



Did You Know?



January 1992

☞ On the 3rd February some rates go up, but the A/B post remains, as expected. The B post rate reduction starts now at 3000 instead of 50, so that means all club secretaries will have to put the normal 50c on their letters instead of 40c. The express fee, inland and foreign, goes from SFr.5 to 8. All bulk mailings go up roughly 10%; this might reduce the amount of junk mail. Inland parcels go up by 40% for the lowest weight of 1kg then progressively less as the weight increases until it is only 10% for 20kg.

We now see that the two new stamps which appear on 14th January are for unregistered parcels of 1kg and 2kg, namely SFr.2.80 and SFr.3.60 respectively. Awkward shapes and delicate contents now cost SFr.5 on top of the registered rate. Registration of parcels rises from SFr.1 to SFr.1.50.

☞ The PTT definitive stamp programme is in a mess, partly caused by the ever-changing rates, and partly because new series of definitives are being squeezed in too early, and then old truncated series are left in service. There are now no less than eight definitive series, or bits of, on sale today, not counting coil and ATM stamps. Taken from the latest PTT sales list, they are:

- 1961 three Evangelists, 5, 10, 20.
- 1977 one Folklore 40c (not needed after February 1992; 40c animal removed from 24.1.92 issue).
- 1980 one Architecture Fr.3.50.
- 1982 fourteen Zodiac, Fr.1.00 to 4.50.
- 1986 twelve Mail Transport, 5c to 90c.
- 1989 three People at Work, Fr.2.75 to 3.75 (two more on 24.1.92).
- 1990 three Animals, 50c to 80c (two more on 24.1.92).
- 1991 two Mountain Lakes, 50c and 80c.

☞ Quite a few of the above are hardly used anymore and cannot be found in many post offices. Also a number of the Transport values were never ordered by post offices as they still have enough stock from previous issues, e.g., Folklore. This means that if you want to stock up, do it now.

☞ At the 6/7th December auction of Hans Schwarzenbach all 1351 lots were taken, with a remarkable WWI Soldier Stamp study collection going for SFr.48 000 (plus 18%) The starting price was SFr.3000.

☞ The SVP have noticed some other events which no longer attract a MPO, Federal Schützenfest and Turnfest. The latter was last held in Luzern in 1991 and had 70 000 spectators. Also the Morgarten Battle Remembrance 1315 has had a MPO cachet from 1938 until 1984, though only three designs were used; for the last 20 years it was the not very exciting picture of the 1907 monument erected at the spot.

☞ Felix Ganz was the acknowledged expert on all aspects of Swiss cancellations, especially the ordinary date cancellations of the period not covered by the A & E eight-volume opus. The SVP are now publishing his 80-page monograph on his life's work, from his typewritten notes, in German, and all his illustrations of the various types of his system. An unequalled study of Swiss cds, which must remain the most comprehensive collection in existence anywhere.



Did You Know?



February 1992

The UPU in Bern have confirmed to me that at the Washington Conference of autumn 1989 it was decided to recommend to all postal administrations that the UK two-tier system be introduced for internal and external mail, i.e., no 'printed matter' nor 'postcards', and that the blue 'A prioritaire' label replace the 'Air Mail' label, specifically for the 1st class, everywhere. This to take effect from January 1991. Switzerland was the first, followed by Luxembourg, Denmark and Sweden.

Not unsurprisingly the PTT did not accept my suggestion for A and B stamps, as the UK system of 1st & 2nd class stamps "cannot be applied to Switzerland". The new stamps are still seldom seen as all POs are first using up their stocks of cats and owls. Nevertheless the red/blue anomaly has been noticed by a number of commentators.

There are 1200 Frama ATM machines in Switzerland now. The last 200 to be supplied had the ten-digit button system, and now all the rest are being converted to this more convenient type. No changes are needed when the rates go up. However, I know of only two where a phone card can be used to obtain stamps, perhaps more will follow.

The world-wide DHL organisation provides good customers with a complete computer system including two printers so that air-waybills can be easily made out using the memorized data. From this terminal the progress of each item can be followed instantaneously across the world. The PTT cannot match that, but their EMS service costs only a fraction of DHL et al.

