



Did You Know?



January 1994

☞ All 17 OCR code-sorting machines in Switzerland are now centrally controlled from Bern, so that each letter can be coded and sorted to each postman in the main towns and, slowly, to include the adjacent villages.

There are 8 machines in Zürich-Sihlpost, two each in Zürich-Mülligen and Basel 2, but only one each in Genève 2, Lausanne 1, Bern 1, Luzern 2, and St. Gallen 1. Each has its own memory for all the others too, but changes and updating come only from Bern. Street name reading is by OCR.

☞ On the 23rd of November the PTT Museum opened a new room for another part of their extensive stocks. Dozens of objects are shown, closely packed on shelves for study. They say they are the first museum to do this: old telephones, radios, TV sets, post boxes, stamp vending machines, franking machines, old uniforms and much more. Well worth a visit.

☞ The other day I saw a PTT-owned railway wagon for mail bags painted all white with a yellow band along the bottom. Looks nice, but difficult to keep clean. There are all manner of colours used today for privately-owned railway wagons.

☞ The St. Niklaus cancel of 6.12.93 is something new for Switzerland and is the personal effort of the postmaster of the tiny PO, Wienacht-Tobel (AR).



The first part of the name is Christmas in Swiss German. It was shown on the main TV news and the result was a flood of covers for cancelling on this special day.

☞ Also issued last year are two new K-cancels from the Weisstannen Valley where the ancient evening prayer, or call for protection, is still practised. The text "Bhüät's Gott" means "Save us, and all we have, dear God". This call then echoes from alp to alp.



☞ The illustration below shows an interesting find made by our member Mr C K Karsten in Scotland. This is the centre part only of a two-ring machine cancellation town die, confirmed by the outer ring in part only being exactly 22mm diameter. The stamp-less envelope he found was from the Philatelic Bureau in Bern, and it seems likely that other members have seen one or may have one (please report finds to the Editor).



The only other examples known are from the PTT Rechenzentrum in Bern and the example shown in the SVP Machine Cancellation Catalogue (Vol. 1, p 17) has the date of 9.8.1967.

☞ In the Güller impression books the earliest cancel made for a foreign customer is for Florence in Italy, made in 1868, see illustration left. Note the un-shaded Cross of Savoy. The second foreign cancel, for a private customer, is shown right. It was made in 1869 but has a most peculiar text; who could have ordered it?



Would it be the Board of Trade or the Commonwealth Office of the day?





Did You Know?



February 1994

- ☞ Zumstein reported that the 80+20c Luzern 'Fire' stamp was withdrawn from sale on the 23rd November, the first day of the Pro Juventute stamps. This might have happened at one or two small POs, against all instructions, but the PTT Philatelic Service has confirmed that the 30th November, as announced, was the last day of sale at all POs and Philatelic counters.

However sales were poor and only about 2 million of the 10 million printed were sold. The public knew that there was enough money available to rebuild the old bridge from the insurance and from public subscription in Luzern itself.

- ☞ The GABRA III stationery exhibition will be open from the 24th to the 26th September in Burgdorf and, being non-competitive, will have lots of interesting objects not normally seen.
- ☞ The 1993 Pro Juventute stamps received general acclaim and the designer, Bernadette Baltis, has told me that she has decided not to give up stamp design so, PTT willing, we will see more of her excellent work.
- ☞ Karl Gebert has issued an update to his booklets on the "*Cancels of Graubünden and the Toggenburg*" (mentioned before), and also a new survey of the cancels of Davos and St Moritz, the two largest towns after the cantonal capital Chur.
- ☞ The new football stamp shown on TV at the time of the victory over Latvia was actually being prepared for issue in 1995, the centenary of the organisation, but will now be issued on 15th March 1994, well ahead of the first match against the USA in Detroit.
- ☞ A new PTT MPO special cover has been issued, first seen by me at St Gallen in November, where it was used with only a round special cancellation. It has now been used in Zürich, twice, with the MPO date stamp and special cachet; Pro Juventute and for the Zürich Christmas Market (see the illustration of the new logo with the text in three languages).

