











## Did You Know?




### January 2000

-  The "Day of the Stamp" Exhibition in Luzern 3-5 December was a great success; organized by the Philatelic Society of Luzern with the help of the Röllli family. There were 117 "normal" exhibitors, and 34 "one frame" exhibits, which could be either 100% philatelic material or up to 50% "open class" material, i.e. photos, drawings (even a penguin feather), etc. This was confusing to the judging public, who had a two-thirds say, with the other third by the jury. Ian Gilchrist was there and gained 'Gold' with his Red Cross exhibit; Harlan Stone had three exhibits but made only Vermeil (under-rated?). Once again I personally learnt a lot from his exhibits.
-  At this exhibition Karl Gebert received a well-deserved prize for his remarkable "*Postchronik*" book. It seems the "Fund for Philately" realized that they had made a mistake by not supporting him from the start. (Now on CD - see elsewhere in this issue.)
-  The SP produced, un-announced, a new version of the two Pingu stamps of 9.3.99, for issue on 6.12.99. The only difference is that the parcels are shown not tied with string, in accordance with the new - unpopular - rule. Most exciting.
-  It is rumoured that soon the parcel rates will also be tiered into A and B. The previous "Colis Prioritaire" was dropped recently when all parcels were late. Some say that "A" parcels will be sorted by hand and "B" parcels automatically by computer.
-  A previous rumour has been, unfortunately, confirmed. Internally the SP has not found a way in which its own slogans can be paid for. Therefore all postal advertising, Group 1, is being stopped at the end of 1999. That means no more slogans such as "Post early for Christmas" and others. Swisscom stopped all telephone publicity a year or so ago, too expensive. Now all charities are being asked to pay for this advertising, so following the "good" example of the SP itself, they are also discontinuing the use of slogans. About 80 to 90 slogans have been withdrawn so far. Another unmentioned aspect is that the SP is not prepared to pay for staff who can supervise the quality of the slogans in use. A great pity, and difficult to justify.
-  I recently came across the name SAVO. This was the Austrian journal for international pre-philately - *Sammler Vorphilatelie*. Their 1933 monthly was often used by Jean Winkler to announce his finds. In 1938, after Austria had willingly joined their neighbours to the north, all Jewish and other non-Aryans, had to leave the club, then the monthly magazine was forbidden, as all such publications were too difficult to censor, and then they had to close down completely. A tragedy to philately, and to the members. Now a German group have re-founded the SAVO.



-  The new Luftpost Handbuch will come out for the Aerophilately Day in Dübendorf in April 2000, for CHF 75.
-  The slogan right, No. 4.6.273 was used during May in Vaduz and Schaan, and shows the identification "Die Post FL" for Liechtenstein.



-  Shown here are the instructions for posting a millennium bar of chocolate, 100g, inside Switzerland. Why are the rates correct, and not those that might apply in 2000?



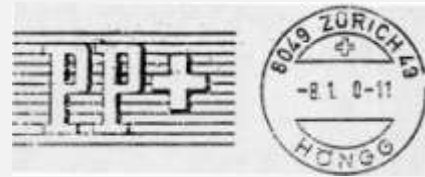


## Did You Know?



### February 2000

☞ The Y2K bug did bite the SP in one place! Nobody had thought that the older cancelling machines, bought in the 60s and 70s from Klüssendorf in Berlin, could not have '00' for the year, only '0', i.e. the two reels were not the same, incredible.



☞ The NABA St. Gallen 2000 catalogue can now be bought for CHF 7 at all PO's. It consists of a main part, A4, 190 pages with articles on all aspects of philately, and articles by dealers and advertisers, full of coloured illustrations, in the appropriate language. The 2<sup>nd</sup> part, also A4, 38 pages, contains all the layout plans, lists of exhibitors, with descriptions of their exhibits. Another first is that this catalogue contains a chit for the purchase of one stamp made of lace (a speciality of St. Gallen) having a limited 'print'. In May a list will be published of the dealers, and other details.

☞ Until the end of 1969 Official letters were sent free, marked '**Amtlich**' or '**Officiel**', then they had to be paid for on a bulk average system, marked in one or more languages, '**Pauschal frankiert**' or '**Affranchi a forfait**'. This would apply to the local fire brigade correspondence, but not to the local football club. Spot checks were made by the PTT to ascertain if the regular monthly payments were sufficient to cover the actual postage used. This system has now been abandoned, for the parcels at the end of 1999, and for the letters at the end of 2000. This means more work for a lot of secretaries, and the purchase of a lot of new franking machines, and perhaps more money to the SP. Typically this information has not been made public, only to the affected organisations.

