

The Tussaud wax works in London

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objekttyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand**

Band (Jahr): **1 (1935-1936)**

Heft 7

PDF erstellt am: **24.05.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-941993>

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THE TUSSAUD WAX WORKS IN LONDON.

Not everybody knows that the founder of the famous Tussaud Wax Works in London was Marie Grossholtz of Berne, married at the age of 35 to a Frenchman, Monsieur Tussaud. Marie Grossholtz, daughter of a gallant Swiss officer, was born in the year 1760. From her mother's side she had an uncle, Johann Christoph Curtius, who was a physician by profession and a creator of wax figures by avocation. So much admired were the products of his art, that the Royal Court of France invited Dr. Curtius to settle in Paris, where he quickly became a favourite of both political factions. He sent for his talented young niece and within a few years she was able to manage her uncle's growing business. Under the turmoil of the Revolution it became Marie Grossholtz's task to take the death masks of the many celebrities who became the victims of the guillotine: the King, the Queen, Princess Lamballe, Danton and Robespierre and others.

In 1795 she married, and later became the mother of two sons. Her wedded life brought disappointments and after getting a divorce she moved to England. There, for over 30 years, she travelled about with her show of wax figures, and only at the age of 75, i.e. in 1835, did she permanently settle in the British Metropolis. A year later Mme. Tussaud ventured to show a wax figure of Malibran, the most admired singer of that time. Soon afterwards this young artist died suddenly and for another glimpse of her, her admirers began to flock to the Wax Museum. Due to this incident, Mme. Tussaud decided to let her future wax figures be inspired by up-to-date events.

Hundreds of celebrities in all walks of life gradually joined the wax collection: Kings, Diplomats, Dictators, Criminals, Artists, Generals, Explorers, etc. In 1925, almost the entire exposition of Tussaud Wax Works was wiped out by fire, but Madame's energetic descendants have, with amazing rapidity, built up a new and equally fascinating display.

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A BIRD HAVEN.

Switzerland owns a bird-cage that holds 560 birds, but this bird-cage differs from others not only in its size but because the birds are free to fly in and out as they choose. Like the youth hostels throughout Europe for the weary traveller, this is a Swiss bird hostel for the wing-weary, both in summer and winter.

Near Neuchâtel at the little town of Serrières, where the Suchard chocolate factory was founded in 1826, is one of the largest and most complete aviaries in the world. Everything, from the temperature of the inclosed glass house to the swings, feed tables, and little waterfall in their garden, is closely watched and taken care of.

Mr. Hermann Russ, a Swiss industrialist, has built this large bird haven upon his estate. He started by transforming his green house, and then constructed an outdoor yard 90 feet long, 45 feet wide, and nearly 20 feet high. The wire, he points out, is not to keep the birds in, but to keep dogs, cats, and humans, out. It is really a bird hostel.

If an injured bird is found in the town of Serrières, it is now customary to bring it to the aviary, where it is fed and taken care of until well enough to be on its way.

Nightingales, canaries, doves, parakeets, and some parrots are the more regular residents, although in the winter many sparrows and swallows register for the season and leave with the spring.

Begun as a hobby, it has proved to be a source of great joy to Mr. Russ. Switzerland's mountains have been a barrier to many of the migrating birds which, when they find them too high to cross, often fall victim to the severe winter. Mr. Russ's activities are beginning to induce others in various parts of Switzerland to put out food and give what aid they can.

There has sprung up among the children around Neuchâtel and Serrières a greater appreciation of the part that birds, large and small, play in daily life, especially in the garden and on the lake. The aviary has become a popular visiting place for the children.

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