- ☞ 179 years after the Congress of Vienna the Laufental has at last been given back to Basel Country, twelve villages with a total of 15 000 inhabitants left the Canton of Bern at the end of 1993. Only the village of Roggenburg in the extreme west decided to stay with Bern.



As the Laufental has been in Postal Region V, Basel since 1849 there will be no changes to cancellations or other items. However, car number plates will change from BE to BL.

- ☞ A new PTT logo is creeping in, next to the familiar cross, in all manner of publications, and in all five languages, English on occasion. It reminds me of the present French Post logo.





Did You Know?



March 1994

- A remarkable exhibition is to be seen in the 18 frames of the PTT Museum from 8th February to 5th June. It is from the prize-winning collection of Albert Fillinger of Mulhouse, France, on the French military cancellations from 1672 - 1830. A postal history exhibit par excellence.
- Another interesting exhibition, also in the PTT Museum, started on the 23rd February and runs until 29th May, on Mail Art, i.e., on what artists send to each other across the world by post or fax. The ideas and creations are limitless, and must have given many postmen a shock. An uncommon aspect of postal history, but with many followers.
- On the 12th May 1908, Zumstein paid SFr.300 000 for the Mirabaud Swiss collection, probably the greatest ever to be auctioned, with no less than 1400 Cantonals, according to the 2-volume "*History of Philately*" by C Brühl (1985), in German.
- For followers of Roman roads, the Hungarians have issued (October 1993) a block showing the main European routes whereby Augustus Rauricorum (the present day Augst, near Basel) is mentioned.
- The cows, and bulls, from the Bernese Simmenthal have made a great impression on South African animal husbandry for more than a century, for which Namibia issued a set of four stamps in 1993 (16th April to be accurate).
I apologise for not realising this at the time, but the blurb did not mention Switzerland as the original cattle came from Germany to their colony in South-West Africa.
- The well-known and respected firm of G Honegger in 8716 Schmerikon/ZH has the habit of issuing every year since 1980, a beautiful catalogue of classic Swiss stamps as his sales list. 100 odd pages packed with colour illustrations and also at least one specialised article on his research into this field. Write to him for a free copy of the A5 book, in German.
- A new printing of the SFr.6 stamp booklet was made on the 2nd March 1993, but I don't know if the marks, including the printing date, are all the same as before. Pity one can't take out a standing order for such booklets, but I suppose it is more interesting to go to dozens of POs looking for the missing bits of the puzzle.
- Zermatt has received a new K-cancel as the PTT have rescinded their old rule that if a place had a cancelling machine then they would have a publicity slogan, and, therefore, did not need a publicity hand canceller as well.



K36



K36a



K36b

- Another two cancels with a British connection have been found in the Güller record books. What was A Arbenz doing in Birmingham?
With a Swiss name was he a confectioner?
The Royal Engineers ordered only this one canceller at the time the Army Telegraphs were being considered; see the Newsletter for October 1993.





Did You Know?



April 1994

At the beginning of April the PTT will introduce a new truly mobile post office service in the Calancatal, the westernmost Italian-speaking valley of the Graubünden. In this remote valley none of the existing tiny village POs can survive, but with this collective mobile office all can be served at least once per day. The special postmark and other details will follow.

I have seen that the old Middle Ages name for the Rigi was Regina Montium, from which the present name is derived. Many articles have been written about the stamps issued by the Hotel of the Cold Bath.

A member has asked me to identify a cancellation 'H.Buchsee'. This is the shortened version for 'Herzogenbuchsee', and there are others of this type used in the 19th century. This, and similar queries, suggests that a comprehensive listing of all abbreviations to be found on Swiss cancels might be of use.

Felix Ganz made the most useful list available (see the Newsletter, August 1993), but I will try to use in each case an illustration of a typical cancellation, showing its use and with an explanation. 'Aangen A/A' and 'Conters i/O' come to mind, even 'Exp. Let.' can cause trouble to a beginner.¹



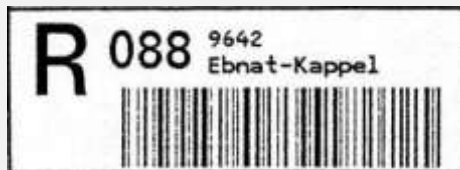
As it is not too easy to complete the list, I would be most grateful for suggestions, especially those which have been unsolved for years. The latest puzzle is shown left, on its First Day of use, just to prove that it is an ongoing problem, in fact it never ends.