☞ As mentioned here last month, the SP is charging such high fees to use slogans in their cancelling machines that their use has dropped dramatically. In January 1999 - 38 used, January 2000 only 9. The local publicity slogans remain in service. At the end of December 1997 the Swisscom withdrew all their slogans. Now we will see how the remaining charities react, their usage dropped from 15 to 4.

☞ The new SP Director, Reto Braun, has given up after 16 months, 'Post' too political, i.e. cannot change everything with only profit in mind, public service has to be considered. The parliament did not give him a clear enough mandate, as they want both.

☞ My note on the first PTT FDC, for the Gotthard stamps of 31.5.1932, cannot be correct (see DYK September 1999). I took it from an old SBZ or BBZ. The first time the grey PTT label, saying 'First Day Cover' in three languages (D F I) with cross on the left, was used was on 6.IX.41 for 750 Years Bern, not as given in the label catalogue with Jan 48, and showing cross on the right. In the PTA of 1932 there was no mention of any sort of FDC service, but it might have been known to collectors in Bern. In this PTA of 18.5.32 it was stated that these stamps were to be sold exclusively on Tuesday 31st May and 1st June, afterwards only on demand, until the end of July. Validity ceased at the end of 1932. Strict in those days.

☞ The new Luftpost Handbook will be available at the Aerophilatelists Day in Dübendorf on 15/16 April 2000, at a price of CHF 75. Previous issue was in 1992.

☞ The answer to the rates question last month is that the SP charge a fee of 20c for each non-standard letter or card; strange shapes, smaller than 140 x 90mm (the chocolate bar was only 80mm wide), or too thin etc. The fee is shown in the stamps used. This is to cover the costs of special handling as such items cannot be sorted automatically. Introduced on 1st February 1991, with A & B post. Seldom collected; Fr.1.10/.90 correct.

☞ A nice pair of cancels used at the change of year.















## Did You Know?



### March 2000

-  'Promopost' is probably new to you also, but is a typical new designation of a postal service, usually derived from an English expression, in this case 'promotion' of sales, of the non-addressed delivery of advertising matter. This started in July 1937, according to Zumstein, with a price of 2c for 50 items, and now for a minimum of 1000 copies of up to 500g for 9c in built-up areas. However, this service is of little interest to philatelists, as there are no stamps or cancels used, nor any mark which can distinguish from privately distributed junk, but it brings in money.
-  The above service has had some unwanted publicity, as the SP in Ticino refused to distribute a pamphlet to all households in Bellinzona and Lugano asking for support to prevent the SP closing practically all sub-PO's. The SP justified this by quoting rule 4 of the January 2000 regulations, "against the interest of the Post". Was this Political censorship?
-  Under the 'Optima' programme about 600 POs will be closed, bringing the total down to 3000. Vast differences exist with a PO in a mountain village (open only a few hours a day) serving perhaps only 100 inhabitants, and in the cities 10,000 dwellers having to queue at the only PO in their area. Nevertheless Switzerland has the greatest density of POs per 1000 inhabitants in the world. Not an easy problem to solve.  
  
The number of inhabitants per PO is: Switzerland 1961; Great Britain 3089; Germany 5641; and the USA 7000.
-  All this does affect philatelists, in that more and more automatic gadgets will produce non-collectable receipts and stick-on's; not nice stamps. These can be obtained in ever-increasing quantities from the SP Souvenir Shops, sorry, Philatelic Bureaux. The latest issue of March 3rd got me confused, the most colourful set of six definitives ever issued. See the three FD cancels below.
-  The BBZ for February reveals some more information on the new rates, which is seeping into daily newspapers. Details will follow when approved by the Federal Council. Part of the rise of the parcel rates is because when a parcel is sent from Chiasso 1 to Chiasso 2, it first has to cross the Alps to be electronically sorted in the new centre in Canton Solothurn. It is reasonable that a letter would have to go to Bellinzona for sorting, at least 100 times lighter than the parcel, strange.
-  The SP has made a good thing of selling three of the best sheetlets as an uncut sheet, see page 33 of the October issue of *Focus on Stamps*; is there a market for the resulting gutter pairs?
-  Röllli got a surprise when many catalogues for his forthcoming auction on the 24-26th of February were 'lost' by the SP. They wrote to all Röllli customers to apologise. Mine came a week after the first viewing date of the 28th of January.
-  All 33 letter-coding machines in Switzerland have now been converted to give 'Quality of Service' information, i.e. where did a letter get held up? For this each letter receives a unique number. The new code is not as easy to read as the older system.
-  Honegger of Schmerikon has distributed another annual "*Alt-Schweiz*" catalogue, beautifully produced, circa 100 pages in full colour. Write to him in English.
-  Shown here are the three first day cancels for the new stamps issued for the Centenary of the International Union of Cyclists, the 'Souvenirs' definitives set and the stamp for the Basel Carnival.





