

In Switzerland with a Car [Continuation]

Autor(en): **Ernst, H. O.**

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IN SWITZERLAND WITH A CAR.

By H. O. Ernst.

(Continuation.)

The number of private cars entering Switzerland is increasing from year to year. This is hardly surprising. Everywhere, on main and secondary roads, in the plains and in the mountains, there is a great variety of interest and scenery. Roads are generally very good, adequately signposted, and traffic is well organised. Gradients are easy, even on Mountain Passes, where the Swiss Automobile Club (A.C.S.) in co-operation with the Swiss Touring Club (T.C.S.) maintain S.O.S. emergency telephone booths in case of a breakdown. Petrol stations and Garages are never far distant. Repair charges and the cost of "Spares" are inclined to be rather higher than in Great Britain, apart from the adverse rate of exchange. Most motor car manufacturers supply owners going abroad with a collection of essential parts. It is certainly a good thing to take advantage of this service, if only for one's peace of mind.

The service of the A.A. and R.A.C. to its members going abroad includes a provision of maps and detailed routes. Nevertheless, it is perhaps useful and interesting to describe a journey by car across the Country from North to South and from East to West.

1. *Bâle - Zurich - Zug - Brunnen - Goeschenen - Gotthard Pass - Airolo - Biasca - Bellinzona - Lugano - Chiasso.*

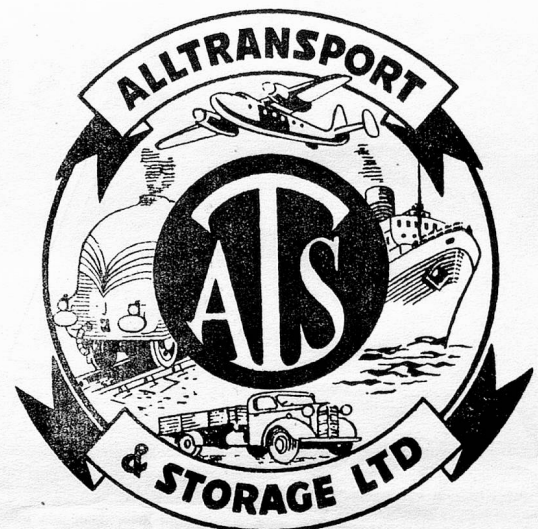
Bâle is the main entrance gate from the north of Europe. It is situated on the river Rhine approximately where it leaves Switzerland. The town has long been one of the centres of European culture. A visit to its very fine Cathedral is well worth while. There is a very fine Arts Museum and a mediaeval Town Hall. A wide main road with easy gradients leads via the two well known Spas Rheinfelden and Baden to Zurich, the largest Swiss town (400,000 inhabitants).

Zurich is more of a commercial and banking centre than a Holiday Resort. However, a stay there, on the lake of the same name, is very pleasant and offers all the amenities of a big city. A visit to the "Landesmuseum", which is very near to the main Station, is recommended. From Zurich a good motor road brings us to Zug, situated on the lake of the same name. Along its shores and past Rigi mountain, we reach the southernmost part of Lake Lucerne and Brunnen. From here a good road gradually follows the river Reuss and at Goeschenen we reach the beginning of the Gotthard Pass. This is open to traffic in summer only, from about mid June to mid October. However, during the period when the Pass is blocked by snow, or at any other time, cars can be transported by rail through the tunnel from Goeschenen to Airolo. The road after passing through the Schoellenen gorge reaches Andermatt, a Holiday Resort and garrison for the Swiss Alpine Troops. From there, after a fairly long climb, we find ourselves at the highest point of the Pass which forms the watershed between the North Sea and the Adriatic. The descent from the Kulm is fairly steep, but the road is good and by no means difficult. Gradients are kept easy by means of numerous switchbacks. At Airolo we reach the young river Ticino and follow its course through a narrow but gradually broadening defile to Biasca and

Bellinzona, the Capital of the Ticino. We are now south of the Alps, where the milder climate produces crops like tobacco, maize and, above all, grapes and sweet chestnuts. Bellinzona is the capital of the County overlooked by three mediaeval castles. From here the road divides, one branch leads to Locarno and the shores of Lake Maggiore. We are, however, following the main traffic artery to Italy which climbs the Monte Ceneri and brings us to Lugano, the well known holiday centre. After crossing the lake by the road and rail bridge at Melide, through the green and fertile Mendrisiotto, we come to Chiasso, the frontier between Switzerland and Italy.