Federal Councillor Ogi, as head of the Post Office, declared a few years ago that there would be no more unintelligible stamps. The present commemoratives belie his words. The first two values of Books and Press are attractive and meaningful, but what has the third got to do with electronics and computers?

Two TPO cancels were shown in last month's Newsletter which mention places in France, namely Culoz on No. 5, south of Genève, and Pontarlier on No. 18, southwest of Neuchâtel.

Hardly had the ink dried on my summary of Swiss Registration labels (February Newsletter) when a new type (No. 8) appeared in late February. Officially the first-day was to be 1st March in an internal PTT instruction to postmasters, i.e., not in the normal PTA.

The new coded labels, see example below, were issued to all Swiss POs (about 3500) but were to be used for foreign letters only. The old red labels and the 'new' black R labels were to be used



only for internal letters. However, the PTT did not issue additional registration books in which all such letters have to be recorded, so how could the counter clerk keep a check using two parallel sets of numbers. Result: all non-coded labels were disposed of in most PO's.

The larger PO's photograph all registered items (and Express), so they still use both types. This means that the 'red' labels are not scarce, but the newly-introduced black R labels (No. 7) will be extremely scarce as they have been issued to only a few PO's.

The labels are slightly bigger, 55 x 20 mm, self-adhesive, all cut, and all black, in strips of ten as before. The bar code can be read electronically to make up the list which accompanies each bundle of foreign registered letters. For foreign parcels and insured items similar new labels, all black, have been issued to PO's. That the bar code contains, other than the item number and PLZ, I have not yet worked out. Note that Japan started this coding system in August 1985.

¹ The Society's website contains a Glossary of Philatelic Terms, with many postal abbreviations included.



Did You Know?



May 1994

- ☞ The PTT have learnt that the old handle stamp vending machines are 'weak' and are therefore being taken out of service as fast as possible. This means that the production of coil stamps has been stopped, perhaps in 1993 already. There are no border currency controls, by the way.
- ☞ The Frama machines have all been converted to ten button units, originally with two coin slots having a mechanical coin checker (1000 of them), but now new machines have a single slot with an electronic checker, which apparently compares the coin picture with the Swiss coin of the same size. No less than 1250 of these have been installed, mainly at railway stations and other places with a high 'tourist' density. The failure rate is nearly zero.
- ☞ There are ten Frama machines operated by Phonecards, three each in Basel and Zürich, and four in Biel, but with Telecom and PTT accountancy problems. Normal coins are accepted as well, of course.
- ☞ It seems that the days of the MPO date canceller and event cachet are over. The BEA and Zürich Sechseläuten are, for the first time, now ordinary round special cancellers. Unfortunately, MPOs are becoming more of a loss-maker.
- ☞ It is incomprehensible to me that the PTT supports the issue of more BIT and UIT stamps for the USA rate of SFr.1.80. These are for use only by the UNO offices that use franking machines anyway for their mail. Don't tell anyone I said so but, 99% of POs accept them as they have 'Helvetia' on them, and there are so many old genuine Swiss stamps about as collectors use up their stocks, so clerks are confused.
- ☞ On the 5th April an entirely new type of mobile PO entered service in the Calancatal, the westernmost Italian-speaking valley of Graubünden. In this lonely N-S valley nearly all POs have been closed, due to the very low population density. Now an MPO will visit each village once a day, handling all PO services, as the first MPO did in 1937.

This new service is being introduced by the KPD of Bellinzona, as they run the postal affairs of this part of Graubünden. It is likely to be followed by others as more small POs are closed down when the postmaster is pensioned off at 65 (see the cancel above).



- ☞ The 28th May will be the last day of the Vallorbe-Le Brassus TPO, and perhaps there will be more. The PTT are to issue a new list.
- ☞ There appears to be a good way of getting perfect copies of black cancellations on coloured stamps. At a photocopy shop ask for a colour copy but with red, blue and yellow suppressed to zero, leaving only the black. Not so expensive if you do a whole page at a time.

