

Swiss Holiday Scene

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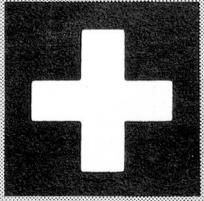
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Swiss Holiday Scene

Compiled by the Swiss National Tourist Office

Market that could bring tears to your eyes . . .

EASILY the best known and most popular of Switzerland's many big autumn markets is Berne's "Zibelemärit" or onion market, always held on the fourth Monday in November.

According to tradition the right to hold the market was granted to the people of the district lying between the lakes of Morat and Neuchâtel in gratitude for the help they gave after the great fire of Berne in 1405.

Up to the present century almost all the people selling their vegetables in the market were from this particular district.

Pride of place in the market, which is held in the square in front of the Federal Palace and in the nearby Bärenplatz, is still taken by onions, which can be seen piled up in great heaps and plaited into garlands and strings.

Apart from the market itself there is a wide choice of amusements. Although to most Bernese it is a normal working day, the event is regarded as a festive occasion by city folk.

When work is over young people stream into the centre for an evening of merrymaking—with a confetti battle in one of the main streets being a top attraction.

A newer tradition is for masked "Zibelegrende" figures to make the rounds of Berne's restaurants and cafes with their satires on current events.



Carving time for turnips

JUST as Britain has its Hallowe'en, so the canton of Zürich has its "Räbenlichter". At the beginning of November it is the custom throughout the canton to hollow out newly-harvested turnips, carve designs on the outside and make lanterns out of them by lighting a candle inside.

This custom goes back many centuries. As the year approached its end, the light was supposed to help ward off the powers of darkness.

Originally the "Räbenlichtli" were carried around singly, but in recent years the custom has broadened and in many districts schoolchildren parade their lanterns through the streets in long, colourful processions.

This happens particularly in the Zürcher Unterland (Bülach, Regensberg and Eglisau) as well as in the suburbs of Winterthur and the city of Zürich itself (Wollishofen, Wipkingen and Wiedikon).

In Richterswil on the Sunday nearest November 11 they hold a mammoth "Räbenkilbi".

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Keeping a date with tradition

SURSEE, in the canton of Lucerne, is the only place in Switzerland where homage is still paid to "Martinigans", or the Martinmas Goose. It always happens on November 11.

Martinmas – the day on which interest was due – was once a very important date and called for ceremonial. In olden days the goose was looked on as a contribution in kind, and it is probable that in prehistoric times it was also a sacrificial offering.

At three o'clock in the afternoon the "Gansabhaut" is staged in front of the town hall in Sursee. Participants in this game are blindfolded and with a single sword stroke try to bring down a dead goose suspended on a wire.



Remembering Morgarten

NOVEMBER 15 sees the solemn commemoration of the Battle of Morgarten where, in the year 1315, the Swiss Confederates defeated the Austrian army.

A special church service is held in Sattel, in the canton of Schwyz, following which civic leaders and clergy, together with groups in historic costume, make their way in procession to the Morgarten pass that leads to the lake of Ägeri.

They gather at the Battle Chapel, where speeches recall the valiant deeds of the victorious Swiss. At the same time the annual Morgarten shooting contest is held alongside the memorial to the battle, above the lake of Ägeri.

Events of the month

Nov 1	Chur	Cycleball: world championships return leg	Nov 11	Sursee	«Cutting down the goose», historic popular custom
Nov 1/2	Zürich	Stamp collectors' fair	Nov 13-23	Biel	VINIFERA, wine exhibition on ships
Nov 1-23	Neuchâtel	Musée des beaux-arts: Jean-Paul Gorra, silk painting	Nov 13-23	Lausanne	Palais de Beaulieu: 11th antique fair
Nov 2	Dielsdorf	Swiss steeplechase trophy/ grand steeplechase	Nov 15-23	Payerne	Comptoir
Nov 4-9	Lausanne	Palais de Beaulieu: Holiday on Ice	Nov 21-30	Winterthur	49th Winterthur fair
Nov 5-9	Lausanne	Palais de Beaulieu: 3rd International automobile sport show	Nov 24	Berne	«Zibelemärit», onion market
Nov 7-Jan, beginning	St.Gall	Waaghaus: «The Culture of the Indians»	Nov 27-Dec 1	Basel	Muba: 9th Swiss furniture trade fair
Nov 7-16	Interlaken	IGA, Interlaken trade exhibition	Nov 27/28	Zürich	Jubilee celebrations: 125th anniversary of Federal Institute of Technology (FIT)
			Nov 28-Dec 7	Geneva	8th Secondhand and antiques fair. – International inventions and new techniques fair
			Nov 29-Dec 21	Neuchâtel	Musée des beaux-arts: Mario de Francesco, paintings

Post bus way to see the scenery

THE Swiss Post Office is widely recognised to be one of the most efficient in the world. It operates a wide range of highly-specialised yet smooth-running services – so smooth-running in fact that people in Switzerland tend to take them almost for granted.