2. *Martinsbruck - Engadin - St. Moritz - Julier Pass - Chur - Zurich - Berne - Lausanne - Geneva.*

Upon entering Switzerland from Austria at Martinsbruck, we soon reach the first large Swiss village of Scuol (Schuls) and the nearby Spas of Tarasp-Vulpera. Zernez, a short run beyond is the junction for the Swiss National Park and the Ofen Pass. Following the river Inn, we come to St. Moritz, known the world over as a Summer and Winter resort. Beyond, at Silvaplana, a right fork leads over the Julier Pass, which is kept open all the year round, to Lenzerheide and the ancient town of Chur, the capital of the Grisons. Thence, via Landquart-Sargans, along the shores of Lakes Walen and Zurich to the town of Zurich. From these an excellent road brings us through hilly farming country to Switzerland's capital, Berne. This city, seat of the Federal Government, offers so many attractions of various kinds that a stay, even if short, is well worth while. It is rich in architectural gems. The magnificent



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Minster is a perfect example of the late Gothic style. The Town-Hall is 500 years old and a dignified memorial to the City's great past. The famous clock-tower dates from 1530 and is a never failing attraction to visitors, especially at the change of the hour when the clock sets into motion a peal of bells and a parade of colourful figures. The fountains of Berne are famous. They are numerous and perhaps the finest examples of their kind in Europe of the Renaissance style. Love of flowers is almost a passion with the Bernese. Fountains, public buildings and many of the old patrician houses are made gay with blooms throughout the flowering season. A drive, or even better a stroll through the many arcaded streets,

especially on market days (Tuesdays and Saturdays) is a treat which no visitor should miss. Berne is also the only town which has kept, since 1441, live specimens of its heraldic animal in a pit. You cannot go far in town without seeing a bear rampant either on top of a fountain, on numerous flags and even on icing sugar on the local tea dainties. The river Aar, partly circles the city and many beautiful old and new bridges connect the town with its suburbs. From many points, especially from the terrace of the Houses of Parliament, there is a wonderful view of the Alps. Westwards, between Berne and Lake Geneva, there are a number of excellent motor roads via Neuchâtel-Yverdon or Fribourg-Bulle and others. The gradients are easy but the Summer motorist who has time, and wishes to see some of the best scenery, should travel south-east from Berne to Spiez and make his way to the Rhone Valley over one of the Passes (Col des Mosses or Col du Pillon). Turning westwards from Aigle, we then reach Lake Geneva via Montreux, one of the best known holiday resorts. The fast road from there to Geneva via Lausanne, beautifully situated above the blue waters of the Lake of Geneva, follows the shore most of the time and offers wonderful views of the Savoy Alps. We now reach Geneva, the entrance door to France and probably the most cosmopolitan city in Switzerland. Here are the European Headquarters of UNO and other international organisations. The town is beautifully situated, gay and lively with many fine shops. Geneva is a great favourite with the visitors.

These two examples cover, of course, only an in-

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infinitesimal part of touring facilities in Switzerland. Many a motorist will prefer to choose a centre and make excursions from there. For this purpose Bâle, Zurich, St. Gall, Lucerne, Interlaken, Lugano, Locarno, Berne, Montreux, Lausanne and Geneva are excellent. In spring, summer and autumn roads in the plains and the pre-alpine regions are open. In the winter it is advisable to carry snow chains. Some of the mountain roads and Passes are snow or ice bound and impassable for periods varying with the altitude and the weather. The approximate opening and closing dates of the main Passes are as follows:

SWISS ALPINE PASSES.