- ☞ Recently in the SBZ there was an appeal for help "Have you seen SCHÜBELBACH with three circles". The story behind this is that a Swiss collector was doing what we all should do and that was sort out his stock book. In doing so he found the cancel shown in the middle, with three circles. He showed this to our member Pierre Guinand who also had a copy. That is where the search started and so far seven different three-circle cancels have been found.



The explanation so far is that the postmaster at Schübelbach needed to repair his canceller which was damaged at the top and bottom, so

either he or the village blacksmith fixed a ring round to hold it together. Hence the outer circle making it 25mm. So far the dates are: two circle 23mm from 1.7.1882 to ?; three circle 25mm from 31.10.1893 to 11.2.1896; two circle 23.5mm from 26.11.1896 to 3.11.1931.



Did You Know?



June 1994

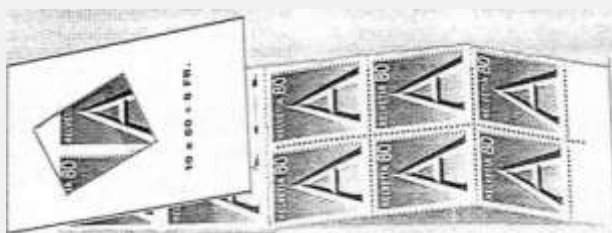
- ☞ Zumstein, inexplicably, persists in using their own numbering for all new K cancels; for instance the latest for 1717 St Ursen has the official number of K1401, as given by the SVP with PTT blessing, but Zumstein has K1408 in the latest issue of the BBZ. Be warned.
- ☞ A battle is developing over the 'official' Swiss stamp catalogue. For years the 'Müller' was used by the Swiss Dealers Association as 'their' catalogue, then due to a legal vacuum caused by a change of ownership, Zumstein stepped in and their catalogue was used by the Dealers.

Now the firm of Birkhäuser, which prints the SBZ, wants to take over the 'Müller' and issue it under their name. This would mean that they would be producing a major Swiss catalogue without being a stamp-selling organisation, i.e., neutral as the German Michel, or US Scott.
- ☞ The PTT List of POs has appeared this year in a larger format, and with some more information. At SFr.3 it is not a bad buy and can be ordered direct from the PTT.
- ☞ Since the PTT decentralised a number of functions, for instance postmarks, there has been no end of confusion due to uncoordinated actions. The SVP has had to go to the telephone very often, either to straighten things out, or at least to find out what is going on.
- ☞ The hard-to-find Philatelic Office in Luzern has moved to the main PO (beautifully restored to its old glory) using the Philatelic Bureau cancel and the new K cancel shown in the October 1993 Newsletter. Well worth a visit.

- ☞ A year or so ago I mentioned that the PTT had raised the maximum weight of parcels from 20 to 30 kg. This did not please the PTT Workers Union, even though it was done to remain competitive with the private firms, but their complaint has resulted in a new label.



- ☞ On 1st July the inland parcel rates will go up. However, what are completely new are the two self-adhesive address labels with printed-on stamps in a new design, for SFr.3 and SFr.3.50. This introduces a new category in the catalogue of postal stationery.
- ☞ On 30th June a new booklet will appear with ten 80c stamps and a window to show the contents. No prizes for those who know where that idea came from. The illustration in the PTT leaflet shows all sides perforated; this I cannot believe. We will see if the sides are cut as with the present 60c stamps (and the 50c before them).



- ☞ On Friday the 13th of May the well-known Schirmer Tower of Luzern's fortified wall burnt out (it is the one which can be walked through). As it was well insured there are no plans for a special stamp!
- ☞ In the April DYK there was a slight joke; 'Regina Montium' was the name of the company which owned many of the famous hotels on the Rigi. It is questionable if the name was ever used by Latin speakers.



Did You Know?



July 1994

The new show in the PTT Museum in Bern covers the Simplon road from Brig to Domodossola. Extensive documentation and colour prints never before displayed cover the history from Napoleon's decision in 1799 to have a military road, to the opening of the post coach service from Genève to Milan in 1808 (see illustration).