The EMS service started when the GPO introduced their Datapost service many years ago as their answer to the private couriers operating in the UK?

Recent statistics show that the number of Swiss POs rose this century from 3550 to a peak of 4033 in 1968. The rate of growth fell during both world wars and also in 1935. The total in 1990 was 3800. Seasonal POs reached a peak in 1955 with 83, and have now dropped to 20.

Some years ago the PTT introduced an international Reply Paid service, and I asked Society members to keep their eyes open for an example for me. Now your Editor has found one, and from the Philatelic Bureau in Bern, in dark blue (see the Newsletter for illustration).

The text is rather minimal in French (the international postal language) so it is not quite clear that the postage is not required from any country.

For the new 10c Cow stamp the French have a better matching first-day cancel than the Swiss, see below.





Did You Know?



March 1992

☞ A recent study has shown that a number of the 57 so-called private railways in Switzerland (only about 10 on average of the shares are privately owned) should be combined into bigger units to reduce the subsidies now being paid by the state, cantons and communes to their local service. Only four do not require help, but a number are grouped to purchase common rolling stock.

The plan for closer fusions mentions the following pair: the successful Brig-Zermatt and the loss-making Furka-Oberalp. Closure is practically excluded today, even for the shortest, the 5km Oensingen-Balsthal Bahn. We will see what happens.

☞ I have discovered the hard way that self-adhesive envelopes are horrors. After about 15 years the glued flap turns yellow-brown ruining its own front side and the next cover in the box, if any. There seems to be no cure. Bolting the door after the horse I now tear off all these glued strips, sometimes in time. It can even stain the stamp, but of course cancel collectors, if they have a lot of business letters, are mostly affected. This type of sealing actually started in the early 1940s here. As the shelf life is limited most envelopes can be licked, and this is more suitable for the automatic sealing machines too.

☞ There is a book for Lake Steamer fans on "*Saving the DS Blümlisalp*" in German, 120 pages, many illustrations, SFr.20. Available from 22nd May 1992, the day of the second maiden voyage, after the restoration.

☞ The Swiss "Luftpost-Katalog" has been completely revised and computerised for publication in 1992 (last issue was in 1984, red cover). It will not show the new phonecard as the philatelic editor has banned them.
The phonecard shows the old JU 52 which is used for flights over the Alps, and the card is for promotional use. You can't phone over the Alps for the SFr1 face value. (See the Newsletter for illustration).

☞ The PTT have announced that six to eight new phone-cards will be issued in 1992, including some with stamp motifs.

☞ Rather belatedly I have found out that in 1984 the Philatelic Academy of Bavaria published a useful little brochure on "*WW I Internment in Switzerland*", in German, by H Sulser. Figure 15 shows some freezing kilted Scots unloading a food train.

☞ Another useful booklet has been published by Karl Gebert, revised edition A5, "*Die Poststempel des Kantons Graubünden, 1850-1965*", excludes Chur, Davos and St Moritz, but the very best list available of all POs and the cancels used (by type).



Did You Know?



April 1992

- ☞ The PTT have announced that next year the inland rates (at least?) will have to go up again, to bring them out of the red, and about 50 POs will be closed.
- ☞ Last month I mentioned that after 15 years the gum of self-sealing envelopes stained the covers brown, but now I have found many damaged after only 5 years! Perhaps humidity has speeded the process up, or the gum is of lower quality. The double strip must be cut off the back immediately.
- ☞ In April this year, to celebrate their centenary, the Brienz Rothorn Bahn is getting the first of a batch of new steam locos built by the Winterthur SLM factory (founded by the English engineer Brown in the 19th century). The Rocher-de-Naye railway and the Austrians are also taking one each and, if successful, another nine or so will be made.



Outwardly these locos resemble their prototypes, but inwardly they are a completely new design using the latest techniques, oil-fired high-efficiency boilers with electric pre-heating, they are one-man powerful wonders, type H2/3. The new K-cancel 40c shows it. (See left.)


