

Freiburg's street names

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SPEED CAMERAS



If you plan to travel to Switzerland and borrow or rent a car to drive around, keep a sharp eye out for the nasty camera boxes standing by the roadside. They are just as vicious as their counterparts in New Zealand. These are Switzerland's newest speed cameras. Easily transportable, they can quickly be set up anywhere along the roads to catch the unsuspecting speedy driver. And the fines are steep if you get caught. They could easily force you to shorten your stay by a couple of weeks. So beware, you have been warned.

One comment though: These boxes look very flimsy and we wonder how many motorists, irate at having been caught, might not have a go at them and give them a good kick or try to push them over, an action which of course might land them with another hefty fine. It seems that you just can't win.

Talking about fines in Switzerland, here are a few examples:

Fines for exceeding speed limits:

6-10 km within cities: 120.-SFR, on the open road 100.-SFR.

11-15 km within cities: 200.-SFR, on the open road 160.-SFR, on motorways 120.-SFR.

Exceeding speed limits by over 40 km can set you back some 920.-SFR.

Driving through a red light: 250.-SFR, overparking: 40.-SFR and illegal parking: 200.-SFR.

New types of fines just introduced: 100.-SFR for holding a telephone in your hand whilst driving and 60.-SFR for keeping your motor running unnecessarily.

But cyclists and pedestrians are not exempt from fines either: 60.-SFR for riding a bike at night without a headlight, 40.-SFR for riding a bike on a footpath, parking your bike at an intersection (?),

on a footpath or in a narrow street and for using worn out tyres.

Pedestrians pay 10.-SFR if they walk on a cycling track instead of the footpath. (Note that the cyclist pays 40.-SFR if he rides on a footpath, this is discrimination). The same fine of 10.-SFR applies to jay walking or crossing a street within 50 m of a pedestrian crossing.

Wow, if by chance you have not yet understood what "user pays" means, well now you know! Very soon only people with fat bank accounts and people who can claim diplomatic immunity will be able to afford to venture out into the streets.

LUCERNE NEWSPAPERS

Nothing stands in the way anymore for the "Luzerner Neuste Nachrichten" and the "Luzerner Zeitung" to amalgamate as the shareholders of both newspapers have almost unanimously agreed to the move. The report does not say what the new newspaper will be called.

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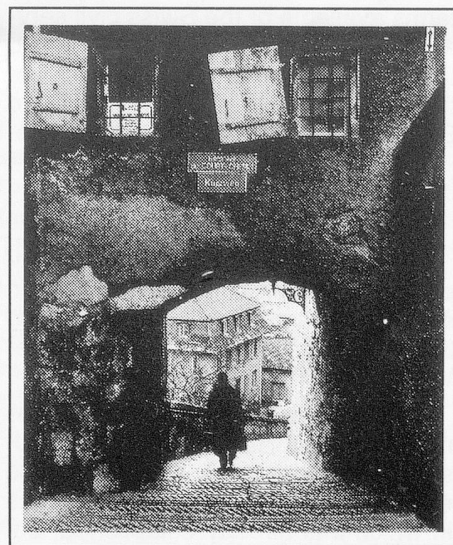
FREIBURG'S STREET NAMES

Like Biel/Bienne, Freiburg/Fribourg is a bi-lingual city. Although two thirds of Fribourg speaks French (most street names, signboards, shop names and the whole telephone directory are in French) Fribourg's origins are German. The proof is that Frei-Burg has a proper meaning whilst Fri-bourg is simply an adaptation of the German name into French.

Some ten years ago, the local authorities decided that some streets, especially those in the old inner city, which still had some historical connections with the past should have German names as well. So twenty-two streets have now bi-lingual names.

In order to establish whether a street deserved to have a German name, old city archives had to be researched. The studies of these archives revealed several anomalies. One of them concerns a street near the cathedral called Rue des Epouses which, in German, had become Hochzeitergasse which of course is not the correct translation. It is being argued that the French name is wrong and that it should be Rue des Epoux which then makes the name Hochzeitergasse correct.

But then the archives revealed that the original name of the street was really Besengasse, which was translated correctly into French as Rue des Epouses. Over the years, the double "s" was reduced to a single "s" which totally changed the meaning of the word (Epouse = cleaner or broom, Epouse = wife). So the weird naming cycle of this particular street went from Besengasse to Rue des Epouses to Rue des Epouses, then to Hochzeitergasse and finally to Rue des Epoux.



One of the old inner-city streets of Freiburg/Fribourg. If you happen to walk through there one day, beware of the window shutter, it might fall off at any time and land on your head.