

# News from Switzerland

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Wanderwege". In the age of motorisation with its alarming inundation of remote districts by cars, the appreciation of country walks has risen considerably. Man has improved technical amenities and forgets more and more that he himself is not such a wonderful machine, but a human being who has to guard against "over-technicalisation".

A silver jubilee of a similar nature is that of the "Walliser Trachtenvereinigung", whose aims are the preservation of national costumes and folklore. It held its celebration early in May at St. Maurice, the old Roman Agaunum.

25 years ago Greifensee became the seat of the Swiss reformed "Diakonenhaus", the only one of its kind in Switzerland, where deacons (appointed ministers of charity) are trained. The "Diakonenhaus" also houses epileptic patients.

The last silver jubilee tells of a peace agreement in the machine and metal industry which was signed on 19th July 1925 between employers and staff of these industries and which has been successfully kept.

2,130 marksmen took part in the traditional "Murten-schiessen", which celebrated three decades of its existence at Morat.

Another 30 years anniversary was celebrated by the Federation of Anglo-Swiss Clubs at their annual congress in Bienne.

Now we come to a number of golden jubilees. Two boy scouts' associations, those of the Cantons Vaud and Neuchâtel, can look back on 50 years.

Two railways celebrate their golden anniversary this summer. The last stretch of the spectacular Jungfrau-bahn from the Eismeer to the Jungfraujoch, over two miles above sea level and the highest station in Europe, was opened on 1st August 1912, one hundred years after the first ascent of the Jungfrau by Rudolf and Hieronymus Meyer from Aarau. The engineer and builder of the railway, Adolf Guyer-Zeller, always intended it to go to the top of the Jungfrau peak, and for some time the directors of the railway have been studying the possibility of completing the project.

Another railway, of much lesser repute, is the Ligerz-Tessenbergbahn on the lake of Bienne, which has existed for 50 years, too. Its finances are in a sad state, but it is hoped to improve them by intensive tourist propaganda.

Impressive golden jubilee celebrations took place at the Vindonissa Museum at Brugg (AG). This museum shows the life of the Roman legionaries who kept a permanent camp at Vindonissa.

Finally, two anniversaries in the world of business and transport. The "Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Kapitalanlagen" (Swiss Association for Capital Investments) in Zurich looks back on 50 years of successful activities, and in Basle the firm of Natural-Basel, the general freight agency in Switzerland of the Holland-America Line, celebrated its golden jubilee, in which many prominent personalities took part.

An interesting organisation in Zurich marks 60 years of existence. It is the "Adressen- und Werbezentrale", until 1950 the "Schreibstube für Stellenlose." When it was founded in 1902 there were many unemployed, and as there was at that time no unemployment insurance the

unfortunate men depended on public and private welfare assistance. To alleviate this humiliation this organisation was started and has since given work to many thousands of unemployed clerical staff. Today when full employment is general the "AWZ" with its branches in other Swiss towns employs mostly handicapped men and women. In 1961 well over 3,000 people were employed, more than three-quarters of them over the age of 40. The work consists mainly of writing addresses for firms, etc., and over 23 million of these were written in 1961.

An anniversary of a very different nature was observed in Zug on 5th July. 75 years ago part of the town sank into the lake. In the catastrophe of 1887 eleven people lost their lives and the material damage was considerable.

The last jubilee of 75 years is that of the Swiss Butchers' Association in Zurich.

Now we come to the centuries. On 5th June 1862 the Wiesentalbahn was inaugurated in Basle, the railway which leads from Basle to Loerrach and Schopfheim (Germany).

Another centenary is that of the Klingental ferry. The old boat which has carried thousands of passengers safely across the turbulent waters of the Rhine has now been replaced by a new one donated by the Town Authorities of Basle.

Also in Basle, the well-known engineering firm of Gruner, which is still a family business, can look back on successful achievements covering 100 years.

The Basle Children's Hospital, too, has a century behind it, and the orphanage of Courtelary in the valley of St. Imier has marked its centenary anniversary by extensive renovations.

The organisation of university students in Berne, "Concordia", arranged elaborate festivities to celebrate its centenary, including a picturesque procession through the town.

Perhaps the most popular centenary is that of the "Eidgenössischer Musikverein", the head organisation of the brass bands of Switzerland with its 56,000 members. The celebrations took place in Berne at the end of June and at the height of the short heat-wave, which made it anything but pleasant for many of the musicians in historic uniforms. Concerts were given in and out of doors and the whole town was resplendent in flags and flowers.

We have recently celebrated the bicentenary of the Swiss Church in London. Therefore it is only natural that the bicentenaries reported from Switzerland have our special interest. The Muenstertal, the lovely Grisons valley, used to belong to the Bishops of Chur, but was sold to Karl VI of Habsburg in 1728. This caused much bitterness among the inhabitants and 20 years later Austria agreed to sell it back to the Grisons at an exorbitant price. This gave the valley its ultimate freedom in 1762, and the anniversary of this historic event was celebrated early in July.

Another centenary was celebrated by the "Feuille d'Avis de Lausanne", the daily paper with the largest circulation in the French-speaking part of Switzerland.

We end this handsome list of jubilees in Switzerland with the report of a millenium; the church of Hochdorf (Lucerne) was founded 1,000 years ago. This event was celebrated by a special pontifical mass at which Bishop Franziskus von Spreng officiated.

Mariann.

(Based on news items mostly supplied by A.T.S.)