

News from the colony

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

SULZER BUILDS TEST INSTALLATION FOR THE "CONCORDE"

Sulzer Brothers are in the course of completing a large test installation for the Concorde at Farnborough. The technical description of this installation is published in the current *Sulzer Revue*.

Building a supersonic airliner evidently presents more difficulties than building a conventional airliner. Supersonic flights bring with them so many new problems not found in subsonic flight that one begins to understand why the Concorde is costing so much just to develop. One problem encountered in supersonic flight is that of heating. When the Concorde cruises at over twice the speed of sound at 60,000 feet, frictional heating imposes a steady temperature of 100°C on the surface of the fuselage. As the plane descends and loses speed for landing, this temperature rapidly drops to -20°. But there is necessarily a sharp difference in temperature between the outer shell and the interior structure of the aircraft. The temperature of the inside of the machine lags behind the temperature on the outside and this leads inevitably to structural stresses. The heated parts of the structure will expand faster than those at a lower temperature and this will result in stresses which, if they are repeated too frequently, may lead to the *metal fatigue* which caused the Comet crashes of the 1950s.

The only convenient way to forestall such disasters is to test a real Concorde for hundreds or thousands of hours of simulated flight and examine the stresses caused by this treatment by means of stress gauges or visual inspection of the aircraft structure. It was, however, not necessary to build a wind tunnel to study the behaviour of the Concorde under thermal stress. This would have cost far too much. Instead, it was decided to wrap the Concorde in a vast metallic casing (rather like a hand in a glove) and circulate air of varying temperature within it. The mechanical stresses on the wings encountered in flight were to be simulated by a battery of hydraulic jacks. However simple the problem may appear in principle, it required the know-how of some 60 Sulzer engineers and technicians, half of whom came from headquarters in Switzerland, and two years of work to bring the test bed to completion.

Sulzer's were the design leaders, but most of the complicated equipment of the installation had, by contract, to be ordered from British firms. A Swiss Sulzer employee who works in the accounting department at Farnborough confided to me that working with British suppliers and with British workmen was a hard strain on the Swiss Sulzer specialists responsible for getting

the job done. Many of the firms supplying the pumps, heat exchangers, liquefier plants and other equipment necessary for the project were unable to honour delivery deadlines. According to this Sulzer employee, some firms made extravagant promises of delivery which were obviously impossible to keep. But the contractors for the test installation received no compensation for these delays in delivery because the defaulting firms were protected by British law. The law lays down that a supplier who is late is not liable for damages as long as his delay doesn't seriously affect the progress of the work of his customer. This law and its terms of reference were a sufficient loophole to allow any supplier to get away with his delay. Another sore point at the Farnborough works was the difficulty in getting the builders to perform their normal daily stint. Work was perpetually being slowed down by absenteeism. If a team had been asked to work on a Saturday, it was almost certain that they would be absent from work on the whole of the following Monday. This meant that it was impossible to establish a production schedule and development plans which were valid for more than a few days. The output of the British staff was just too unpredictable and it appeared that the aggravated Sulzer men from Winterthur, used to the co-operation and thoroughness of the Swiss working man, were faced with a typical case of "restriction of output". The result was a latent restlessness among the Sulzer team at Farnborough. This, according to my Swiss friend, made it one of his less satisfying jobs with Sulzer's.

(PMB)

"THE SWISS OBSERVER" FROM AUGUST TO DECEMBER 1940

The most important new development in the life of the Colony at a time when the war was nearing its "first anniversary" was the instalment of the Relief Centre in Fitzroy Square for the benefit of Swiss residents and nationals bombed out of their homes. It was opened for view to the Swiss Colony on August 8th and August 10th and by that time had already harboured 15 compatriots in distress. Its realisation had been made possible by a generous and spontaneous response from the Colony to an appeal by the Relief Centre Committee, chaired by Mr. Louis Chapuis, for money, bedding and furnishings. "The Swiss Observer" of August 24th contained a letter of thanks to the many donors by the Swiss who had benefitted from the Relief Centre.

The life of the London societies continued unhampered by the war. The Nouvelle Société Helvétique, the City Swiss Club and the Swiss Mercantile Society held their monthly gatherings.

The August meeting of the N.S.H. heard exposés by Mr. G. Keller and Mr. Girardet, first counsellor of legation, on the political situation. The Swiss Mercantile Society listened to the adventures of a compatriot who had been stranded in Belgium and to the North African experiences of two other guests who had just been liberated from the French Foreign Legion.

A party of 250 compatriots boarded the train at Euston on Friday evening, August 17th. They reached a port on the West Coast the following Sunday morning and boarded two steamers belonging to the Swiss Shipping Agency. This convoy organised by the Legation sailed under the Panama flag with the name "Switzerland" prominently painted on the sides and illuminated at night towards Bilbao, whence its weary travellers trekked by train to Geneva via Cerberes and the Free Zone.