Route	Name of Pass	Normally open
Albula	Tiefencastel-Ponte	June/October
Bernina	Pontresina-Poschiavo	June/October
Brünig	Meiringen-Sachselt	Whole Year *
Flüela	Davos/Dorf-Susch	end-May/October
Forclaz	Martigny-Chamonix	May/October
Furka	Gletsch-Hospental	mid-June/mid-October
Grand St. Bernard	Martigny-Aosta	mid-June/mid-Oct. ø
Grimmel	Meiringen-Gletsch	mid-June/mid-October
Jaun	Bulle-Reidenbach	May/mid-October
Julier	Tiefencastel-Silvaplana	Whole Year *
Klausen	Altdorf-Linthal	June/mid-October
Lukmanier	Disentis-Biasca	June/end-October
Maloja	Silvaplana-Chiavenna	Whole Year *
Marchairuz	Le Brassus-Rolle	end-April/October
Monte Ceneri	Bellinzona-Lugano	Whole Year x
Morgins	Monthey-Abondance	mid-May/end-October
Mosses	Aigle-Château-d'Oex	Whole Year *
Oberalp	Disentis-Andermatt	June/mid-October
Ofen	Zernez-Santa Maria	Whole Year *
Pillon	Aigle-Gsteig	mid-May/mid-October
St. Bernhardin (San Bernardino)	Hinterrhein-Mesocco	June/mid-October
St. Gotthard	Andermatt-Airolo	June/mid-October
Simplon	Brig-Domodossola	mid-May/mid-October
Splügen	Splügen/Dorf-Chiavenna	June/mid-October
Susten	Meiringen-Wassen	mid-June/October
Umbrail	Santa Maria-Bormio	mid-June/mid-October

* Chains required in winter.

x Chains rarely required in winter.

ø One-way traffic only during certain hours between Cantine-de-Proz and Grand St. Bernard Hospice and vice-versa.

(to be continued)

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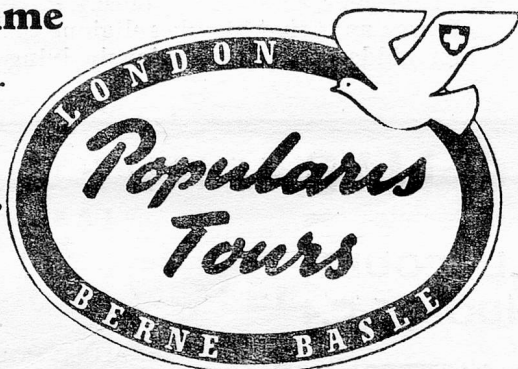
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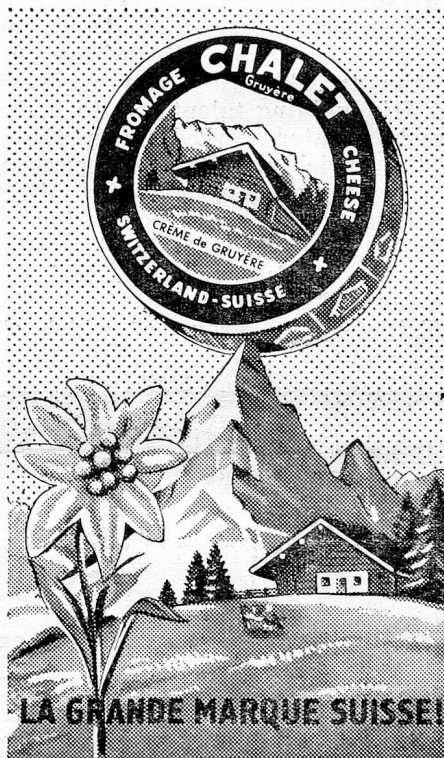
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