## Did You Know?

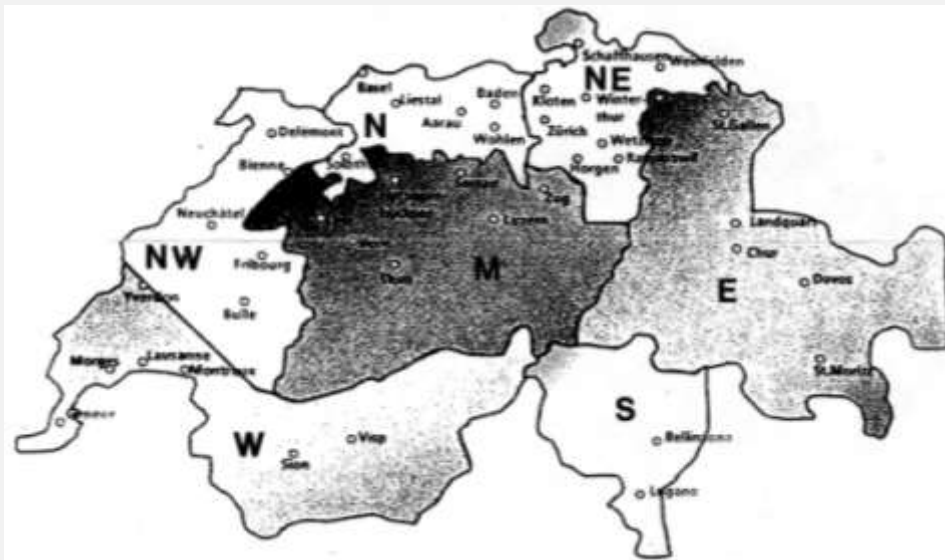


### April 2000

One can hope that the new head of the Swiss Post, Ulrich Gygi, will bring stability and renew the feeling of a common purpose to the biggest employer in the country. The 600 POs facing closure are mainly relieved, but the price increases will go through in July, if accepted by the Federal Council.

From 1849 to 1997 there were 11 Postal Districts, then reorganized into 40 Sales Regions. As this proved to be impracticable there will now be 7 regions, the intermediate 4 divisions having also been dropped. The 7 regions will be: West in Lausanne, North-west in Fribourg, North in Basel, North-east in Zurich, Middle in Luzern, East in Landquart, and South in Bellinzona. Perhaps some more cancels?

From the latest issue of the fortnightly "*Die Post*", the house magazine for all postal employees, I have taken, with difficulty, a Xerox print of the coloured map showing the division of Switzerland into the 7 regions mentioned. In the accompanying text the borders follow the cantonal border, usually, more closely than the first 11 regions of 1849. But this does not seem to match the map in detail; perhaps a better map will be issued later (see below, I have added the compass signs)



After string being banned from use for parcels, one wonders if the new stamp made of lace will fare better in the automatic machinery. At CHF 5 its use will, I guess, be limited to registered and express letters, which are all hand sorted.

In April the fortnightly "*Stempel News*" will be superseded by a new product, in colour, and apparently giving more news of new cancellations and changes to POs (usually closures). We wonder if it will have the range of information that there was in the PTA weekly.

In 1995 Richard Schafer wrote a major work on Swiss postal history, "*Swiss Letter Mail to Foreign Countries 1459-1907*", a wonderful book, nearly all colour illustrations, 440 pages, in German, for CHF 170. Now his next works are announced: "*Swiss Postal Contracts-Tariffs-Routes 1609-1798*", on 15th April for CHF 100; then "*Swiss Postal History of the Old Confederation, up to 1798*" on 21st June (St. Gallen) for CHF 300.

Tangible proof of the new post in a new cancel and stamp, for the Liechtenstein POST Co., quite clear and straightforward.

The Philatelic counter in Aarau now has its own canceller, showing the old town. Few remember today that Aarau was the first capital of Switzerland, after the French occupation, followed by Luzern and then Bern on 28.11.1848.












