



Did You Know?



January 2009

- The Soderberg auction became a most peculiar event on 5th November 2008. It started late at 6 pm (as the last of five collections) and went on until 3 am the next morning!! I don't know how many Swiss collectors were present, but the 1353 lots apparently did not achieve the expected result for such a remarkable collection. Specialists will enjoy the catalogue of so much Swiss classic and other fields.
- Another catalogue is remarkable too, that of Rapp for his auction of 24th-26th November 2008 in Wil. It weighs 2.3 kg, beautifully bound and has just over 600 pages for nearly 1700 lots. Who can throw such a reference book away?
- For many years I have been looking for an acceptable explanation of the 1910, and onwards, Bahnpost/Ambulant TPO cancellations with small letters 'a', 'b', 'c', 'd' or dash after the SBB train number. I have covers with all these letters, "d" being the rarest, while most collections have seen none. Now I have met an experienced philatelist, Karl Böniger, who, for many years, was a PO official in Swiss TPOs. He confirmed the easiest explanation, namely that this was to identify multiple cancellers in the same coach for the busiest long distance trains. The applications are; "a" for the main desk handling "Registered" or other special mail items; "b" for usual letters and cards; "c" for items taken by the conductor at intermediate stations with "d" as a reserve. Until now it was thought that the role was to have only one canceller per TPO, and that the letters



could indicate on which part of the route items were cancelled. See illustrations taken from the Güller record books.

- Another TPO question can also be cleared up, namely Werner Gattiker's registered cover shown on Page 65 of the September edition of the Newsletter. Such letters (posted into a stationary TPO) even if correctly franked could not be registered in the TPO as they never had the labels, nor the receipt forms. These letters were handed to the PO at the end of the trip and were then handled in the normal way. If there was a sender's address the receipt was sent there free. It is hardly likely that the "label" shown was completed in the TPO. Was 371 the correct number?
- It should be noted that there were various "levels" of official mail, at different times, but usually an additional service, such as registration, had to be paid for with ordinary stamps on the cover.

- A friend gave me a curious cover and as I look for foreign cancellations which have a Swiss connection, the official German Special large-size cds for 10.10.1969 is shown below. The question is; what does "450 Years" mean? What happened in 1632 to initiate a permanent association with the Swiss Confederation? It is well-known that the medieval town of Rottweil, south of Stuttgart, did have a loose alliance with the Old Swiss Confederation, which was nullified by Napoleon, together with a similar situation in Mulhouse, north of Basel. My three history books all give different periods for the admittedly loose ties with Rottweil. The addressee has no idea.



- The third and last very large REMA letter sorting installation has started full operation in Harkinggen, near Solothurn. Details of the last day of older generation and first day of new are in preparation.
- I should have mentioned it before, but last October a very useful book (spirally bound, 67 A5 pages, in Italian, French and German) was published by the group who study the new business franking impressions, IFS etc. Titled "*Repertorio Catalogo*" it can be obtained for about 40 CHF. Further details may be obtained via the Editor.



Did You Know?



February 2009

- ☞ There were 65 million SMS or MMS messages sent at Christmas, and the PO did their bit by delivering more than 3 million parcels in time. There were even more electronic messages at New Year, a record.
- ☞ Glancing through an old 2006 Chianni Auction catalogue I noticed that there were many mint sheets of Liechtenstein stamps on offer, some of which were printed by Courvoisier in La Chaux-de-Fonds, However, the perforations were clearly made by a Swiss 25-stamp harrow machine situated in the Swiss Mint in Bern. That was a surprise for me. Now I have heard that Luxembourg also had stamps printed by Courvoisier and perforated in the Swiss Mint. Which stamps with exactly 25 horizontal and 13 vertical teeth were printed by Courvoisier from 1933 till about 1938? Thank you for helping. The normal 20mm gauge system does not help with this study, especially when catalogue reproductions are being checked.
- ☞ In Modern British and German philatelic reference books there is very little, or nothing, about Swiss Perforating Machines, and what is said on early methods of perforating generally is usually wrong or incomplete. For me there are three periods of special complication at the moment: the Tell Boy, the Shields of 1924 and the low values of the Peace issue of 1932. If anyone has corner blocks I would be most thankful if you could send photocopies to the Editor for me to study for an explanatory article.
- ☞ The well known philatelic dealers Honegger of Schmerikon have produced another of their annual catalogues in A5 size full of colour illustrations of Swiss classic material, stamps and covers. A wealth of information.

