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EDITORIAL

It is already 3 years since your Editor has taken over the job of producing this magazine. During this time several members have asked your Editor how a magazine like the Helvetia is actually put together. As this question might interest other readers, here is a description in broad terms of the procedure involved.

It all starts with the collection of suitable material by perusing dozens and dozens of Swiss newspapers and magazines kindly supplied to your Editor by the staff of the Swiss Embassy without whose support the Helvetia could not exist in its present form. Suitable articles and photos are cut out and, as most articles are written in German or French, they have to be translated into English and edited at the same time in order to shorten and adapt them to fit into the format of the magazine. Even before you get the present copy of your Helvetia, this work is already in full progress for the next issue. In fact this work starts the day after the current issue has been handed over to the typesetter and the printer, so there is practically no let-up between issues. It is a continuous job and, when your Editor accepted the job, he realised that he had to put aside any thought of a holiday for the following 5 years otherwise the magazine would simply not appear.

For each issue, your Editor also has to dream up an Editorial, a task which is

often undertaken while driving to and from work. Sometimes the inspiration also comes during the night, in which case he writes it down quickly in the dark (so as not to awaken his wife) only to scratch his head in the morning because he cannot decipher what he had scribbled down in the darkness of the night. Luckily, so far at least, your Editor has not yet run out of ideas for this part of the magazine.

Once a good stock of articles has been written up, your Editor types them into a computer and then proof-reads them all very carefully to try to eliminate as many errors and misspellings as possible. The proof-reading is done in two steps. First you read the text to make sure it all makes sense, that the sentences follow in a logical sequence and that everything is grammatically correct. Then you read it a second time, but this time, word for word, looking for spelling mistakes (by that time you are a bit blurry eyed and unfortunately, the odd mistake still manages to slip through).

Once the proof-reading is done, it is back to the computer to enter the necessary corrections in the texts. In the meantime, all advertisements are collected and a final selection of photographs is made.

By the 15th of the month, the Club news items arrive at your Editor's office, either by mail or by fax. Then the real scramble starts because from this point on your Editor has only 3-4 days

left to finalise his job otherwise the magazine would not come out on time. All these Club items have to be quickly typed into the computer and proof-read for mistakes.

Then armed with all the articles, photos, advertisements and Club news items, your Editor then proceeds to make the layout of the magazine. This is like a jigsaw puzzle where every item has to be slotted into its right place. Sometimes you are lucky that everything just falls into place nicely. Other times, you can sweat for hours over just one or two pages when nothing seems to work out and nothing wants to fit into the space you have left available. As time is pressing, this job often goes right into the night and, on occasions, right through the whole night.

Once everything is in place, it is back to the computer to transfer the whole lot onto a floppy disc, then, with floppy disc and layout pages, your Editor is off to Fred, the Typesetter. On his special typesetting computer, Fred can juggle with the texts, enlarge, reduce, change the style of the lettering, decide on the style and size of the headings and put in the necessary instructions for the Printer, a job that takes quite a few hours. Then all the pages, minus the photos, are printed out on a laser printer and then everything, including the photos goes to Peter Schüpbach, the Printer who produces the final article which you are now holding in your hands.

All in all, your Editor spends around 50-60 hours on every issue. Unfortunately, as your Editor has to work some 12 hours a day, 6 days a week at his own job to earn his living, the work on the Helvetia magazine is mostly done

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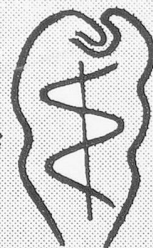
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