## Did You Know?

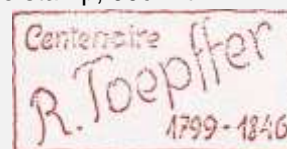


### May 2000

-  The term "**Fahrpost**" was officially changed to "**Paketpost**" on the 25.11.1907, to remove a point of confusion among the populace. This is mentioned by Georges Valko on page 29 of his excellent book "*Über die Frankaturen 1882 bis 1907*", published in 1986.
-  The SP has another term which needs explaining, "Hybridpost". You will never guess the answer! Studying the postcode on letters I noticed that, some years ago, the address of the sender firm did not line up with the place where the letter had been coded. Usually these were accounts or monthly statements, so I guessed that the firm in say, Winterthur, sent electronically all details to a specialist firm in Aarau, which printed out the statement, put it in a PP envelope, and off it went, thousands at a time. Now the SP has caught on to this, and the first installation is being started up in Zürich Sihlpost, to print all the postal cheque transactions, received electronically from the area centre in Netstal, Glarus. If banks and other large firms can be won over, then another printing centre in the west of Switzerland is planned. Security is a problem. The SP guarantees that all electronic data received before 9pm will be in all Swiss letter boxes the next morning.
-  The German name for the excellent *Focus on Stamps* publication from the Philatelic Bureau is "*Die Lupe*" i.e. "The Magnifying Glass". The translation into English is very well done, but in the latest issue the rather long title in German of the "*Verband Schweizerischer Philatelistenvereine*" has appeared in English as "The Association of Swiss Philatelists' Circles". I think that Dr Felix Ganz used "Union of Swiss Philatelic Societies". Have you any better ideas? "Circles" is too limited, inferring "Study Circles".
-  It has been heard that one can produce one's own printing errors with the strange exhibition block for St. Gallen, (and now the second one is the same) by filling in the wrong colour in the numbered spaces. Take a close look at these rather peculiar philatelic gems. At least unique, so far.
-  The attractive Pro Patria series of town views uses steel engraving again, after a number of years. The black lines are filled in with offset colour by the SP Printing Works (again, not Courvoisier).
-  On the 21st of September 2001 the popular Gabra IV will again be held in Burgdorf, the best un-judged show in Switzerland. The Ganzsachen-Verein celebrates its 75th birthday with this show, so it will be held after only 7 years instead of the usual 9; they have nearly 300 members.

One of their publications, on Perfins, by Martin Baer, has sold well over 500 copies, for CHF 33. I recently found in a club packet a new perfin, used in 1922 by the Hasler firm in Bern, just before their business franking machines came into operation, thus eliminating the need for Perfins. It has a capital 'H' within an irregular oval of holes. It just shows what can suddenly turn up. There are three exhibits on Perfins in St. Gallen.

-  In February the stamp booklets with the ten 70c self-adhesive stamps have a new backing paper, effectively chalkier, barely noticeable; for specialists. The more attractive stamp, 90c with sketches by Rodolphe Töpffer (DYK June 1999) reminded me that there was an APB cachet for him, used in Geneva on 7/8th December 1946 in Auto No. 2. See illustration right, in red, which was incorrect. Only plain set type was to be in red, all drawings and illustrations were to be in black.





## Did You Know?



### June 2000

☞ On the 20th of April the Federal Council announced that they had postponed the proposed rise in letter and parcel rates from July to 1st January 2001 at least. The SP has put forward a more detailed analysis of their costs.

☞ In the March 2000 issue of *Focus on Stamps* you all saw the error found in the printing of the 70c 'Rights of the Child' stamp issued on the 24th of September 1999. In the Romansch text was the word "Dregts" instead of "Dretgs" (see right). This stamp now joins the small list of Swiss stamps with errors of text or drawing, as against the printing errors.



☞ Cancellations, especially machine slogans, are much more prone to error, and the Italian language has provided a wealth of such errors. The latest has been reported by Dr Jan Etter to the NZZ. The illustration on the left shows the original text, which was used in Chiasso from the 3rd to the 12th of January 2000 only, and, on the right, the replacement, first used in Lugano during April. Incorrectly, he notes, the same number is used for both version of the cancel - 2.2.205.



☞ In No. 3 of the more or less twice-yearly "Fakes- Forgeries- Experts" (F.F.E.) (published by FTE- Journal 200 pages, A4, English and German, CHF 50), is an interesting review of the CD-ROM on the 1850-54 Federal stamps and their forgeries by Prof. Anton M Kofranek. I guess it is the best description in English of these issues and the printing methods, as well as the famous forgeries. Available from the AHPS.

☞ The SP is now severing its electronic connection to the Swisscom network with its own 'Yellowgate' and is, in fact, co-operating with the Swisscom competitors DiAx and Sunrise. This should help their customers with their financial access to the Post-Finance, i.e. Yellowworld, instead of the Swisscom Blue Windows net. A rainbow future is assured, even without the telephone firm Orange.

☞ The computer-generated postage stamps are still being worked on here, so don't miss the inevitable FDCs. I hope I can warn you in time.

☞ The auction house of Hans R Schwarzenbach has also made a name for itself with the publication of the quarterly "*Postgeschichte*", now in its 21st year with No. 81. One of the most important Swiss philatelic publications. This year, for the third time, he is arranging for a meeting, open to all customers and others, on the 5th & 6th of August. The subject is 'Transit-post over the Alps; before the railway era', i.e. France, Switzerland and Austria. His next auction is on 26/27 May.