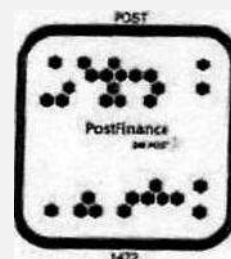
- ☞ I came across the emblem of the Harmonica Club of Wollishofen (since 1893 part of the city of Zürich) and thought this was a good illustration of how the old 1493 village arms are used today. They consist of a left-half in gold (the dots for yellow are missing on such a small reproduction) with 5 bars alternating in silver (white) and red (vertical bars) with 5 bars alternating in silver (white) and red (vertical bars).



- ☞ The 1932 PJ 10c has been skilfully modified by the secretary of the active Philatelia Winterthur for their monthly programme, as shown left. The ancient stone is shown on another stamp, do you remember which?



- ☞ Coming to modern times, the illustration right shows one of the new electronic methods of communication, "BeeTagg". The stamp was described in *Focus on Stamps* 4/2007. The coded pattern can be read by the camera in your hand to give you immediate contact with your Post Finance account anywhere. Can I afford another ice cream?





Did You Know?



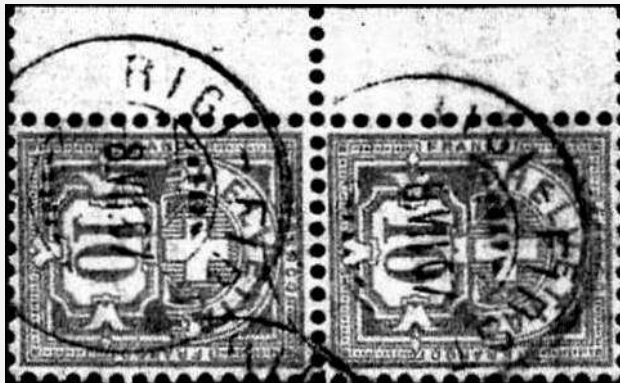
March 2009

The SP announced it intends to raise the rates for letters to foreign countries and for inland parcels. And now something new. For those with a WebStamp licence to print their own stamps, either direct onto the cover or onto a stick-on address label, would be allowed a discount if they handed in parcels with such a label. At the moment the SP hardly needs stamps, all franking can be handled by the counter computer-cum-printer for all services to anywhere, but this new development takes a new step. Certainly useful for firms with many different sized parcels.

A week after the above announcement the SP revealed another ingenious plan, 'Send Your Parcel CO2 Neutral'. You can pay 1c-10c more, depending on distance, which will be used to buy collectively the usual type of CO2 Certificates. Payment in cash at the counter or by your Web Stamp. First Day was 11th February 2009 with no warning. Thanks to Giovanni Balimann I can show you the 'pro clima' counter label as used on a letter, see right.



The illustration below should be recognised by older Members. It has now appeared in the German Gartner auction catalogue (Lot 3392) and poses some questions. However, after a bit of searching, I found that I had written a two-part article on it in 1984 (See HNL or SBZ for July and August). The gist is that at the NABA Zuri Exhibition two well known philatelists had shown examples that they had found separately (including this example) and suggested that for the first four mysterious booklets in the Zumstein Spezial list for 1904/5, interspace sheets of 90 stamps were made, but not one example was kept by the Post nor sold to collectors. Since then I have heard nothing except that in the Gartner auction catalogue there is a lot (3593) consisting of two hand-written pages, in English, mentioning the date of 1984 and, that in 1989, it had been confirmed that the first booklet panes used in 1904 were of the type with interspaces. All four panes from the 5c and the 10c booklets are shown, with perforated margins having the control mark 11.



As many Members are keen on Swiss trains I mention a new booklet "*Bahnhöfe der Stadt Zürich*" which covers all stations with many historic illustrations. A4 sized 128 pages for CHF 25. Did you know that there are three steep "mountain railways" in Zürich, two with two cars balanced, and one is 810m long. All date from the 19th century, but all have been renovated recently. And they never seem to stop building new stations, new lines and new tunnels, at the moment a new direct underground line from Zürich Main Station to Oerlikon.

THAT the preparations for the GABRA V non-competitive exhibition to be held in Bern 9th-11th October 2009 are well under way. The sub-title is '100 Years Universal Postal Union Movement' as Georges Schild realised that this has been shown on more stamps in the world than any other subject during the last 100 years.



Did You Know?



April 2009

At the recent AGM of the Ganzsachen-Sammler Verein more details of the forthcoming GABRA V in Bern were revealed all for the benefit of those who make it to Bern 9th-11th October 2009, from free entry to the special postcard. There is a non-competitive event and suitable exhibits from the UK, USA, etc. would be welcome. As mentioned here last month the UPU meeting in 1900 is associated with this GABRA, namely the Monument (not Movement) erected in Bern to celebrate its 25th anniversary. The 1900 meeting of postal representatives from all over the world was to choose, during 3 days, which submitted statue was to be accepted. Apparently no postal matters were even discussed. Their selection has been a great success, easy to find near the station.