The postal history is shown in 18 frames by Louis Vuille in masterly fashion. An 80-page booklet in German, and separate French text, is available too. It is well worth a visit and is open until 30th October.

Everyone is wondering who took 1 metre from August Piccard. The attractive 60c stamp gives his depth record of 10 916m, but the official PTT FDC gives him credit for only 10 915m!

On the 15th June 1844 the steam loco 'Napoleon' was driven to Basel. It had taken four years for permission to advance the 1860m from the French border at St. Louis into Switzerland. It took another year before it was actually allowed through the Middle Age town wall into Basel itself.

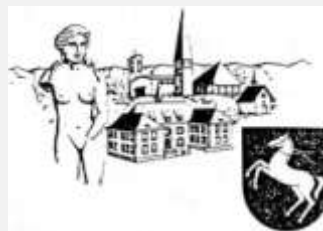
Melchior Berri designed the wrought-iron gate which had to close the hole every night! A few years later all the town walls were removed in Switzerland and the Modern Age could proceed unimpeded. Berri later made the twelve letter boxes (three still being used) which preceded his Basel Dove stamp.

The PTT had hoped to issue shares to the public in 1996 after privatisation of the postal and telecom services (to benefit whom?), but rising opposition and a negative report by the British accountants Price Waterhouse has made them think again.

The ASCAT catalogue publisher's jury has given the prize for 1994 to the Swiss PTT for its reserved approach to new issues. Well done, but how does one get the USA to reduce their output by say 95%?

The PTT has just issued the sales figures for the 1992 stamps showing a 25% drop in sales of the highest value Pro Patria stamp, and a 13% drop in the Pro Juventute 'key' value of 70c. Other values of this attractive set were higher. The highest sales were the 50c Comics and Circus with 29m each.

The village of Bellach issued a pleasing cover for the first day of their new Jubilee cancel where the marble statue 'Venus of Bellach', found by a farmer in 1580, is depicted with the village arms.



The disorganised PTT does not mention in the official gazette if a place with a changed post code has a K cancel, nor when the name is changed. The following three cancels are shown for the first time. The SVP had to advise the PTT 'K' New Issue Service of these!



K 1295a
FD 1.6.94



K 1405
(new)










K 640a



Did You Know?

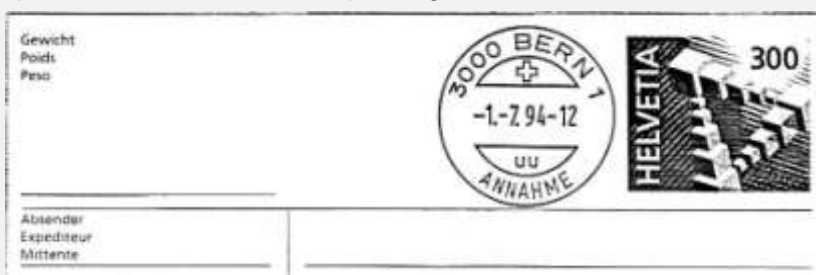


August 1994

-  I have not been able to find out why the new SFr.6 booklet does not have cut edges, which makes me think that perhaps it is because sales of the counter sheets were lower than expected, so to use up excessive stocks these booklets were made up. So far two printings have been seen, 15.11.93 and 10.2.94. Also the rather primitive artwork suggests a rush job, unplanned. Perhaps if sales are good, and taking into account that no publicity is made at the counter, then perhaps a second edition will follow with cut edges, as with the present 60c stamp in the SFr.6 booklets.
-  The SVPS (note the change from SVP, which is the same as a political party) has issued the third supplement to their Machine Cancels Handbook, 23 double-sided pages, covering the new slogans for the years 1991-1993, price £8. Supplements 1 & 2 can still be had, for £18 each.
-  Zumstein now use the SVPS/PTT official K cancel numbering system, and print a useful old-to-new conversion list in their issue 7/8 of the BBZ. Note that the 1993 issue of the K-Handbook can still be bought for £13.
-  Also in the same issue of the BBZ there are illustrations of The Swiss Paracelsus stamp shown used in Germany, and the almost identical German version used in Switzerland. This was not a combined issue as the Swiss stamp shows him looking to the right and the German one looking to the left from, in fact, the same original painting.
-  Again in the same BBZ there is an article on the special cancel used by the Swiss Medical Unit in the West Sahara as part of the UN force there.
-  Between 1983 and 1993 the number of post offices dropped by 130, and 350 further closures are being considered. Postmasters are being encouraged to open up some other business to be run in conjunction with the PO; only a restaurant is not allowed, so far.
-  In spite of these closures the number of stamps printed increased in 1993 (1992) to 777m (714m), by the PTT 599m (497m) and by Courvoisier 178m (217m). The financial link between these two has not been disclosed, but it is close. Postcard sales jumped to 12m from 10m, mainly used for promotional competitions.
-  The two new stamped labels have been first-day cancelled by the PTT off the 'stamp', see the illustration. Dr Jan Etter has written in the NZZ that this is strictly speaking not correct, as the old rule (that stationery items were not to have their impressed stamp cancelled) was rescinded by new instructions issued on the 6th November 1907.