☞ The new Aerophilately Handbook was available at the annual event, this time at Dübendorf airfield. Expanded to 716 pages, 200 more than the previous 1992 edition, it is *The Classic*, a must for all collectors. The 56-frame exhibition attracted much attention, two exhibits on historical documents I found fascinating. Shown here is the special cancel used; two Ju 52s were taking people for short trips.





## Did You Know?



### July 2000

- You certainly remember the 'three-hole' controversy, with the investigation by Zumstein proving that there are only two holes, 11 & 9 mm diameter, made in the interspace sheets and a deformed hole, probably caused by the 11 mm hand punch being dropped, at least twice. Now in the Röllli auction of 24-26th February 2000 Lot No. 4008, for a full sheet of S18 and S20 with the deformed hole (this was not mentioned in the description, but I had a look), had a starting price of CHF 160. It went for CHF 350 net; a fair price. Now in a German auction "Hobbyphilatelie" are a number of items with the 'rare' deformed hole, including a full sheet as above, with an asking price of DEM 25,000. The original SBZ article of November 1998 is quoted, and mis-quoted, as proof of rarity. Fair?
- The new inland rates have not yet been decided, nor when, but the foreign rates for letters and parcels will go up on the 1st July 2000, but details are not yet known.
- The SP claims that the delay in raising the inland rates will cause a drop in revenue of CHF 100m.
- The Swiss Postal Coaches (the yellow ones) have won the 10-year contract, against seven other European bus firms, to run all bus services (i.e. continue) in Liechtenstein, for CHF 14.4m, for 2.2m km per year using 49 vehicles and about 60 drivers. Most of the old diesel buses will be replaced with ones using liquefied natural gas motors.
- The newly organized POs into seven regions (see page 31 in the April Newsletter) will start up on the 1st of November 2000, with 80 staff.
- The world-wide EMS (Express Mail Service, Datapost in UK) is gradually being eroded by the private firms. Now the SPI has concluded an agreement with TNT of Holland for the handling of all foreign parcels, in addition to the one they have with General Parcel. Therefore from the 1st of July parcels will be sent, at the new rates: Urgent (ex-EMS), Priority (ex-A post), and Economy (ex-B post).
- Letter box collections are being rationalized. Those with few letters per day will either be removed, or will be cleared only in the morning. Others, starting in eastern Switzerland, will be cleared at unknown times, i.e. 'Next collection at ...1 will not be indicated, only a fixed information on the last clearing on Mon-Fri, Sat & Sun, to achieve delivery the next morning anywhere in Switzerland. During the week, at our nearest box, this means changed from 8p.m. to 6.45, without knowing if it has been cleared or not, especially when I am late in sending the copy for the DYK page! The Sihlpost is 'open' till 8 p.m.
- The latest news from the SPI is that they have made an agreement with 34 AGIP petrol filling stations around Milan. Using freely supplied envelopes or cardboard packets that can be sent to anywhere in Italy, or the World, via Chiasso. This is possible if the price per item is more than ITL 6000 (about £2). Delivery is promised in 24 hours in Italy, and up to 3 days in the rest of the world. If this is successful the service will be extended across the whole country. Something new.
- The new publicity cancel (figure 1) used since the 7th of June in Brienz, and figure 2 a similar subject on PP advertising mail, i.e. begging letters. The 'stamp' is yellow and black.



Figure 1



Figure 2



## Did You Know?



### 📖 August 2000

- ☞ The new *Stempel News* has come out, at the NABA St. Gallen, titled *Phila News* with yellow overlays, monthly only and, apparently, gratis. The cover photo (b/w) shows the postcard issued at the NABA St. Gallen of a Zeppelin over St. Gallen. The layout is more open than before, but without any paragraph numbers; and programme for rest of year.
- ☞ The St. Gallen NABA was remarkable in many ways, mostly positive. Information was poorly handled, some visitors didn't even know there was a second floor, but below. At the Palmarens we were told about the flight of the new Zeppelin to St. Gallen where it picked up seven bags of mail. Where did this mail come from? Nobody was selling covers or other items at the show, as far as I could see. An opportunity that was missed. The blocks of 4 lace 'stamps' were sold out before the end. I did not have the courage to put a single 'stamp' on an ordinary letter to go through a cancelling machine.
- ☞ Jean-Marie Gassman has been replaced as head of 'Stamps and Philately' by Elsa Baxter-Fuchs, the previous head of 'Product Services' (and a member of the Board of Directors of the 'Crossair' airline).
- ☞ I have just received (sorry, I found it in a waste-paper basket in the St. Gallen main PO) an advertising 'letter' with a new 50c definitive on it, i.e. for a bulk rate, but with cut sides, from an automatic stamp affixing machine. It was correctly announced that on 20th March this stamp would be sold in rolls of 1000 and 10,000, and that singles, or strips of eleven, would not be sold by the Philatelic bureaux (too much trouble). These replace the much used 50c left-handed postman coils (see the example right). The cancel is a private one, in black, of 8.6.00 with no neutral or advertising 'flag'. The 'VIII/17' in the lower half is 'VIII' for the 'old' Post District 8 (Zurich), and '17' is for the seventh owner to be given permission to cancel in black, bulk rate.