- ☞ The new CEPT stamps for Columbus are very good and will be well received I am sure. However the three "Comics" stamps which come out on 22nd May will raise a few eyebrows, but wait and see.
- ☞ It has taken me considerably longer than expected to put together Dr Ganz's notes on his "Typology of Swiss 20th century date cancels", sorting out, correcting some small errors, checking queries he had raised, cutting out and sticking in dozens and dozens of illustrations, rearranging the last few incomplete chapters, and the rest! I have certainly learnt a lot. Delivery in April now of the 38 double-sided A4 sheets, each page consisting of two sheets reduced to A5. This reduction is mandatory for all publications of cancellations here. Not beautiful, but I hope still useful, in fact the best available, the result of his years of work in a difficult field.
- ☞ The current exhibition in the PTT Museum in Bern is by Alfred Speck of Zürich on his thematic collection on Music, Literature, and Theatre in European Culture; until 3rd May.
- ☞ On 16th March the Genève 2 PO officially started their inward coding system, sorting automatically down to each postman. This is the fourth such in Switzerland and four still to come; Zürich this year and Basel, Lausanne and Luzern next year.
- ☞ The Pro Juventute committee say their sales in 1991 were up 23% on 1990, and the net profit jumped 37% to SFr.120 000, which will be used this year mainly in the Zürich region for needy families and children.
- ☞ Occasionally incorrect dates occur in cancellers, such as 39.19.99. These are curiosities, and show how the digit wheels are arranged in the canceller. If high prices were to be paid for such items then they would be mass produced by PTT staff, illegally.




Did You Know?





May 1992


-  If you are a computelyst you will be glad to know that by writing to Charles J Peterson, Box 5559, Laurel MD, USA 20726, you will learn all about the "Computelyst", a quarterly publication which provides helpful hints, reports and product reviews on the application of computers to philately. As they say, its news when mouse bytes modem. Published under the aegis of the American Philatelic Society.


-  The PTT has issued stamp sales figures for 1990, and for the Folklore definitives of 1977. The Genève 90 block sold only 1 387 000. In the last 30 years only the Red Cross Centenary sold less - 784 785. Now the final accounts for the exhibition itself can be published, and they won't be rosy, red in fact.


The 60c (Z.679) sold least of the folklore (13m); the second of the Sport Stamps made only 5.6m (first 13m), so what will the figure be for the third on the 23rd of August?


-  At the SVP auction on 28th March a machine slogan reached the sensational price of SFr.1100. No.2.2.79z with the spelling 'L'hospedale', instead of the correct 'L'ospedale' (used in Lugano 3 on 1st October 1970). The example is one of only five, and was found in a sales packet by a member who knew more Italian than the PTT, and more than the person who put it in the sales packet. A nice collection can be made of the incorrect Italian slogans of Switzerland.

-  The 40c Escalade was issued a few weeks ago in rolls of 10 000, and now the 50c Postman (not the cat!) as well; special supply to the junk mail firms, but available to all. Order direct from the PTT please.

-  In all PTT publications, except the very first note, the A & B stamps have the names of the lakes transposed. Zumstein and the Helvetia Newsletter got it right.

-  The Glattalbahn or 'Glatt Valley Railway', as named by the English planning engineer, Zürich to Uster (and as the first stationmaster used to call out "Rapperswil, Vienna, Budapest, Constantinople"), celebrates its 140th year with a brochure by Werner Neuhaus.
This is his tenth on the railways of Zurich, SFr.9 each, or SFr.80 the lot.
Tosstalbahn next.

-  The "Sihltalbahn" (SZU now) celebrates its centenary on the 3rd August this year with steam trips, fetes at various stations and the rest. The first planners saw it as the start of a connection to the Gotthard, but Thalwil won.

-  For the first time a Japanese cancelling machine will be used in Switzerland, two in fact at the new Zürich-Sihlpost. They also sort to size of cover and face it before cancelling with a 28mm town die.



Did You Know?