With a month's delay due to the difficult postal communications with the homeland, the SO published General Guisan's stern and unflinching 1st August address to the nation.

The Consistory of the Swiss Church in Endell Street published a vibrant appeal to the SO's readers, inviting them to come to church on the National Day of Prayer and Repentance and give thanks to God for the fortunate position of the homeland.

An important piece of news from Switzerland was that of deceased Federal Councillor Obrecht's succession by Dr. Stampfli. The first October issue contained a complete reproduction in French of an illuminating article on the political unrest within Switzerland by the journalist Pierre Béguin.

The Editor, Alfred Stauffer, liked to reproduce the many letters which were sent to him by readers. Many of the latter failed to receive their SO because of the shortcomings of the wartime GPO, and an open correspondence was maintained in the pages of the SO

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0550 h SR 303 Geneva-Zurich
0625 h SR 420 Geneva-Zurich
0635 h SR 600 Basel-Zurich
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0740 h SR 740 Zurich-Basel
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0745 h SR 800 Zurich-London
0750 h SR 430 Zurich-Vienna
0750 h SR 600 Zurich-Rome
0755 h SR 510 Zurich-Dusseldorf
0755 h SR 790 Zurich-Amsterdam
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0850 h SR 841 Manchester-
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1000 h SR 571 Stuttgart-Zurich
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1010 h SR 771 Brussels-Zurich
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1015 h SR 841 Rotterdam-Zurich
1015 h SR 960 Zurich-Basel
1020 h SR 983 Berne-Zurich
1025 h SR 531 Frankfurt-Zurich
1030 h SR 722 Geneva-Paris
1040 h SR 130 Zurich-Geneva
1040 h SR 611 Rome-Geneva
1050 h SR 202 São Paulo-
 Buenos Aires
1050 h SR 621 Milan-Zurich
1110 h SR 811 London-Geneva
1115 h SR 511 Zurich-Geneva
1125 h SR 421 Oslo-Copenhagen
1140 h SR 235 Malaga-Geneva
1140 h SR 450 Zurich-Zagreb
1145 h SR 432 Zurich-Vienna
1145 h SR 514 Zurich-Dusseldorf
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1345 h SR 719 Paris-Berne
1345 h SR 967 Basel-Zurich
1410 h SR 623 Milan-Zurich
1410 h SR 774 Geneva-Brussels
1415 h SR 338 Geneva-Tel Aviv
1420 h SR 235 Geneva-Zurich
1420 h SR 492 Geneva-Zurich
1430 h SR 792 Zurich-Amsterdam
1450 h SR 806 Zurich-London
1500 h SR 693 Lisbon-Geneva
1500 h SR 725 Paris-Geneva
1505 h SR 130 Lisbon-New York
1505 h SR 375 Athens-Geneva
1505 h SR 706 Zurich-Paris
1510 h SR 451 Belgrade-Zagreb
1510 h SR 624 Zurich-Milan
1520 h SR 403 Copenhagen-Geneva
1520 h SR 523 Dusseldorf-
 Frankfurt
1520 h SR 671 Palma-Zurich
1520 h SR 750 Zurich-Nice
1520 h SR 813 London-Geneva
1525 h SR 433 Zurich-Basel
1525 h SR 605 Rome-Zurich
1535 h SR 466 Zurich-Budapest
1535 h SR 743 Paris-Basel
1540 h SR 492 Zurich-Warsaw
1540 h SR 984 Zurich-Berne
1550 h SR 651 Madrid-Zurich
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*To be continued.**



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on this matter. The war had sharpened the live interest of readers for their paper, as exemplified by a letter signed "Gallus" on August 17th. He wrote: "Dear Mr. Editor. But for the news contained in the last number of the SO, I am afraid that very few of us would have had any idea as to how the folks at home spent the 1st August this year. I for one was glad of the reassuring account and am grateful to you". This correspondent ends with a poem called "Rückblick auf den 1. August".

The only death that appears to be reported in those five months was that of Mr. G. E. Cornioley, born in Neuchâtel in 1854, and founder of the London branch office of Henri Picard & Frères, a Chaux-le-Fonds watch undertaking. The death of Lieutenant Rudolf Homberger, a Swiss pilot felled by a German aircraft, was erroneously reported. This was corrected by a letter from Mr. P. Bucher. He wrote that Lieut. Homberger was recovering from serious injuries. He was the son of Mr. Ernst Homberger, former Chairman of Britannia Iron & Steel Works in Bedford and President of George Fischer. The obituary column of the SO was less furnished in 1940 than it unfortunately is today.