The SP is getting serious about global warming, not only the Pro Clima logo shown last month, but also the new 1fr. stamp issued on the 5th March showing the speeding up of typical glacier melting. See the clear article in "Focus on Stamps" (1/2009) by three university specialists on this subject. For a number of years the fleet of postal vehicles has been in the process of lowering their CO2 output. See right for the FD cancellation.



After a lot of thought and working with stamp illustrations having different sizes of reproduction I realised that the conventional perforation gauge per 2 cm. (e.g. 11.75: 11.5) is not good enough for many reasons. Counting the number of teeth on 2 sides is much better i.e. 12: 14 with the first number for the horizontal side and the second for the vertical, as with the above gauge. Exact identification is then possible even under glass. Small and large, wide or tall can be exactly defined. The only restriction is that with linear perforation it is not always correct, but that does not occur with Swiss stamps (for the first printing of the 1900 UPU stamps the perforation can be called "Duplex Harrow" and is fully described in the Zumstein Specialised 2000 and earlier). Soldier stamps, air show vignettes, PJ forerunner of 1912 etc. all have linear perforation as this was cheaper for such small quantities and the official perforation machines were reserved for the higher quality postage stamps, from 1862 till now. Your comments are invited, to the Editor please.

To recognise insidious back-dated postmarks there are some tips to help the wary, although a number of dealers and others are against giving this type of information to collectors. They say it helps the forgers, I say collectors should know. I will start with an example from the Güller record book Vol. 1 page 48. The early cancellers had fine lines in the upper and lower segments but they turned out to be difficult to clean leading to smudgy postmarks, so in 1874-75 the PO decided that the number of about 17 fine lines should be reduced to 7 thick lines. This change was effected with No. 2583 and 2589 (in between there are 5 rectangular cancels). See the types shown here in full-size. Note that at this time Güller delivered cancellers set at random dates; only from



February 1881 was the delivery date used and later the actual FD as fixed by the PO in advance. Another curiosity; the first type is not mentioned in the AW eight-volumes of cancellations, only the second type as Group 143. Some collectors use 143A for the fine lines and 143B for the thick lines or bars in correct historical order.

Today we have a different situation. The SP does not often clean or correctly ink the equipment, and the counter-staff don't receive any hints on correct cancelling. The illustration right shows an apparently maltreated cancel as a decoy to make you think you have a genuine letter and not a bulk junk item.



The firm of Honegger of Schmerikon will have a stand at the Swiss Stamp Dealers Association's exhibition at Rapperswil-Jona on 10th-12th September where you can view their range of classic material.



Did You Know?



May 2009

The Swiss Post was prevented from raising any tariffs this year as confirmed with the new list of April 2009. The only change that I could see was that inland letters are now limited to 20mm. thickness, as the additional price of 2.30 Frs. for up to 50 mm. has been abolished (presumably as it was seldom used and too expensive). No mention is made of the rates rise of 10c on Standard foreign letter; see DYK of last month. However, for perhaps the first time, stamps have been printed for the new rates of 1.40 (UK) and 1.90 (USA), but which have now been refused by the official watchdog.

The two new stamps showing the last two birds of the popular self-stick series are very attractive. One of the advantages of the self-stick stamps is that the "teeth" are clean, complete and never damaged ('never say never' they say). The Philatelic Bureau in Bern know that they have to be careful about philatelic details today, so for the new issue of the "old" 1.30 stamp, but without the blue "Priority" tab, they have warned collectors that there is a slight change in the lower wavy-line piercing.



As this rate has now not changed, the situation is complicated - so watch out. For those who follow the self-stick issues, and there is a lot of interest in them, Figs. 1 and 2 show how the two issues of the same stamp differ. Fig. 1 shows the three "bridges" holding the tab in place, if needed, and Fig. 2

the new version without the tab and the three tiny "bridges" (taken from the "Focus on Stamps" flyer).

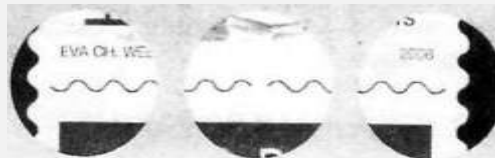


Figure 2



Figure 1

The "Pro Clima" signet is appearing more often on mail items, and curiously the firm where Giovanni Balimann works, "Chocolat Frey", was the first in Switzerland to introduce it on their meter marks; see Fig. 3 below for the exclusive FD impression.