June 1992

☞ At the end of May Jakob Gnägi left the PTT on pension. For 30 years he has been in charge of the Philatelic Section of the PTT Museum, which included organising all the dozens of exhibitions held there and keeping the Swiss stamp exhibit up to date, as well as the world collection of stamps sent in by all the UPU member states.

A philatelist in his own right, his numerous contributions to the SBZ and his book "*Die Zürcher Kantonalmarken*" of 1984, to prove it. Peter Meier, also a philatelist, takes over.

☞ From the 11-14th June the Regiophil XXIII will be held in Neuchâtel, in the ice rink, which should keep things cool.

☞ The big event for 1993 is the WIBRA in Winterthur, 6-9th May, the third trilateral meeting of Austria, Germany and Switzerland. Also the 9th Exhibition for juniors. Three postcards and three covers will be sold. All visitors to the above Regiophil will get one of the postcards free; normal price 60c.

☞ Zumstein in the May BBZ comments on the prizes for the Best Stamp contest; curious that nothing philatelic is to be found under the 100 good prizes: Will the winning stamp also be the biggest, as last time with the oversize Tinguely?

☞ The 10Fr booklet with ten additional 50c stamps is no longer to be found. Also the full sheet of ten blocks of four of the 1991 '700th centenary' stamps: The booklets can still be found however if you are lucky.

☞ The Austrian PO has brought out an S7 stamp for the Rhine Correction, as did Switzerland on 24th March 1992 with a 50c, but much better visually, an excavator at work, showing Austrian & Swiss flags.

☞ The new SBB/CFF timetable came out on 1st June, 340 000 printed, or you can have it on a disc for SFr28, so combined with your PC and printer you can produce your own special timetables with all trains from X to Y to Z.

☞ I noticed in one of the few cancel record books in the PTT Museum a curious hand roller cancel 'Oberlikon'. On the left is shown a normal Swiss-made hand cancel. On the right a German-made roller cancel (they made all such), crossed out and the note "Zurück" (return).

I can imagine what happened: the engraver had never heard of the place, as the capital letters Ä, Ö and Ü used in Germany have the two dots as part of the printed letter, whereas in Switzerland the dots for the first letter of a word are written as an 'e', as in Oerlikon and Aegeri. So the engraver thought that the 'b' was missing, making an impossible name!





Did You Know?



July 1992

- ☞ With 200 000 results in, the PTT could reveal at the Regiophil in Neuchâtel on 11th June that the 700 years block of four had the greatest number of votes in the Best Stamp contest. Yet again it is the 'biggest' stamp issued in 1990/91.
- ☞ The present show in the PTT Museum is devoted to a thematic collection on 'Birds' by Herr Peter Schneider. The birds are all shown arranged in their families.
- ☞ In the new Zürich Sihlpost which opened on 1st June, the two new Japanese CFCs (culler-facer-cancellers) can also sort out A & B letters, if the respective stamps have the appropriate optical features. These stamps are not yet available, so all the letters (as all over Switzerland) have to be sorted by hand, after cancellation.
- ☞ The new postal rates for 1993 will reflect the lower percentage of 17%, instead of the predicted 25% of 'A' letters, i.e., the 'B' letters will be more expensive to make up the difference.

- ☞ With the new railway timetable of 31st May 1992 a number of changes took place. Fig. 1 shows the last-day cancel of the private TPOs of the Waldenburg line. The old TPOs can still be seen at the two terminii, rather worn out compared to the new passenger coaches. One, I think, will now be broken up.



Fig. 1

- ☞ The SBB closed down two lines, the Solothurn-Herzogenbuchsee, and the Beinwil-Beromünster; see Fig 2 for the last-day of the station cancel. The two lines will continue with sporadic goods traffic only.

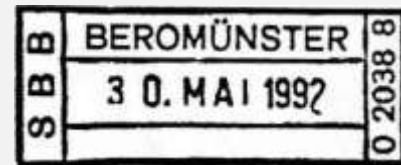


Fig. 2

- ☞ One of the 'Self-service' POs of Zürich closed down with the pensioning of the postmaster, see Fig 3.



