### November 1991

☞ It now lies before me, the long-awaited 1992 Zumstein Specialised. In build-up the same as the previous issue of 1982, but a lot of new information, not just of the last 10 years. Liechtenstein has been left out, and I think the Air Posts could have been as well, to save weight, though the 24 pages of airmail postage rates will be of immense interest to specialists. The section on booklets has been vastly expanded with all covers illustrated. Coil and ATMs also covered in depth. Only black and white printing though.

The classic stamps, and their varieties, are all illustrated, and a slightly new numbering system. The 7-page detailed introduction is in German, French and English and will be of great help to non-German readers. A good buy at SFr.85.

☞ The PTT have now sent out order lists so that their Taxcards (Phonecards) can be ordered direct. I note that the first three types of SFr.10 are no longer on sale, and that the 50c Cat joins the other animals.

Also of interest is that no mention is made of any standing order facilities. Will these cards be mentioned in the next Specialised?

☞ Later this year St. Gallen will join the other six cities when letter coding is introduced. The new Sihlpost in Zurich will open in 1992 with an advanced plant.

☞ Of the 3830 Swiss POs some 2000 are now equipped with Publifax facilities. There are about 150 000 private fax machines in operation. No stamps needed.

☞ The Glattal Philatelic Society, in Dübendorf, celebrated their 100 year Jubilee, and held the XXII Regional Philatelic Exhibition at the end of September. Some 120 exhibitors showed 640 frames with a high standard all round.

For one of the covers prepared by the Club they had them specially coded to show that this belongs to modern philately. Usually clubs having such covers cancelled in advance demand 'no coding' on philatelic mail. I disagree.

☞ For the second year there has not been a MPO cancel for the annual 'Knaben-Schiessen'. These attractive cachets started in 1941, '650 years of Federation'. The reason is not that girls are now allowed to shoot, but that the organising committee and the PTT found the costs to be too high for the financial results. Pity.

☞ I heard a Swiss judge (philatelic) defending the judges from the claim that "they knew nothing about such and such specialised field" by saying that the exhibitor had the duty to inform the judges, and thereby the public too, of the specialities of the field. Not by saying "this is rare", but by saying why. A point to remember.

☞ When the PTT announced that their office in Domodossola was to close on the 30th September they were flooded with requests for 'Last Day' cancels. This is what they got.  
Als Paketauswechslungsamt in ITALIEN,  
stempelt die Poststelle Domodossola agenzia keine Briefmarken.

**Poste svizzere**  
**CH 3907 DOMODOSSOLA**



## Did You Know?



### December 1991

- ☞ Heinz Katcher has done it again, discovered three important new varieties! Mark, Luke and John have been reprinted several times on the SSR 3 recess machine in the PTT Printing Works in Bern, instead of on the old no-longer used SSR 2 unit, but bought-in ink was used apparently, instead of the previous PTT-mixed inks.

The result is a disaster. All stamps printed in 1988 and after are immediately recognisable by their "flat" appearance. They look like cheap offset fakes of the originals. After 4 years it is now unlikely to find the old ones in stock. SFr.5, 10 & 20. (Z.382-384) Good hunting. The sheet size and layout remain the same.

- ☞ At the enormous Parcel Sorting Centre, 8010 Zürich-Mülligen, which handles all parcels for Eastern Switzerland, they also sort bulk letters, i.e., quantities of 3000 or more. For this they have now received two Flats Sorters with 120 bins each and, more of interest to us, two advanced OCR address-reading machines with 28 pre-sort and 140 final-sort bins each. All made by AEG Electrocom of Konstanz.

Half a million letters can be sorted each day, with the so-called inward code allowing the postman's round (or walk), for all seven main Swiss cities with automatic sorting equipment, to be read from the street name and coded on the covers, at the rate of about 10 per second!

"Flats" is the term (US?) for largish covers, A4 to C4. They are of no interest philatelically as no marks are put on the covers.

- ☞ After 8 years of legal wrangling the Supreme Court in Lausanne has decided for the PTT, i.e., the letter box must be within 8 m from the street line. Re-positioning was subsidised by the PTT by SFr.150 within the time limit.
- ☞ In spite of loud public protests the PTT is to raise parcel rates by about 40% next year. This will affect circulating packets, among other things.
- ☞ As expected one can now buy a FDC for the 50c cat Phonecard, for SFr.20, but you can use the card for some phone calls (which is something you cannot do with the stamps on an ordinary FDC), i.e., for SFr.10.
- ☞ The latest PTT Museum display is "130 Years of Greek Stamps". The special show on the Fischer Posts has been extended to 5th January.
- ☞ The PTT has issued a statement on forged ATMs, and there is an article in the November SBZ. The forgery is in back-dated cancellations of 5.11.90 Bern 1 on impressions with the new-type narrow "0" which was nowhere in use with the new yellow paper at that time. Another sad episode by people who take the term "Do-it-yourself stamps" too far.
- ☞ Markus Seitz in Luzern has brought out a neat plastic-ring-bound A5 catalogue on Swiss ATMs. A basic listing on 40 single-sided sheets, in German at SFr.14.
- ☞ Josef Schalch has stated that he is continuing with his loose-leaf A5 ATM & SFS catalogue, which is much more detailed than the above.
- ☞ It appears that the 70c of the costumes issue (Z.600), has been reprinted but the paper was also changed in thickness and in its colour reaction under UV light. Can any member help here?