There has been a friendly change at the top of the SP organisation, but the closure of village and small POs continues. Another group of 420 is now being scrutinised, but the opposition on all sides is growing. Parliament insists on profit, but others nearer the ground do not want the social contact provided by the local PO reduced. If everyone had a PO Giro account this would help as the local agencies (Ymago kiosks in the local store, etc.) cannot accept cash. However they can do almost everything else. The local councils are being asked to suggest answers. Another solution is to have a "House Service Delivery". When the mail is delivered the postman can collect mail, sell stamps, and pay out money, etc. on the doorstep, if anyone is at home when he calls.

In the bulletin that goes to all members of the Swiss Protestant Church the Philatelic Bureau is advertising for their new Calvin stamp issue, sheets of 20, FDCs plain covers. A good idea. Have the bridge builders also an advert for the new stamp of H. U. Grubenmann, the 18th Century architect from Appenzell?

No end of trouble is being caused by the new 100c. Ice Hockey stamp as it cannot be properly removed from the backing paper. Strange that this production error could be made by the very experienced printer Enschede in Haarlem NL.



Did You Know?



June 2009

Last month I mentioned that, according to a newspaper report, the public were having great difficulty in getting the new self-stick stamps off the backing undamaged. As I do not get all the new issues automatically I bought a corner block of these Ice Hockey Skates and had no trouble at all. It seems that only part of the delivery gave real trouble. The new Trees' are self-stick and are also printed by the same firm Enschede. They seem to be in order. Note that the thicker paper requires more perforation holes, so here we have 13½ instead of the old 11½, which has been the tendency since the introduction of the SSR IV of 1985.

I have come across a cover in an old box which has been attacked by mites at some time in the past. The damage is shown enlarged here. The question is - why was only one of the two stamps attacked with the other untouched? The 15c Z.525 was issued on 30th August 1973 on chalky white phosphorescent paper without fibres and the 5c Pro Patria Z.128 of 12th June 1966 was on plain white phosphorescent paper with violet fibres. It seems clear that the mites preferred the older paper without chalk, but how were they affected by the phosphorescent additive? Did they light up in the dark corners of the clothes cupboard?



Heinrich Federer (1866-1928), shown on the stamp above, lived for 6 years (1893-1898) in Jonschwil, Canton St Gallen and wrote a number of books on the inhabitants of the fictitious village of Lachweiler. Shown here is the complete K 818 used on the first day. One day I will check to see if this well-known novelist was in any way related to the even better-known tennis player of today - Roger Federer.



There was a most interesting article in *Focus on Stamps* on how printing has progressed since the days of Johannes Gutenberg, as indicated in the FD cancel of the new 100c stamp, his 'a' of 1450 and today's @, see example right. I took up their offer of a guided tour of the special exhibition and the main part of the Gutenberg Museum in Fribourg. The 15th Century building houses, on five floors, a unique collection of old and new printing machines and all the auxiliary equipment, excellently displayed, with French and German descriptions. The special SP souvenir of the whole story is well worth reading, but a bit expensive.



In 2008 the Postauto's carried a record number of 115 Million passengers, i.e. 315,000 per day, over a distance of 94 Million kilometres. However, the high cost of fuel reduced the clear profit. Today they have the most up-to-date coaches and buses, yellow double-deckers and articulated 'bendy' buses. They have also won several contracts to operate in France and Liechtenstein.



Did You Know?



July 2009

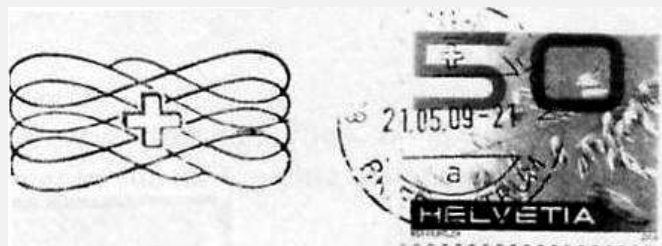
- The excellent booklet mentioned last month on the Gutenberg Exhibition in Fribourg has a well-translated text in English, but I have now noticed a couple of translator's errors, which should not have occurred - Luxembourg instead of Liechtenstein and 'rubber ring' for the hardened steel transfer roller used in recess printing (nit-picking !).
- The well-known philatelic researcher and writer Alex Herms has published three new booklets, A5 and in German, on the Standing Helvetia issues. No.1 on 'Production' i.e. paper, water-marks, gumming and perforation. No. 2 on 'Printing' on the various machines used; and No. 3 for the 'Essays and Trials'. Each is full of detailed illustrations mostly in colour and with many tables of great interest. An amazing assembly of information for collectors.
- Charles LaBlonde has reported on an extraordinary 300-page book in English by author Alex Gundel of Cologne on all those curious postmarks on mostly bulk mail from one country to another via an intermediate country with the lowest postage rate, etc. Some have been shown here "SPI UK" etc. This is becoming a major industry full of new ideas and, in fact, replacing the UPU in their home territory of International Mail with postage stamps as we know them being side-stepped. Something for real enthusiasts who like looking for gems in various PO waste-paper bins!
- The "Zuri '09" philatelic exhibition stage II in May was a great success, but perhaps the dealers would have appreciated more customers. I found the collections of high standard and very varied in subject matter. Good for the future. The next exhibition will be in Rapperswil-lona, where the Swiss Dealers Association will celebrate their Centenary with a great show from 10th to 12th September. This will be followed by the GABRA V in Bern from 9th to 11th October. Last but not least is the "Day of the Stamp" in Bulle, a stage III exhibition from 11th to 13th December at which there will be a special presentation of postmark material to celebrate 50 years of SVPS Swiss Postmark Society.