This was because the PTT were then allowing private firms to have 'ordinary' stamps impressed on their envelopes in bulk in advance of posting.

However, many postal clerks still say that the cancel need lie away from the 'stamp', as if cut out for re-use it is in any case not valid.





Did You Know?



September 1994

- ☞ At last the PTT are doing something about the totally unnecessary UN/Helvetia stamps for the BIT, WHO and others. At the end of 1994 they will withdraw from sale all those issued up to 1989. All future issues will be on sale for only five years from issue date. The suggestion has been made to make only one issue for all these International Offices collectively. Either that or scrap the whole system.
- ☞ The latest candidate for UN International Office stamps will be the WTO, the successor to GATT, in Geneva. We will see what happens.
- ☞ The SBB has issued their 'Railway Map' again. At SFr.14.80 a good buy for railway fans. Compared with the 1990 issue I can only see that the closed Herzogenbuchsee to Solothurn line has been deleted. As before there are useful maps of 13 towns. The scale of 300 000:1 makes it a handy guide to all of Switzerland.
- ☞ Now is the time to note that the 'Basler Taube '95' Philatelic Exhibition will run in Basel from the 17th to the 25th of June 1995, in the Mustermesse, an International and National show of importance.
- ☞ The idea of suppressing the red, blue and yellow colours to get only the black of the cancellation does not seem to be possible with the usual colour copying machines, at least not without the aid of a willing maintenance engineer. One firm flatly refused to copy stamps at all, and said that wanting to obtain the cancel alone seemed a very suspicious operation altogether, in fact almost proof of criminal intent. I left in a hurry.
- ☞ Fifty years ago the three Olympic stamps were on sale and went so fast that a second printing had to be made by Courvoisier, but they could not get more paper from Biberist, so had to turn to the Zürich firm of Sihl. Not only were the fibres shorter, but the gum was no longer mat and yellow, being shiny and less yellowish.

It is remarkable that the colour matched so well from one printing to the next. As fewer of the second issue were sold, they are the more expensive today. These paper mills are the oldest 'Works' in Switzerland.

- ☞ In the SVPS Bulletin for July 1994 there is a long reprinted PTT article in German and French on the PTT-designed cancelling machines, as used virtually exclusively in Switzerland to-day. Breaking a light beam electronically triggers the rotation of the die head, instead of the old USA system of the cover mechanically striking the mechanism to cancel the cover.
- ☞ Another anniversary is being celebrated this year, 70 years of Swiss currency in Liechtenstein. However, on the 1st of February 1921 the Swiss PTT had taken over the posts, and on the same day issued the 10 Heller stamp with a 2 rappen overprint. So that proves that Swiss coins were in use before 1924, during the change-over period.
- ☞ The illustrations below are from the new covers used by the Philatelic Office in the head post offices of Zürich, Bern and Luzern. They show the old Municipal Offices, the Rathaus, not as one might imagine the Philatelic office itself.





Did You Know?