New Bulk Rate definitive

- ☞ Only weeks before the end of June the new foreign rates for the 1st of July were handed out at PO's. The following are for normal letters, up to B5, 20mm thick (old rates shown in parentheses).

Weight	'A' Post		'B' Post	
	Europe & Med.	Rest	Europe & Med.	Rest
20g	1.30 (1.10)	1.80 (1.80)	1.20 (0.90)	1.40 (1.10)
50g	2.00 (1.80)	3.00 (3.00)	1.70 (1.20)	2.00 (1.40)
100g	3.00 (2.80)	4.30 (4.30)	2.00 (1.50)	2.50 (2.00)
150g	(5.00)	(7.30)	(2.20)	(3.00)

Note: there is no longer a 150g rate, it now falls into the 'Large Letter' category; this is defined as up to B4, 20mm thick, three steps to 500g. Then there is the 'Maxi Letter', over B4, 20mm thick, four steps to 2000g. Printed matter rates up to 5kg. Letters to the USA have not changed - popular route? The registration fee goes from 4 to 5 CHF.

- ☞ The FL will issue a nice set of four for the Sydney Olympic Games on the 4th of September, taking into account (I guess) the as yet unannounced new inland rates, and the above.
- ☞ This year's PP stamps are again printed by the SP, but in small sheets of 20 stamps, to encourage those who collect by the sheet, but don't forget that there are eight per printing cylinder rotation.



## Did You Know?



### September 2000

- ☞ The Federal Council decided in July not to allow the SP to raise the basic internal A & B letter rates above the present 90c & 70c, but restricted to 100g instead of the previous 250g (since 1891). However, heavier letters and parcels will be allowed but will cost more. As the SP is losing CHF 100m per year thereby it seems inevitable that many small post offices will close.
- ☞ When the parcel rates go up they too will be divided into A & B, i.e. 'Priority', fast delivery for an extra CHF 2, and 'Economy' or slow delivery. Four bands (2 to 20kg), instead of five up to 30kg.
- ☞ A Large Gold was well-earned by Dr Giovanni Balimann at St. Gallen with his exceptional exhibit on the history and development of machine cancellations from the first use in Switzerland in 1911. It is rare for an exhibit showing post-1907 material to gain high honours. Perhaps this is at last showing an acceptance of modern themes by juries, and not before time with classic material way beyond the purse of any new collector today. Owing to their scarcity, many historical postmarks make Basel Dove stamps look like packet fillers.
- ☞ Those members with a stock of old Swiss banknotes should check during their next visit that Swiss shopkeepers will still accept them. If not then banks will exchange them without charge; if they are very old then the National Bank will usually still take them. If you are in any doubt then send me photocopies and I will ask the local bank.
- ☞ The very useful SBB/CFF map, 1:300 000 has been re-issued at CHF 19.80. Details of all city, local and regional train and bus services are shown in a separate booklet along with a 'List of Places' together with some 'Places to see'; in four languages (with English) mainly. Well worth the price!
- ☞ In future if one of the yellow posting boxes gets less than 50 letters between collections, there is a risk of it being removed or the number of daily collections being reduced, but there will always be a Sunday collection. Of the 21,500 boxes in use at present one should be within 400m of each household. Each of the 23 'Letterpost Centres' can make its own decisions on how it intends to make the collection more efficient, and cheaper.
- ☞ All posting boxes are being fitted internally with a bar code which cannot be read until the box is empty. A hand-held 'reader' is then used to register when each box on the route is cleared, and also at post offices. This ensures that all boxes are cleared at the specified (internal) times, and in effect when each letter entered the system.
- ☞ The Swiss Post International (SPI) is continuing its activities in Italy to help postcards reach their addressees quickly. More than 100 hotels now sell the same booklets of 'stamps' as last year.
- ☞ Once again Charles LaBlonde has discovered another curious thing about this postcard system for tourists. He received two different postcards from Paris, which went to the USA via Zürich Airport! See figure 1 with the impression in black, customer No. 077 MTS (Mail Transport System?). So far this type has been seen only for foreign mail to be distributed in Switzerland. Figure 2 is in red and smaller, number changed to 977 (?) and the time included, 17:00. There are no stamps as 'PP' is sufficient, but who paid what and to whom? Both the postcards were handed in at a Paris hotel.