Fig. 3

- ☞ You all know about the four new high-value GB stamps with their unique security features; extended perf holes, different colours of castles under UV light, and the gold-to-green Queen's head. This special ink is made in Lausanne, and by accident I found an old red frank of this firm, see illustration right.





Did You Know?



August 1992

The 1992 edition of the Schweiz Luftpost-Katalog is now at the printers. It has been computerised, up-dated, revised, extended to 576 pages and costs SFr.60; in German with French and English explanations. Please order from Vera Trinder or your local dealer. This edition has a grey cover; the previous one in 1984 was red.

The Pro Sport 1992 stamp to be issued on 25th August (see the July edition of the Newsletter) was designed by Jean Tinguely who died last year. He was the winner of the 1988/89 Best Stamp contest and this has probably been done in the hope that it will boost drooping sales of Sport stamps, as the FDC and the first-day cancel are also by him.



Phonecards (Taxcard in Switzerland) are here to stay; in Germany they will be accepted in exhibitions under "General". The 3rd edition of the Michel catalogue recognises that the first one came out in 1883 in Bavaria (repeat 1883), under the name "Telephon-Billet". I have not seen a decision on mint or used.

All mail from Graubünden is now sorted in Zürich; Chur sorts only the mail for the Canton. The same arrangement seems to apply to mail in the Canton of Aargau.

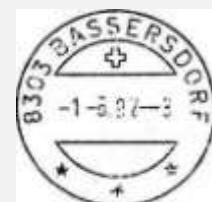
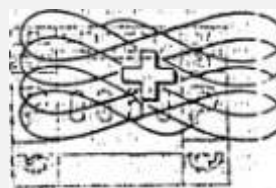
During the LIBA 92 Vaduz from 1-9th August, in addition to the special exhibition cancel, there are also nine daily cancels and, guess what, nine postcards are being issued, though some of them are definitives. Who will collect all the combinations? A new Stamp Catalogue is being issued for SFr.20, a good buy.

The Swiss-German dialects are being used more and more on cancellations, to the irritation of the French and Italian Swiss who, if at all, have learnt "High-German" at school. In the main one can distinguish between the sub-dialects of Basel, Bern and Zürich.



The latest effort of a machine slogan from Basel, "600 Joor Glai- und Grossbasel" means '600 years, small and great Basel' i.e., the town on both sides of the Rhine; 600 years since the town on the right bank was recognised.

In the official PTT Bulletin it was stated that Bassersdorf was to receive a cancelling machine on 1st June. When the covers I had sent in did not arrive, I asked at the post office. The answer was "The building extension is not yet complete, it will be September or so". But for philatelists all the covers sent in were cancelled on the machine during June, as shown. Is this correct, as only a provisional hook-up was made, and no live mail was cancelled?








Did You Know?





September 1992


-  On 1st February 1993 the postal rates go up again; A remains at 80c, but B goes up to 60c (50c) to encourage the use of the A service. Registration (recorded delivery) goes up from 3 to 4 francs, a rise of 135% over the SFr.1.20 of a few years ago. Foreign mail up by 10%, these details and changes to bulk rates will be announced when the Federal Council has given its approval.
These rises are to cover the losses of the PTT buses and the delivery of political newspapers, both services being government requirements.


-  Two interesting 'follow-up' books have been issued by two well-known philatelists: Dr Ernst Schlunegger with his fourth volume of "*Die Motive der Schweizer Werbedatumstempel*" (description of K-cancels), and Franz Oeler's 42 page (A4) update of the 1960 classic by Alfred Müller "*Die Ortsstempel der Zürcher Aussengemeinden ...*".

-  The political incorporation of the eleven surrounding villages into the town of Zürich on the 1st January 1893 was preceded by the postal absorption, in that the new cancellers were issued on the 1st July 1892, a fact discovered by Franz Oeler and worthy of a centenary slogan, but the moment was missed. (On 1st January 1934 a further eight villages followed, by popular vote, as nearly all were bankrupt.)


-  An attractive set of 52 playing cards has been issued by a club in Basel under the name 'Dominik'. Each card has a Swiss, German or Austrian stamp illustration and a type of Happy Families can be played.