October 1994

- ☞ With a first edition of 10 000, the Swiss Dealers Association has put their new catalogue on the market, basically the old Müller, but with new co-ordinated prices. The only other price list is the traditional Zumstein still, now with net prices, whatever that should mean, at least dealers are not being supplied at these low levels. There is more information in the Zumstein and I think the colours are better, but we will see who wins. The Zumstein is SFr.2.50 cheaper, and is now in hard cover. One hears that a dealer will sell using their catalogue, but will buy using the Zumstein pricelist.
- ☞ For these with a video camera they might be interested in some experiments I have made using the camera/TV set as a closed circuit. In this way it is possible to enlarge a stamp or cancel 20 to 30 times, depending on the size of the screen, and in full colour too. With my Sony and with back lighting I can lay two thin photocopies over each other to compare the smallest details. Try it.
- ☞ Together with Germany, Sweden, France, Netherlands and Canada, Switzerland has founded a new company with TNT to form the GDW (General Delivery Worldwide) to combat the private parcel delivery firms.
- ☞ In the same direction the PTT has now extended its city internal special express service "142" (that is the special telephone number) to cover traffic between the big five cities, under the name "PTT-Rapid 142 Intercity". The prices are double or more than the present registered express, but delivery is guaranteed within 3 to 6 hours.

The minimum charge is SFr.59 or SFr.65 to/from Zürich, plus SFr.5 for every kilogram above 20 kg, up to 30 kg. Not cheap, but cheaper than the others, especially with the quantity discounts available. Not for circuit packets though.

- ☞ The Swiss cancel for the new combined issue with France and Belgium has an oval form, the first since the special air cancels from the late 1920s. Without a date this shape has been used for a number of mobile post office cachets.
- ☞ On the 1st January 1995 Switzerland introduces VAT, instead of a wartime purchase tax system. Stamps are excluded if the business is less than SFr.75 000 per annum. Full details in the September BBZ.
- ☞ Gene Kelly has published the 6th volume on Fiscal stamps, this time on the Canton of Luzern, 198 pages, plus five full-sized copies of complete sheets. SFr.45.
- ☞ I recently found two new cancels in the PTT Library among new file cards. The first "Wertzeichen" is used only on official letters, not on stamps; the other one can be used on stamps, but again only by the mail order department of the Philatelic Bureau in Bern-Ostermündigen. The Parkterrasse office is closed. I'm told the first-day was December 1993.



- ☞ New PTT covers in yellow/red and yellow/green have this interesting map of Switzerland made up of the area postcodes.





Did You Know?



November 1994

The GABRA III in Burgdorf was a great success. Several HPS members were to be seen; Alma Lee and Fred Pickard exhibited. Generally more attention was being paid to the exhibits than is normally the case. The catalogue contained articles of permanent value, in fact all three.

The latest issue of Postgeschichte shows a new find: the 1912 Bundesfeier card, No.3 in the series, overprinted with a birth announcement for a boy who arrived, appropriately, on the 1st August (Swiss National Day).

The 'Ganzsachen-Sammler-Vereins SGSV' produced a booklet on the National Exhibition of 1914, by Georges Schild and Hansjörg Fankhauser (who also had the material on show), 75 pages, in German, for SFr.15. I doubt if anyone realised that so many postcards and other printed items had been issued during the exhibition.



Another book issued by the SGSV at the GABRA, but without a number, A4, in French, covers all Fiscals issued in Switzerland. Very well laid out; SFr.50.

The 'Schweiz Vereinigung für Postgeschichte' (used to be 'Schweiz Spezial Sammlerverein') published a bound 80 page book on "Eidgenössische Fahrpost" or Federal Packet Post, by Emil Ruegg, and deals specifically with the routes over the Alps in Graubünden up to 1907. All illustrations in colour, in German, for SFr.60. Not a book for beginners.

Dr Thomas Keller has just published a most interesting and comprehensive book, in German, on the "Ship post on the Lake of Zürich in the 19th century". All the details one can wish for, extensive illustrations, mostly in colour, tables, plans, letters and cancellations, hard cover, nearly A4, 248 pages for SFr.165.

As was to be expected the PTT has received piles of letters complaining about the new AIDS stamp. Some people really don't have anything else to do.

The PTT Museum now has the special exhibit on Scouting by Walter Grob of Lutry, covering the first 50 years, and which has received Gold plus awards at a number of exhibitions. In four showcases are also scouting memorabilia, many unique. This show lasts until 26th February 1995. Well worth a visit if this interests you.