RADIO LONDON AND ITS SWISS EQUIPMENT

Mr. George Simmons, a young mustachioed British radio reporter invited me out of the blue for an interview at Radio London. Having worked for three years for the Swiss Short Wave Service in Berne, he had learned of the existence of our paper and thought it worth while to interview its Editor. One interview was to be sent to Berne, for the benefit of the stray English speaking listeners of the Swiss Short Wave Service across the world, and another for the London audience of this relatively new local radio station which shares time with Radio One on UHF, Radio London.

Our interview was warmed up by a conversation over a cup of tea on "Journalism in Switzerland". Mr. Simmons claimed that there was too little "news" in Switzerland and that this makes his job correspondingly less inspiring. He also complained of his former salary, which was of only two thousand francs a month, compared with the £3,500 which he now gets as a producer on Radio London.

We then had a guided tour of the station and stopped in the editing room, the nerve centre of the place in which all the seamy stories from London were collected, processed and edited for broadcasting. Half a dozen journalists and writers were nonchalantly relaxing among heaps of paper and obviously enjoying themselves. We went up a flight of plush stairs to the studio and watched a pretty speaker smile to herself as she read her text behind sound-insulating glass panels. A short look round the bristling electronics of the room was enough to dis-

cover a *Kudelski* tape recorder, made in Cheseaux, Vaud, and the best tape recorder on the market. The turntable used in Radio London music broadcasts is a *Thorens* apparatus, the cart-ridge of which is made by *Lenco*. In a neighbouring studio where the recording apparatus is a little more bulky, the machines were from *Studer*. I'm sure that with a little more perseverance I should have discovered more Swiss-made equipment, such as *Revox* recorders.

The interview was performed in a cosy living room isolated from the recording technician by the usual double glass panel. The listeners on the Swiss Short Wave Service will hear me speak (when, I have no idea) on the 50 years of glorious history of "The Swiss Observer". Londoners, if they tune in to their local radio, should hear me one day philosophise and stutter on the "Press of the foreign communities in Great Britain". I pray that the Poles or Hungarians of London whom I mentioned as relevant examples, will not seek to find me and eliminate me!

(PMB)

CITY SWISS CLUB CHRISTMAS DINNER

Mr. Alfred Kuhn spoke for many City Swiss Club members when he said that he had never seen so many members present at any function in his two years of presidency. More were present even than at the Annual Dinner and Ball, whose attendance was made up by a majority of guests. The Dinner lasted from 7 p.m. until well past 9 p.m. and the atmosphere in the Orchid Suite of the Dorchester Hotel was particularly lively throughout these two hours. The City Swiss Club has certainly as much zest as any of the other Swiss institutions in London.

LE CERCLE GENEVOIS

The *Escalade* was celebrated by a small party of Genevese and friends of Geneva in the Ladies Annexe of the Law Society—and a particularly suitable venue it turned out to be. We were 21, a smaller attendance than usual, but this didn't impair the success of the evening. For two new Anglo-Swiss couples, one of which has resided in England for fifteen years, this was the first Swiss function in this country. These new friends had heard of the "Cercle Genevois" through the consular bulletins. The chocolate "marmite" had been brought especially from Geneva by a faithful member. It had an exciting story behind it since it was not easy to transport such an unusual object by plane in our hijack-ridden days. The attempts by Madame Curchod to break it with a wooden spoon having failed, it became incumbent upon your Editor to smash it to smithereens with one well calculated blow. The marzipan fruits and chocolate splinters spattered about the room. Monsieur and Madame René Keller, who are citizens of Coligny, were un-

fortunately not able to come, but they were represented by Mr. Bruggman, Commercial Consoller at the Embassy, and Mrs. Bruggman.

(PMB)

ANGLO-SWISS SOCIETY

The guest speaker at the Anglo-Swiss Society's winter dinner was Professor L. W. Forster from Cambridge. Professor Forster, who had read English at the University of Basle for a number of years, had come to speak to us on "Some Swiss Writers and their Attitudes".

The kernel of his thesis was that Switzerland, and in particular her creators, had adopted an attitude of *detachment* in order to maintain their cultural identity. Detachment seemed to have been the archetype of the Swiss creative mind in Professor Forster's view. The history of Swiss letters was above all conditioned by the overwhelming neighbourhood of the powerful cultures of France, Italy and Germany. Professor Forster's exposé was more descriptive than discursive and had its poetic chapters. In fact, the only Swiss writer, besides Frisch, Durrenmatt and Bixler which he chose to name to illustrate his point was an unknown Swiss emigré who had returned to the homeland after a life spent in Argentina, Eugen Gomringer. This poet was one of the protagonists of *Concrete Poetry*, of which Professor Forster aptly and eloquently read a typical example. It is a poem on "The Swiss" with the minimum of vocabulary and syntax:

*Schwiizer
luege
aaluege
zueluege
nöd rede
sicher sii
nu luege
nüd znäch
nu vu wütem
ruig bliibe
schwiizer sii
schwiizer bliibe
ne luege*

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