The recent issue of a series of four new postage stamps depicting aspects of the Swiss Post Office gave Colin Farmer of Swiss Radio International the opportunity of talking about the various highly-specialised services, such as the network of post-buses.

Anyone who has visited Switzerland can hardly have failed to notice the bright yellow buses operating throughout the country. The post buses have been part of the Swiss scene since the beginning of this century, when they began to replace mail coaches drawn by horses.

Today there are 1,300 post-buses operating over a nationwide network of some 5,000 miles. They travel nearly 30 million miles a year and carry nearly 60 million passengers – more than a million people every week.

The post bus service has contributed greatly to the expansion of Swiss tourism, opening up many attractive resorts in the more remote alpine and country areas.

Excursions by post bus are an increasingly popular way of seeing some of Switzerland's finest scenery, and they provide the highlight of many a holiday in this country.

Turning to the telephone service, Colin Farmer recalled it was a private company which put into operation the first local telephone network in Switzerland – 100 years ago this year.

By 1959 Switzerland had the



first fully automatic network in the world, and since 1964 subscriber-dialling has been made available to an increasing number of European and overseas countries. Telephone growth in Switzerland has exceeded all expectations.

Another specialised service operated by the Swiss Post Office is the Giro. This was introduced in 1906 with a view to simplifying and speeding up payment transactions. Now the Giro fulfills a very important function within the economic system of Switzerland.

This year the Swiss Postage Stamp Printing Office, which until 1930 was part of the Swiss Federal Mint, celebrates its 50th anniversary as a separate entity. Despite the increasing compe-

tion from franking machines, the Swiss Post Office still produces more than 500 million stamps a year.

Lugano offers winter package

"WINTER in Lugano" is a weekly package which is available until March 28, 1981, and includes accommodation, a welcome drink, one admission to an indoor swimming pool as well as admission to various night clubs, unlimited journeys on Lake Lugano, the funicular to Monte Brè, buses to Tesserete and Sonvico, the railway Lugano – Ponte Tresa, and on Saturdays and Sundays the chairlift to Monte Lema.

Prices range from Sfr. 150 for

bed and breakfast and from Sfr. 245 for full board.

Information and bookings: Lugano Tourist Office, Riva Albertolli 5, 6901 Lugano, Switzerland.

New internal air service

CROSSAIR is operating scheduled flights between Lugano and the intercontinental airports of Zürich and Geneva from Mondays to Fridays.

The cost is: Geneva-Lugano Sfr. 180 (Sfr. 360 return); Zürich-Lugano Sfr. 165 (Sfr. 330 return).

Reservations can be made through Swissair.

Skiers go underground

THE former chairlift from Zermatt to Sunnegga, opened in 1947, is no longer able to cope with the flow of skiers, so a new underground funicular has been constructed and will operate this winter. The Metro Sunnegga will carry skiers in a mere three minutes from the centre of Zermatt to the Sunnegga sun terrace. Two cars with a capacity of 100 each can thus transport 2,600 people per hour in each direction, eliminating queuing at the Zermatt terminus.

Britons swell statistics

BRITISH holidaymakers are flocking back to Switzerland in ever-increasing numbers, according to new figures issued by the Federal Office of Statistics.

In the month of August overnight stays by British visitors jumped by a massive 48 per cent compared with August 1979. It was by far the biggest increase on the monthly statistics. The total number of overseas visitors was up by 20 per cent.

During the period January to August Britons accounted for 1,002,000 overnight stays, which was an increase of 30 per cent over the same period last year.

The number of visitors from the USA is also on the increase, but nothing like that from Great Britain.

FURTHER DETAILS

about any of the items reported here can be obtained from Swiss National Tourist Office, Swiss Centre, London W1V 3HG. (Tel: 01-734 1921).



Taking the Simmental calf for a stroll are Swiss Centre restaurants general manager Hans-Jorg Baumann, restaurant manageress Mrs Lydia Nunez, manageress of the Gourmet Corner and Swiss gift shop Elisabeth Ince, and Ambassador Claude Caillat.

Bringing home the message

A GENUINE Swiss Simmental cow and calf brought the West End to a standstill when they arrived in Leicester Square at the start of a two-week cheese promotion at the Swiss Centre restaurants.

The cow, winner of a major award, is pride of a herd of 200 Swiss cows in Somerset. It emigrated to Britain 11 years ago and now moos in perfect English, although it still understands Swiss German, as Ambassador

Claude Caillat found out.

It was the Ambassador who led a colourful procession round the Swiss Centre. Restaurants general manager Hans-Jorg Baumann wore a Nidwalder costume, complete with flat hat. And there was a St Bernard dog pulling a milk cart.

A giant cheese put up for auction and bought by the Army & Navy Stores for £82 was later given to the Ambassador to donate to Swiss churches in London.



The Ambassador and restaurants marketing manager Ted Glasswell make friends with Janor, a St. Bernard loaned by the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association.



Rea Studer, Carole Béguin and Beatrice Ruh help get the cheese tasting under way.