The firm of ATM Seitz in Luzern discovered the PTT has extended their SFS service in that receipts can now be printed out on request. The first seems to have been in Luzern on 17th September 1994. More than 1000 are planned, beginning in the Postal Regions of Luzern and Lausanne. Payment can be made by 'Postcard', i.e., deducted automatically from one's account. This is useful for firms which bring a number of parcels or airmail letters to the counter, and require a collective receipt. At the moment this must be added up manually by the counter clerk.

Zumstein have just issued a useful A5 booklet on their complete range of services, devices, etc. A new design and attractive layout. Just in time for Christmas, 64 pages in German and free, much of interest, including a list of books in stock.

POSTSTELLE	
6002 LUZERN 2 BAHNHOF AN	
BELEG-NUMMER	0680
TERMINAL/KASSE	002
EINKAUF	EFT-WB 002235
POSTCARD	45073106
TOTAL	FR. 0.80
17.09.94	15.49

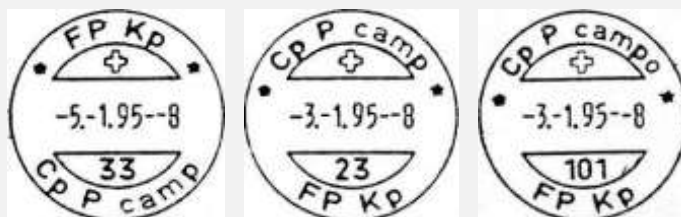


Did You Know?



December 1994

- ☞ Looking for something else on one of the glass frames in the PTT Museum in Bern, I noticed a nice-looking Razor Blade cancel 'Luzern 1.VII.02-.11', a week earlier than so far noted; Guinand No.8.02.
- ☞ Next year the PTT postal rates go up again, due to rising costs and to move more letters into the 'A' stream. The 'B' letters, larger than B5 and for quantities of more than 3000, go up by 3c. Foreign 'A' remains the same, but 'B' letters above 20g go up and registration up from SFr.2.50 to 3. (Still cheaper than the Fr.3.20 for inland letters).
- ☞ I forgot to mention the name of the author of the book on fiscal stamps in French last month; it is Denis Gainon. Our member Gene Kelly is not very happy about the accuracy and completeness and you can ask for a copy of his review direct from him.
- ☞ Postal mechanisation is proceeding apace. Geneva has just put two new AEG ILV sorting machines into operation, and Basel has replaced its ten-year old facing and cancellation machine with the same type of Japanese machine as used in Zürich. The PTT no longer will give a good rebate to those firms sorting their bulk mail as the PTT can now do it cheaper themselves, right down to the postman's walk for all major centres.
- ☞ A new 120-page book in German "*Mit Dampf and Gloria*" deals with 66 Swiss lake steamers in great detail, a good buy for enthusiasts at a Price of SFr.49.80.
- ☞ Since the PTT postcards went up to 60c they have not been sold in glued booklets (the last was four of 50c for Fr.2. from vending machines). Now there are no more coin machines, but the PTT sell ten cards in an envelope over the counter for Fr.6.
- ☞ A new printing of the 'A' post blue label was made on 8.93, the 5th it seems. The printing is poor, the white A is speckled with 'fly spots', but I have not tried plating them! See illustration right.
- ☞ As the Cold War cools down the Swiss Army is being reduced by roughly a third. One of the least popular steps is the dissolving of the Pigeon Post Units after 77 years; 7000 birds are in service and a further 30 000 can be called up. It is their owners who will lose out when the Army stops their subsidies.
- ☞ Another move is to reduce the number of Field POs from the present 28 to 22, and to call them Fieldpost Companies. Only one will be based in Canton Ticino, as before; four in the French-speaking parts (five previously); 17 in the German-speaking parts (22 before).



better. The three types are shown here: German with FP Kp above and French below; French with the texts reversed; Italian with German below. The illustration right shows the rare old-type equivalent of better appearance made some 80 years ago.

Ahead of the first-day at the beginning of January 1995 we can publish what the new cancels will look like, and not very exciting at all. The older ones from before the First World War were