Figure 1

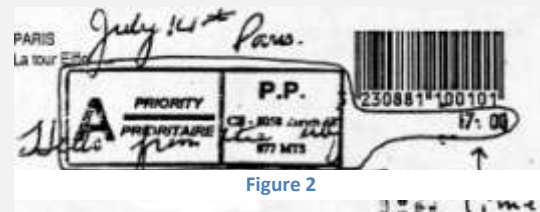


Figure 2



## Did You Know?



### October 2000








-  Accidents can happen, in particular between the writing and the printing of our Newsletter, in other words the price of the paperback version of the Zumstein 2001 Catalogue is CHF 20, and not 25. Apologies all round. And my thanks to your Editor who corrects numerous errors and omissions of mine!
-  More importantly a serious fire at the binding works consumed all the spiral bound copies, and some of the paperback copies of this essential tool for philatelists. Not only Zumstein suffered but also the Dealer's version was partially lost. Deliveries should all have been made before the end of September, at the latest.
-  You must not miss the story of Zumstein in the latest (4/2000) issue of *Focus on Stamps*, a most useful magazine to all collectors of Switzerland, and it is free.
-  Should you suddenly notice that you have not received the last couple of issues of *Focus on Stamps*, it is likely that somehow you forgot to return a postcard sent to you for confirmation of your interest, if you had not ordered anything lately. Ordering is not a condition. However they have to check up on foreign addresses etc. from time to time.
-  A number of dealers have noticed that high-priced modern material is not selling well because of some doubts as to its authenticity. Erwin Steinbrüchel has sent, to all experts, auction houses and others, a full-colour explanation with greatly magnified photographs of mint stamps cancelled using lasers and other modern printing processes. One of the cases which alerted him to this new "practice" was when a set of the 1949 definitives, in blocks of four, was offered with excellent FD cancels. However, the 20c was Die II. Further examination showed consistent aberrations of the cancel details, which could not have happened twelve times with hand-struck cancellations. This case, and others, showed that the 'inks' used in these modern methods are not absorbed by the paper of the stamp.
-  In connection with this one must remember that only after Decree 178 of the 22nd November 1924, i.e. for the 1924 PJ stamp issue, was it allowed to cancel a pair or block of 4 with one strike. Until then every stamp had to be individually cancelled. But letters do exist with a single cancel on several stamps. Were these just 'private' or has anyone seen such a pre-1924 letter which travelled across Switzerland, or even one which went to the UK or the USA?
-  In August my wife received two thick catalogues, nothing special, but on their way into the 'vertical filing system' I noticed that they did not have the usual 'PP' mark for postage. As shown in figures 1 & 2 they had 'CAT', obviously indicating a special rate for catalogues, a bulk rate cash payment. And that is as far as I can get. The Zürich PO main information desk could not even find out where I could get more information within the SP organisation! I would like to know, for example




Figure 1

what is the minimum number? Of course big catalogue firms will know and the rest of us do not need to know!



Figure 2

-  Apparently on 9.5.99 a new PO was opened in a large store in Mendrisio. My efforts to get official confirmation or a mention in the official *Phila News* have been unsuccessful; see example right.



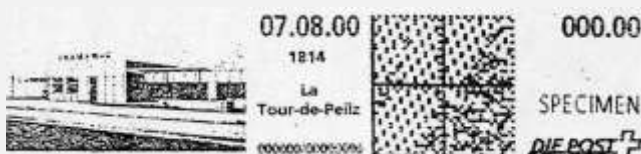
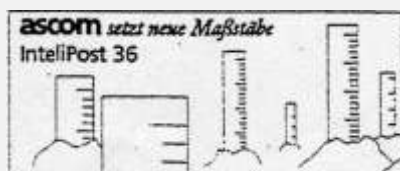


## Did You Know?



### November 2000

- ☞ On the 1st of January 2001 the Swiss Express rates go up again; increases range from CHF 1 to 5, depending on weight, the heavier the higher. Swiss Express is now quite separate from Letters & Parcels, and cannot be subsidized by them. It fixes prices to be just below that of the private carriers. Details will follow as soon as announced.
- ☞ Another new name has appeared, Swiss Post NET, in combination with TNT, for night deliveries across Europe. They offer a special service 'Innight Express' in Switzerland. If your dishwasher, for instance, needs a special washer, which has to come from, say, Holland, this will be delivered at night, into the repair man's service van, ready for him to bring it to you as soon as he comes to work. The Innight Express people have a set of keys from all their customers, for storerooms, workshops, cars and vans. The Internet can't beat that. Price? How important is your washing up?
- ☞ I've been shown a package of very interesting information sheets prepared by SP for use in schools, to make clear the positive side of the modern "service public", as applied to the post office. Admirably, and unexpectedly, well done.
- ☞ PC-generated DIY stamps are now being worked on by two firms: Ascom (Hasler) and Frama, see illustrations. A new value frame will be introduced for ordinary franking machines on the 1st of January 2001 for those customers who will get a special discount if their monthly usage is over CHF 2500 per annum.