- THAT the two items shown below arrived the same day and illustrate some aspects of how mail is handled today. The first is an example of a privately computer-produced Webstamp showing that a nice photo does not make an acceptable stamp - too small and too dark. The data matrix is standard on most mail, but should not be cancelled, as this makes the code unreadable. A



problem that the SP has not solved as the Webstamp carries no date or place of origin, only the 16 digits of the licence number. Dater die is the small one of 22 mm. diam. usually used on faced mail from a post office direct, not via a letter box. The size of the self-stick label is 97 x 42 mm. Rate "B" standard 85c.

- The second example is also from the new Mail Centre of 8010 Zürich-Mülligen but I have not retouched the 28 mm. diam. dater die. The quality is above average as the date can be read clearly. The cover has probably been faced automatically before cancelling. However "How come only 50c postage?" The stamp used is one of the four low-values issued in September 2008 This rate is for bulk mailings of 500 or more items (only "B" post) with a basic rate of 53c for standard letters B5 or smaller up to 100g, together with a weight addition of half a cent per 10g. This letter weighed 36g, giving 53 plus 2c i.e. 55c actual charge booked to the sender's account for each item sent. A tolerance of about 10% is allowed, compared to that of the stamp used. The basic rate increases in 4 further steps of size and weight to 1.65c.





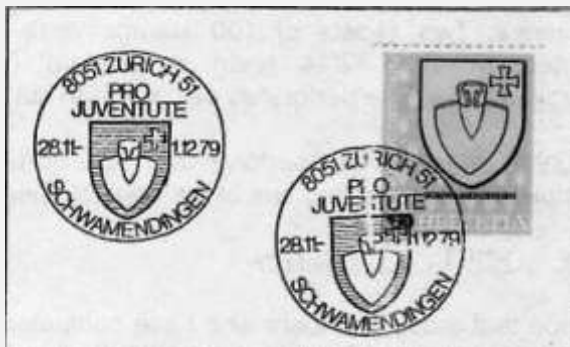
Did You Know?



August 2009

- ☞ Surprise, surprise, an important Swiss postage inland rate has been reduced, as from 1.7.2009, almost without warning. Large letters B4-size have tumbled 10-20% with now only two weight steps instead of three. So now we have up to 500g; 2. /1.80 Fr. (A/B) with Registration 5 Fr., and then up to 1000g; 4. /3.60 Fr. R = 6 Fr. Thickness in all cases 20mm max. Pity that any FDCs will not fit onto the usual exhibition sheets unless one changes from A4 to A3 size, as some collectors now do to increase the number of covers shown, and also in the "Open" class.
- ☞ In May I mentioned the two versions of the 1.30c stamp with and without the blue Priority tab and it will not be the last as the rates change in the future. Keep a close check on this small variation to the "teeth" of these self-stick stamps. The US term for these cuts of the stamp paper, but not the backing paper, is apparently a "kiss-cut".
- ☞ The new SP management has carried on closing the least profitable POs in town and country, and has a few new ideas; for instance - deliveries only in the afternoons to match the ever-spreading, early-morning collections only. Strangely the numbers of A-letters delivered within the advertised period is dropping. But there are various definitions of "public service" available.
- ☞ In an article on the name "Zürich", as used by a number of small towns in the USA and Canada, it was also mentioned that Asteroid No. 13025 also has the name "Zürich". (Addition to last month's "Winterthur"). You can look up www.swissroots.org for more about Swiss settlements in North America.
- ☞ On the 7th September 2009 Liechtenstein is issuing five series of stamps, one of which, showing butterflies, is especially interesting. This issue is remarkable as it is the first to be produced entirely in the Principality from creation, design to printing in sheets of 20 on self-stick paper, but perforated and slit for the easy removal of any individual stamp from the backing-sheet. The stamp glue is water-soluble, so there will be no trouble in removing such a stamp from an envelope. Worldwide a new concept.
- ☞ Our sister society across the Atlantic, AHPS, has rejuvenated their popular beginners' 20-page album "A Swiss Sampler" using themes from Swiss stamps. Pre-printed in colour with a full description of each stamp it is a joy to behold, and should interest beginners and others by giving a good overview of the possibilities. Perhaps you know www.swisstamps.org already? This is the time to have a good look, especially at the long list of terms which are competently explained and illustrated.
- ☞ Another important book has been published as No. VIII for the Swiss Postal History Society by the well-known Richard Schafer "Schweiz – Frankreich - Transit 1798-1850". 420 pages, all illustrations in colour, with a 30-page summary in English. Further details, prices, etc. from Andreas Grunewald at prephilately@aol.com

