

A scamper abroad

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Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1946)**

Heft 1056: **++**

PDF erstellt am: **12.07.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-692426>

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A SCAMPER ABROAD.

Some members of the Swiss Colony may not have had my good fortune of visiting their home-land this year. Here are a few thumbnail sketches of things which stood out during my "scamper" in July last.

When passport and visa and a seat in the plane had been arranged it became necessary to secure living rooms and this was accomplished in a Zurich hotel and in an Alpine Resort, both of which I had visited before — indeed there was less difficulty about the hotels than there had been about the plane.

Croydon is not nearly so pleasant a spot as it was in 1939 before the bombing of it — then one had a good solid lunch in the restaurant overlooking the aerodrome, now one is limited to a snack bar, without, however, forgetting to mention that Swissair provides gratis some light refreshments.

The trip by air in good weather was uneventful and all went like clockwork even until we arrived at Zurich with its majestic open space in front of the station with the tumultuously noisy Limmat to greet old friends.

Upon our arrival at Dübendorf we were given a number of coupons of various character and denominations to be supplemented by a bigger supply when our papers had been exhibited to the proper authorities.

Our first step was to greet our few remaining relatives and in the evening we had the pleasure of a family dinner, just like old times, on the veranda of our hotel enjoying again the bustle and clang of the busy Zurichois and the noise of their excellent trams did not worry us at all.

Next day and the day after we went en famille up the lake by boat as far as Rapperswil, enjoying the air and scenery near and far, renewing acquaintance with many familiar landmarks, including one or two reminders of the 1939 "Landi".

One of my relatives generously offered to take us for a motor trip and I chose as our object the well-known castle of Kyburg, beautifully situated, well preserved, now the property of the canton of Zurich. The trip took us through the town of Winterthur past the famous iron foundaries of Gebrüder Sulzer, in which town I was educated some 70 years ago.

The day after we took the train to Berne and Goppenstein on the Lötschberg line where a chaise drawn by a mule awaited us for conveyance to the village of Wiler in the Lötschental. At Wiler the chaise was left behind and the mule was at my disposal when I wished to ride on the steeper parts of the narrow road or path to Fafler Alp, a lovely spot some 5,800 feet above sea-level. The mule which brought me to my destination met later with an accident and had to be killed; these animals are most valuable in the mountains and I was told that "mine" was worth Frs. 2,600 and that the owner realised Frs. 300 for the carcass.

The journey to Fafler Alp took about 2½ hours (on foot all the way it is 3½ hours) and just at the end we had to traverse a huge mass of snow and debris thrown down by an avalanche in February, the biggest known in that part of the "Thal."

On an earlier occasion, in 1907, I had spent a holiday at Ried lower down in the valley, and later in 1913 and again in 1929, I was at Fafler Alp. On these occasions my chief mountain guide was the well-known Theodor Kalbermatten of Blatten and I was particu-

larly pleased to meet him again this year; we spent a memorable hour together over a glass of Fendant in the homely Walliser Stube attached to the hotel, recalling the details of our important ascents and of some failures, and talking intimately of the other members of my family who had joined us in the smaller expeditions, viz., my late wife and my late sister. My sister had presented Kalbermatten with a new sucksack and when I asked him for news of this he said that he still had it "das ist ein Heiligtum". Needless to say that his climbing days, like mine, are things of the big days of the past.

During our 14 days at the hotel we had a happy time; we visited all the old haunts and we were fortunate most days with good weather and there was not any accident beyond getting our feet wet trying to cross a turbulent mountain stream. The hotel was well managed, with good food and refreshing vin du pays; the service was excellent, about eight maids serving at meals (two helpings if you wished), nearly all in a semblance of the Lötschental costume, not perhaps in full rig all the time.

One evening the Prior of Kippel, Sigen, gave a lecture with interesting slides about the customs and beauty spots of the "Thal" which he knows like no one else. I reminded him that during 1907 when he was still a student I bought of him a picket for Frs. 30, my own having had the point knocked off during a slight accident on the Bietschhorn; we had just arrived near the top when a small rock came off, in my hands as it were, and crashed down the mountain, doing slight injury to my leg and more serious damage to the picket; fortunately I was roped, as was necessary, and my two guides held me up.

Fafleralp is a favourite spot for groups of scouts who pitch their tents in the wood surrounding the hotel and on the meadows on the border of the Lonza, where assuredly they spend the happiest of holidays.