-  In the May 1992 issue of the SBZ there was a short article on the validity of Swiss stamps which contained a number of errors. This has now been 'corrected' by the editor, but with some more errors! It seems that this is a difficult subject.

-  The 'Uri', so well known to tourists the world over, built in 1901, will soon be afloat again with an oil-burning boiler after a complete renovation. Then the Lake of Luzern will have five steam-driven paddle-wheel ships in service, the largest such fleet in the world. Should be worth a special cancel next year.

-  This year the Swiss Army celebrates 75 years of pigeon post and confirms that this service will be continued due to its cheapness and reliability (a statistical comparison with the A & B post is not made).

No less than 7000 birds are kept by the army in 23 self-contained units, with a further 33 000 in reserve awaiting their call-up papers. The Soldier Stamps of the various Pigeon-post units are among my favourites.

-  Hundreds of pigeons were released at the official opening of the new Postal Museum in Bern, and at the opening of the new Zürich Sihlpost in May 1992.




-  Dr J Etter has just written a long article in the NZZ on the 2½c stamp of 1918 (Z.136), used only as a make-up value, and together with the 7½c stamps, discusses all the ramifications and combinations through the years, fascinating.



Did You Know?



October 1992

-  In 1972 the Swiss artist and writer Meret Oppenheim predicted the present dilemma with the stamp shown; should Switzerland join Europe or not.
- 
-  130 village post offices are scheduled for closure when the present public servant is pensioned. As usual to save money, with the falling number of letters and other items today due to the worst recession for 50 years.
 -  The 100 year old station of Aathal (Zürich Oberland) is closed, but was gently moved 75m to become the new post office! That does not happen often. (Aa is the pre-Celtic word for river - reputedly, and is found in many names in Switzerland and southern Germany.)
 -  The Swiss sport organisations are not at all pleased with the PTT. Only a week before the new 50c+20c stamp came out on the 25th August it was announced that the letter rate would go up to 60c on 1st February 1993, thus robbing the clubs of a steady source of income during the planned three years of sale. Who will put on an extra 10c stamp on each letter? This must affect the number of used stamps for collectors.
 -  Thieving vandals have forced the PTT to start removing all the telephone coin mechanisms from public boxes so that only phone-cards or, in future, credit cards can be used. The start is being made in Winterthur I believe.
 -  I was never happy about my statement in the January 1992 issue of the Newsletter regarding which lake was which, and even the BBZ of January 1992 had it wrong so I visited them both! The blue 50c shows Lago Moesola on the San Bernadino Pass, and the 80c reddish the Lake of Melchsee (I had a short, sharp swim in it).
 -  Zumstein corrects the error in the new 1993 Catalogue, and this is not the only piece of correct information in our 'Bible', the book of books, the essential tool for all collectors of Swiss philately. The spiral 'lay-flat' binding has been replaced by a satisfactory stitched binding. At SFr.20 the best buy in philately.
 -  In the smallest village in the Canton Zürich - Hüttikon - the firm of Güller and Sons was founded in 1845 as engraver and stamp maker. Since 1867 practically all PTT cancellers have been made by them, until the very large orders for cancels with the postcode in 1964 could not be met. Some of their record books were copied by the PTT decades ago, but now all records are to be updated and made available to collectors, hopefully in 1993. Many questions can then be answered I am sure.



Did You Know?