- ☞ An attractive example of a colourful modern PP "stamp" is shown right. Below is an example of a design error in that the FD



cancel for this PJ issue of December 1979 (Z.271) indicated a blue background of the arms of the shield correct red i.e. horizontal lines instead of vertical. Do you remember, water lies horizontal and blood drips downwards as explained in my article in the April 2007 issue of the Newsletter?



Did You Know?



September 2009

- From 1st July the SP monopoly has dropped to the new limit of 50g per letter. This, together with the digital revolution, has resulted in fewer letters handled and a new firm, Quickmail, has appeared which delivers letters in four Cantons around St. Gallen. The SP says that the letter volume has dropped by 4%, but that they still have 75% of the market.
- The SP is trying out new methods of saving money, but not to the satisfaction of their private customers. The reduced collection of mail from letter boxes, i.e. only in the early mornings from the smaller towns and no collections at all on Saturdays, for instance. Now trials have started in a few selected places with deliveries only in the afternoons. It is rumoured that 5% of the 10,000 delivery postmen will be made redundant. The financial turn-down has also reduced the amount of junk mail; and, of course, the smaller POs are closing regularly.
- In *Focus on Stamps*, 3/2009, there is an interesting article on Friedrich Schiller whose last play, written in 1804, put Switzerland on the map, namely the story of Wilhelm Tell. Historians say it cannot be proven, but I think it is likely. In 1986 a well-documented book of 300 odd pages appeared. One of the objections was that Tell is not a Swiss name. However, there is a rural village west of Zürich called Dällikon today, but until the 15th Century was written in surviving documents as Tällikon or Tellikon and in 870 as Tellinghovon, i.e. the farm of Tello. This is not proof for careful historians, even though today's inhabitants still call their village "Tälike" in Swiss-German.
- As part of their reorganisation of the sorting of the millions of letters per day (REMA) there are now only 3 coding installations in the country, Zürich-Mülligen, Härkingen and Eclépens. But where are the letters cancelled? This cannot be determined, as it is changing constantly, but clearly the minimum at the counter (the staff are no longer trained to cancel properly). Mail collected from letter boxes is cancelled mainly in either of the sorting offices. The distribution of the sorted mail by van (increasingly with "clean" electric vehicles) follows complicated routes. This means that curious cancellers are appearing, with strange names and abbreviations. A selection is shown below.



- A question has been asked "What has happened to the rectangular emergency replacement date stamps?" I don't know exactly, but the last use was probably before the SP took over from the PTT in 1998. Some "collectors" had annoyed the PTT, as soon as the news got out, with hundreds of covers to be cancelled on last and first days etc. The answer to that was that practically all POs received two or more normal cancellers, so if one has to be repaired or replaced a substitute was to hand. I wonder if one of these curious and original cancellers has been kept in the Postal Museum.
- The 130c and 180c stamps, which were "superseded", then not, are now available from the Philatelic Service without the Priority tab, and showing the correct cuts through the teeth. Enough to puzzle collectors for a long time.
- I must apologise for not realising that the illustrations in last month's DYK would not (yet) come in full colour. The "INK" is in yellow, red and blue, and of course the background of the Schwamendingen shield is in red, see Z.271, 70c from the 1979 Pro Juventute set.



Did You Know?