At the hotel we had two meatless days, as is customary in Switzerland, but the manager always provided a palatable substitute.

I was much impressed by the Walliser Stube already mentioned, which I am sure conforms to the excellent principles and ideas of the "Heimatschutz" movement, with the London branch of which I had been connected in the years before the war; the walls and all the furniture are made of the local wood of the Arve.

One night we had the somewhat frightening experience of earthquake shocks, the Lötschental being

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in the region which has had many shocks lately; in our case there was no damage and no general alarm.

One other thumbnail sketch should be mentioned: the use of electric light in the hotel and outside it is on a scale extravagant for our ideas in England, explained, of course, by the cheapness of production.

Upon our return to Zurich we visited old friends and we cannot praise sufficiently their hospitality, whether we had given them notice or not.

We also inspected the Zoo with a feature new to us, namely a board at the entrance telling visitors of any new arrivals of animals.

We returned to Croydon by plane and were seen off by two nieces at Dübendorf who waved a goodbye because we were locked in the Customs and could not secure the good things intended for us, nor could we reward their good intentions by a fond embrace.

Like all this year's visitors we found Switzerland happy and prosperous and I hope to be spared for another such scamper next year!

J.J.E.

NEW APPOINTMENT AT THE SWISS LEGATION.

We have much pleasure in announcing that the Federal Council has appointed Dr. August Lindt to the post of Press Attaché at the Swiss Legation in London, in succession to Monsieur Eric Kessler, who was, some time ago, transferred to our Legation in Washington.

Dr. Lindt, who hails from Berne, was born in 1905. He studied law at the University of Berne, where he obtained his degree as doctor-of-law.

From 1929-1932 he resided in Paris, Berlin and London where he occupied himself with banking and journalism; after 1932 he devoted himself entirely to journalism. For a considerable time he stayed in the Far East, in Palestine, Liberia, Africa and in the Balkan States. After a journey to Finland in 1940 he was attached to the News Service of the section "Heer and Haus" of the Swiss Army Command.

Subsequent to a mission to London in 1945, on behalf of the Federal Political Department in Berne, he was appointed Delegate of the International Red Cross Committee in Berlin.

Dr. Lindt, who is no stranger to the Swiss Colony in London, is shortly assuming his new post, and we wish him the best of success in his new and responsible appointment.

Basler Nachrichten

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SWISS HOLIDAYS UNDER THE PRO JUVENTUTE SCHEME.

As readers of the "Swiss Observer" are aware from previous references in this paper, a party of some 35 children of Swiss parents travelled from England and Scotland to Bâle last July, returning after a happy stay of eight weeks in the land, of which they had heard and read so much, but which they had never seen before.

Thanks to a most generous offer on behalf of the Swissair, the journey there and back was made by plane, a second party leaving each time exactly a week after the first. All the administrative work was undertaken and carried out, with customary efficiency, by Mr. Theo Ritter, Secretary of the Swiss Benevolent Society, actively supported in Consular matters by Monsieur R. Mordasini, Chancellor of the Swiss Legation, whilst Dr. C. Carey kindly attended to the medical examinations and requirements. This excellent team work resulted in a smooth and speedy working of all our plans whilst, on arrival in Switzerland, the care of the party was taken over by the Pro Juventute organisation. They also kept a watching brief over the children during their stay in Switzerland and attended to all the preparations for the return journey.

It was my pleasure and privilege to see the children off at Croydon, where they embarked very self-possessed and in high spirits and again to meet them at Airways House on their return, looking well and happy after their blissful holiday in the land of their fathers.

The Editor of the "Swiss Observer" suggested to me some time ago that some of the children might like to record some of their impressions and experiences. Here now is a first batch of these youthful essays, which all speak for themselves.

For my part, however, I should like to be allowed to express my sincere and grateful thanks once again, not only to the Pro Juventute organisation and the Swissair, but especially to the three members of the Commission already named, as well as to all the other members likewise, who so kindly supported me in making this novel experiment a real success.

WILLY DEUTSCH,

Chairman.

—oOo—

Holiday in Switzerland.

Yes, it was really a very nice holiday, such a holiday as many other Swiss children of London should have so that they too may see what beauties our little Switzerland possesses and how kind its inhabitants, our fellow countrymen, are.

Switzerland has, no doubt, also suffered from the war, but seemingly in another way than we in England. Swiss people have a specific gift of receiving

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