

Schoolgirls abroad

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Objekttyp: **Article**

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

Band (Jahr): **- (1950)**

Heft 1135

PDF erstellt am: **13.09.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-689898>

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SCHOOLGIRLS ABROAD.

(The following article has appeared in a Sheffield paper.)

On Wednesday, 5th April, 1950, a party of us excitedly set off from Whitby Road County Girls' School to London *en route* for our first holiday in Switzerland. Our journey to Wilderswil, in the Bernese Oberland, was taken via Dover-Ostende through Belgium, Luxembourg and France.

Each day was planned so well that we experienced many phases of Swiss life and all the variety of scenery to be seen in the Bernese Oberland. The weather for the greater part of our stay was cloudless and hot, and as we unpacked in our bedrooms imagine our delight to find a view from our windows of the glorious Jungfrau gleaming in the brilliant sunshine, instead of the customary chimneys of our City of Steel.

Before the weather might change, it was decided to make the journey up to Jungfrauoch, which is considered one of the most thrilling experiences in Europe. This it proved to be for us when we went the following day. Winter Sports were at their height as we travelled up via Wengen to Kleine Scheidegg, where we changed into the Jungfrauoch train. On our journey through the $5\frac{1}{2}$ mile tunnel, which climbs steeply to a height of 11,340 feet, the train stopped three times to allow passengers to view the marvellous expanse of the Alps, through the plate glass windows set in the mountain side. At Jungfrauoch we visited the Ice Palace and then as we climbed through the snow to the edge of the plateau we were glad that we had taken the advice of our hostess at the hotel, to wear sun glasses and cream our faces. The return journey was made via Grindelwald which we visited at a later date in order to have a nearer view of the famous upper and lower glaciers. On the second visit to Grindelwald, nature supplied us with an unexpected thrill. A roll as of thunder echoed through the mountains. The Swiss appeared at their chalet doors attracting our attention to the view in the distance, of an avalanche, reminding us, as did the multi-coloured crocuses and the vivid blue gentians on the lower slopes, that Spring had come to Switzerland despite the fact that the higher slopes were dotted with the gaily coloured figures of the skiers.

Though some of us were rather nervous of a sug-

gested lake trip to Brienz, we learned how different a channel crossing and a lake trip can be. As our lake steamer crossed from village to village, we marvelled at the pure jade colour of Lake Brienz and the immensity of the surrounding mountains with their many waterfalls. (Little did we realise the awesome power of these falls until we paid a special visit, a few days later, to the Trummelbach Falls at Lauterbrunnen.) We wandered leisurely through the quaint streets of Brienz and gazed into the wood-carvers' shop windows, almost disappointed that it was Sunday, and we must postpone buying gifts to take home.

Our visit to Mürren proved such a happy occasion, that, even on our return in the mountain train, we asked if we could repeat the visit the following day. But alas! the holiday was too short to permit this. On leaving the funicular, which had taken us up from Lauterbrunnen to a height of 8,412 feet, we transferred to a tiny train that seemed to skirt the very edge of the plateau. Long shall we remember our lunch with a party of English skiers who joked with us of their mishaps and demonstrated the art of skiing until we too longed to be climbing up the mountain side on the ski-lift. Snow fell as we watched their ascent but even so we were reluctant to leave this fascinating mountain village.

By the end of the week we had grown accustomed to the value and use of Swiss money, so that it was with confidence that we accepted our teachers' offer to have a free afternoon in Thun for the purpose of shopping. Everywhere we found great kindness and generosity. Sympathy for our shortage of francs was shown in the practical form. As soon as we were recognised as English girls, gifts were frequently reduced in price. Similar kindness was shown to us when we shopped in Interlaken.

We enjoyed, as all English visitors must, the delicious food and the small luxuries to be bought with our pocket money but the most vivid memories that we have brought back with us are of the grandeur and beauty of this country and never shall we forget the kindness and interest of the Swiss people who did everything in their power to add to the comfort and happiness of this, our first holiday abroad.

(Miss J. SAISON.)

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