- ☞ The 70c stamp to be issued on the 21st of November was chosen by popular vote, for the first time in the 150 years of the Swiss posts. Designed by Martin Eberhard it shows the Zürich 'Böögg' burning, and gained 18% of the 10,000-odd votes cast. Ten designs were offered for the Day of the Stamp issue 2000.
- ☞ Several machine slogans have appeared with their contact address given as 'www.... etc!'. Two are shown here.




- ☞ I have been informed that the five circular 'stamps' issued by the SP on the 15th of September are not part of the anti-AIDS campaign. The main objective is to present something new. The five basic colours used are, of course, to match the famous five Olympic rings, and can be so stuck on an envelope accordingly. After going through the mailing system will anybody notice the yellow and green 'stamps' are for official IOC use only? Are there any collectors out there who feel the SP should NOT do away with these "never-used correctly" labels from about eight different international offices?
- ☞ The guest nation this year at the postal history 'Mecca' in Sindelfingen will be Switzerland, with a special SP stand, from the 27th to the 29th of October. The exhibition and bourse is situated just south of Stuttgart, Germany.



## Did You Know?



### December 2000

- ☞ A number of excellent books have appeared lately. The most popular will be, among non-specialists, *'Philately, a Hundred Times'* by Peter Meier (ex PTT Museum) 220 pages of fascinating information in three languages (D,F,E) on 100 items in chronological order, spread over about 300 years. The cover or card, in colour, is discussed on the facing page. Should show to all new collectors, especially, the depth of interest behind stamps. CHF 34.00, excl. p&p. At 210 x 210 mm it will fit in all stockings.
- ☞ Richard Schaefer has brought out two further tomes of his postal history epic; *'Das Postwesen der Alten Eidgenossenschaft'* and *'Postvertrge - Taxen - Routen Alte Eidgenossenschaft'*. Both in German deal fully with posts in Switzerland before 1798. The former has 300 pages with most illustrations in colour, CHF 300 and the latter 450 pages with b/w only, CHF 100. Beautiful productions, for specialists.
- ☞ Another important book is *'Helvetische Republic 1709 - 1803'* by Andreas Gruenewald; 432 pages all in colour, in German, CHF 160. Fits into the above Schaefer set. Both are members of the Swiss Postal History Society.
- ☞ The mysterious cancel shown on page 79 of the October issue of HNL 'Mendrisio Fox Town' is in a type of supermarket, but is only a depot, and opened on 17.5.00. What is new is that it opened under full secrecy; specifically philatelists were not to be told! I can partly understand this as it is unbelievable what collectors want to have precisely cancelled. I think that (as in the UK) anything to be cancelled should have at least the B-post rate, not 5c as at present. There are other cancels on the secret list as well.
- ☞ An experienced philatelic journalist (he writes on Swiss Philately every month in a German publication) Walter Wehrle, has in this way told of his attempts to get a special cancel on the official invitation to the celebrations of 'Bellinzona - 500 years in the Federation' on 14th April 2000. Why not one cancel, let alone a stamp, was issued for this historical event is also a good question. But Bellinzona refused to cancel the 70c stamp of 1960 (Z.365) with. K-cancel K1274, with no reason given. Since then he has been trying in Bern Philatelie with no success at all, to get at least his unused stamp back. However, I have noticed that the cancel he asked for was withdrawn on 16.10.97, but the successor K1274a would have been OK.
- ☞ The year 2000 Album at CHF 49 from the Bureau, in four languages (D,F,I,E), and with a unique embroidered NVI "stamp" is a good buy for 96 pages of information and stamps. See your copy of *Focus on Stamps* for details.
- ☞ The 90c Christmas stamp has been beautifully designed by Bernadette Baltis, who did the 1992 and 1993 PJ stamps, and the 1995 Basle Dove miniature sheet, and others too. All first class.
- ☞ The PJ stamps are, for the first time; 2 x 70c & 2 x 90c. Will this give different booklet layouts? These have a layout of 6 x 70c & 4 x 90c. Nice FD cancel 
- ☞ Collectors of the red business franking machine impressions are in for a shock. They will now be in blue, as soon as each machine is changed over from the present credit system, i.e. pay at the end of



the month following a telephone or postcard 'reading', of the meter registering the 'stamps' used, to an all-electronic system based on pre-paid debit, as is the new world standard. See example left

for a normal-looking impression from an Ascom-Hasler Mailmaster (note the old four-figure machine number), but almost a FD of the new system in Switzerland. The UPU decision to use red, taken in Madrid in 1922, is thus over-ridden.