📖 November 1992

- ☞ On the 25th September the NZZ revealed - a bit too soon for the PTT - details of new issues for January 1993, as follows: a new 'A post' stamp for 80c but showing only an 'A', thus it is no longer necessary to add an 'A Prioritaire' label or an hand written 'A', but the colour is still red! For the new 'B' rate a 60c stamp, showing the mountain lake of Tanay in the Valais, near Vouvry. A SFr.1 stamp showing a mare with foal in the Farm Animals series has also been printed.
- ☞ The first two stamps, for the A and B post, have a type of bar code along one edge of the stamp picture, so that for the first time A and B post can be sorted optically using the Japanese CFC machines in the Zürich Sihlpost. Illustrations will be in the December issue of the Newsletter.
- ☞ Basel 2 is to have their old AEG facer-canceller machine, running since June 1980, replaced by a Japanese NEC machine in the spring of 1993 (as in Zürich). Bern, Lausanne, Geneva and Luzern will follow in a year or so, enabling optical A and B post separation to be carried out all over Switzerland. The diameter of the town die will remain 28 mm.
- ☞ Transit mark specialists will be interested in a new work "*Rates and Marks following the postal agreement Basel-France, 1.4.1829 to 30.11.1845*", in German, 164 A4 pages, with about 200 covers illustrated and explained. Available from Hansuli Sieber, Postfach, CH-3312 Fraubrunnen.
- ☞ Zumstein has brought out an updated version of their 1988 Pen catalogue of all special and MPO cancels. One of the most important catalogues for the Swiss collector; SFr.20 for a set of updating sheets, or SFr.75 for the complete catalogue.
- ☞ Preparations are under way for the three-country WIBRA exhibition to be held in Winterthur from the 1st to the 6th May next year.
- ☞ Instead of the old four-digit SFS machines for the counter labels, from April of 1992 new five-digit machines have been supplied, some 336 in four months, and about the same number expected by the end of the year.



The use of medium and high value stamps is certainly being reduced by this labour saving method. See the illustration left.

- ☞ On the 12th October a new Registration label (and receipt form) started a 3 week trial in Bern 18 Bümpliz. All text is in red ink-jet printed; note the automatic weighing. ⇒












Did You Know?





December 1992

-  After more than two decades of truly international study, the famous 'Razor Blade' mystery has finally been solved. A comprehensive article is in preparation.
-  Following the article in the March 1992 Newsletter by David Robinson, I found another excellent publication, by G F Otley, "*British postal rates to Europe 1836 – 1876*" which also covers Switzerland in detail. (See June 1992 edition of the Newsletter for a review of this book.)
-  Last year, Johannes Müller of Bern issued a full-colour priced catalogue of all Pro Patria stamps, postcards to 1960, lapel badges, coins and medallions, and all slogans, special cancels and MPO cachets, not forgetting stamp booklets. A very useful reference booklet containing unique information.
-  The PTT has jumped on the 'Pin' (lapel badges) bandwagon fast with reproductions of various stamps in metal. The first was the 90c Comics, followed by the Sport and Circus stamps, but the most attractive ones are the Pro Juventute Cantonal Arms replicas. Some of the classics are also available. Order direct from the PTT Philatelic Bureau in Bern.
-  The Pro Juventute organisation will issue not only their five 1992 Woodland stamps in pin form (in an attractive case for SFr.45), but also the 50c Melchior as a SFr.15 (10+5) phonecard for their 80th anniversary.
-  Georg Landau of Sarnen has produced a remarkable 3-volume A4 work on the "*Postal History of Obwalden*" photocopied in a very limited edition; I saw the PTT library copy. He has spent years going through all the local newspapers for the past 100 years to glean information on each and every PO in the half-canton. His own considerable philatelic knowledge has helped. Postmarks and many other items of interest are included, all fully illustrated. A good example for other cantons.
-  Only by going to Bern 18 Bümpliz did I find that the new trial Registration label, as mentioned in last month's DYK, can also be obtained non-R, i.e., as an ordinary SFS



label for letters and parcels, see below. Note the weight of the item is always shown automatically. The printer is by ASCOM and the computer by Olivetti and, if successful, I guess that this system will be used in all main PO's.

-  To match the private mail distributors the PTT has had to relax its 20kg limit and now accepts parcels up to 30kg, for SFr.26, and in steps of 80c per kilogram.
-  At the recent SVP meeting in Zofingen Jacques Hansler of Morges gave a fascinating talk on his research on the first Swiss machine cancellations, those with the letters C, D, R & T in the flag. As expected, no logical pattern could be found. His travels around European flea markets, thousands of kilometres including Lisbon, proved his philatelic dedication, and he was usually successful too with his finds. See the illustration. 