October 2009

The Swiss Dealers' Centenary in Rapperswil was a resoundingly successful exhibition. Being non-competitive meant that items were sometimes presented in non-standard fashion and in other ways often looked different. Mainly it was dealers who were showing that they were also philatelists



and revealing their treasures from all over the world. I doubt if so many Swiss classic stamps have ever been under one roof before. Situated between the railway station and the Lake of Zürich in the new buildings of the local Technical College, which are very accessible, with good lighting and a good view. There was a restaurant and plenty of seating. Altogether a pleasant atmosphere. I had the pleasure to meet several HPS and AHPS Members old and new. See the innovative FD cancel of the special stamp.

The new strip of three 85c stamps for the ceremonial march of the Appenzeller livestock up to the higher pastures and down again in the autumn is the best for this year. This has become a great tourist attraction, but if there were no tourists it would be done in exactly the same way, as for hundreds of years.

It is now common to use a digital camera with anti-shake and poor-light facilities to make perfect colour pictures which can be enlarged, copied and studied at home. So don't forget your camera when next you go to a reference library or archive.

GABRA V is approaching, Bern 9-11 October. There will be just over 100 exhibits, 21 dealers and a special UPU show in eight parts. The theme is the well-known UPU monument in Bern (25 Years UPU) has been shown on more stamps the world over than any other motif. For an unknown reason the UPU has decided to have its own show in the Berner Rathaus at the same time. Additionally there will be a high level ceremony at the Monument itself on the 9th October this being the World Post Day.

A fellow collector of curiosities has sent me a cancellation dated 9.9.9 – 9 (see below) however non-retouchable in average SP quality from "8044 Zürich 44 Zürichberg". Do you remember in 1999 there was a panic that all older computers would fail at the moment of New Year 2000? They didn't, but about 20 odd cancelling machines had never been provided with a '2' in the appropriate date reel. At the time I showed some examples of how the various POs tried to solve the problem. All were then provided with correct reels except for 8044 (don't ask why!). Now this will be done for 2010 at last, so this is a rare cancel and a "snap number". Thanks to Hans Häfeli, the self-stick stamp specialist - see the AHPS "Tell" front page article by Richard T. Hall (May 2008) and HPS 'Did You Know?' (Dec. 2007) plus page 59 from the August 2008 Newsletter.



THAT you can be sent every newsletter/price list by Markus Seitz in Luzern giving the latest Swiss ATM issues, new counter labels, etc. and their variations, by internet www.atms.ch after contacting 22atms@atms.ch. From his latest Newsletter No. 124 I have learnt of the new WebStamp shown right, where the short vertical bar indicates that the sender is a business customer, for statistical purposes they say. This was possible from 1st August 2009 (a National Holiday) at the Zürich Airport, as shown by the reduced Local Publicity Datestamp with the new Postcode of 8060.



Perfin experts know that the large shipping firm of Danzas AG was one of the last to use this outdated method of preventing misuse of their stamps. The example here shows the oldest use of their "D" that I have ever seen. As their perforating plate was laid out for the old small stamp size there are two "Ds" on the newer, larger stamps for 2nd see the 2 of 72. This example was used on 19.4.1972 in their sub-office in Koblenz where four train lines cross, opposite the German town of Waldshut across the Rhine. Perhaps you have a later example, or one with two clear "Ds".













Did You Know?



November 2009

 Gabra V was a great success, with high attendance especially on the Friday (The official postcard is shown at the bottom of the page). There was a high proportion of exhibits from outside Switzerland, but all were interesting, with many discussions to be seen. A lot to see and learn. Some excellent UPU 1900 collections were on display with unique material, and many others not usually seen. HPS Members Harlan Stone, Fred Pickard and Eric Lienhard were there, probably others too. Two new catalogues were presented at Gabra V - the 9th Edition of the Zumstein Ganzsachen (not the 11th as on the title page!), in blue cover for CHF 90 and the remarkable five-volume Postcard Catalogue by Martin Baer of the Ganzsachen-Verein, with every card illustrated in colour and described in German on separate loose-leaf pages. All card prices are in Vol. 5. The price of the Postcard Catalogue is CHF 250 for the full set of five. It is worth it for the club library, and libraries have a good discount I was told.



-  THAT in the Bern City Parliament there was also a UPU exhibition with remarkable historic photos of the various designs for the monument and of the winning model. Also world-wide philatelic collections, somewhat marred by the poor lighting. At the monument there was a high level ceremony on the Friday 9th (World Post Day) to officially open the centenary celebrations in Bern, the only city to be a home to a UN organization outside of New York, Geneva and Vienna.
-  The Swiss Special Stamp for the occasion is for the UPU organisation only, and is not valid for normal use. I have not bought it, and think all these restricted issues should be abolished at last, or issued by the UN itself.
-  At their Rapperswil centenary show, the Swiss Dealers Association introduced a new decoration, namely an attractive lapel pin, the "Golden Dove" with a red background, for those publicising Swiss Philately. First recipient was Hans Erni for all the stamps and cancellations he has designed, the second Harlan Stone (very well deserved on both sides of the Atlantic) and then from England Joseph Hackmey for his well-presented, exceptional UPU collection of Swiss classics.
-  In our library there is a copy of the 1861 edition of Murray's Switzerland (Book No. 436). I have a reprint of the first edition of 1838 and refer to it quite often, a remarkable description of Switzerland in those days. Try it to enjoy and learn a lot.
-  Another book I constantly refer to is "*Motivhandbuch Schweiz*" by Ernst Schlunegger, 570 pages showing all Swiss stamps with descriptions in German from 1843 till 1990, written for thematic collectors, but useful to all. A similar work exists for Liechtenstein stamps from 1912 till 1984, including postcards.
-  One of the new Philatelic Bureau creations for booklet stamps is for Princess Lillifee with sparkling multi-coloured tinsel for children. It brings to mind that a century ago practically every PO circular threatened drastic action for those sprinkling such tinsel over greetings postcards, which as a powder was damaging other items, etc. I must add that today's tinsel is well stuck on, so they have learnt something since.
-  Once again I thank Markus Seitz for warning all ATM collectors that as Frama no longer make their machines the red colour is no longer available, so that the SP has to supply units with black ink for all labels, as used for the pictorial issues. Now the older definitive with the tiny map of Switzerland in green will have the postmark frame and date in black instead of in red. All machines, starting in Geneva, will be modified in turn. The new paper will be printed by Cartor in France with the map in green but sharper. More details from www.atms.ch



Did You Know?



December 2009

☞ There is an answer to the question in last month's HPS Newsletter by Ian Gilchrist. For 28 years I worked for this large international firm Sulzer Bros. in Winterthur. Here I learnt that during the 1930s Sulzer had a private arrangement with the PTT that all Express letters, perhaps also others, from foreign countries would be brought immediately to them and they, Sulzer, would pay the Swiss Express fee of 40c. For this extra service the Sulzer gave them a supply of 40c stamps, often with an identifying hole. The reason was that perhaps a quick answer would get them an order in those hard times. The letter shown by Ian was received on Tuesday 18th June 1940 and passed onto the Express Delivery Office, which was usually combined with the Telegraph Office, as they had the bicycles at that time. Therefore the Telegraph Office postmark with a date later than any I have seen before. I think I have written this explanation before for the HPS Newsletter about a letter of April 1934, and in the BBZ for November 1986 Marcel Kottelat came to about the same conclusion regarding two letters from 1937 that he had found.



☞ THAT the Swiss Postmark Society (SVPS) has now published their long awaited magnum opus after years of painstaking work by Giovanni Balimann in 4 loose-leaf A4 books with an incredible amount of detail on all aspects of Machine Cancellations. All the machines used are included and explained for the first time in Volume 1. Then in Volumes 2 and 3 are all the slogans used with their various dater dies right up to date, using all the previous slogan numbering in the well known 13 groups. Volume 4 has the complete dater die listing, and also the popular combinations of slogan and dater die in the order of the POs having these machines. Volume 1 also has something new – an attempt to estimate the number of slogans available to collectors, so that the points given to each in the catalogue does not reflect the demand for popular slogans, but is only one factor in determining the day-to-day price, which can fluctuate of course. Much is simpler and easier to follow than in the preceding edition of 1983.

☞ Another interesting work (in German) comes from the well known military historian Georges Schild on the interning of foreign soldiers in Switzerland before and during World War I, from 1859 till 1919. Full of extraordinary detail of this not so well-known period. Price CHF 70.

☞ Soon after joining the HPS in 1971, in the days of Felix Ganz, Ivan Tillen and the indefatigable Secretary Edythe Rawnsley I began to learn about Swiss Philately in depth and sent in some new items for the Newsletter, which were accepted. To my surprise, Edythe accepted my offer to put some bits and pieces together in a small column I called "Did You Know?" This became my constant companion and a driving force. Your questions sent me off into strange and exciting places to find an acceptable answer. And, of course, I met in Bath, London and here not only the three mentioned above but a stream of fellow enthusiasts, a privilege. However at 85 I have to go a bit slower so have decided to avoid the monthly printing deadlines not wanting to break my record of never missing a number! That the Society is putting all the old DYK columns onto the internet is an honour and much appreciated.

☞ As I cannot drop the subject, I will always appreciate your questions at mmruth@bluewin.ch, but don't forget to include clearly any dates -they are essential. Further, that a number of articles are still lying around which must be cleared up for everyone's benefit.