

Travel Observer

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Interlaken – holiday centre for 300 years

LEGEND tells us that huntsmen and fishermen were the earliest inhabitants of the valley of Interlaken. The oldest traces of civilisation, however, date back to Roman times.

In those early days, the whole region between the lakes of Brienz and Thun was known as the Hinterlappen. In 1279 the small township founded on the shores of the Aare was named Unterseen, which, in the German of the period, meant "between the lakes."

The monks of the Augustinian monastery, founded in 1130, called the town by its latin equivalent of "inter lacus" which led to its present name – Interlaken. Ruins of the monastery, which was closed down during the Reformation, may still be seen in the grounds of the castle and of the protestant church.

Following the days of the monastery's supremacy, In-

terlaken became the seat of the Bernese provincial government and thus the capital of the region. Every attempt the Bernese administration made to attract industry to the area failed, but Interlaken became more and more popular as a gateway for the excursions to the mountains and glaciers of the Jungfrau massif.

In 1690, Margrave Frederic Albert of Brandenburg was the first traveller, of whom we have record, to undertake a journey into this alpine world. Tourism as such, however, began only between 1805 and 1808, when the Unspunnen Festivals of the alpine shepherds drew the attention of writers and artists alike to Interlaken.

It was the introduction of steamer services on the Oberland

lakes and the construction of railways and roads, however, which really turned Interlaken into the focus of this unique region.

Although the war years meant a serious setback for Interlaken's tourism, the resort succeeded in overcoming these difficulties and its fame gradually spread the world over.

★ ★ ★

SWITZERLAND has too many travel firms, says Kuoni boss Jack Bolli.

Mr Bolli, chairman and chief executive of Switzerland's biggest travel organisation, says in the company's annual report that the fight on the Swiss market became more intense last year.

One solution, he says, would be for "certain airlines to give up unprofitable – almost ruinous – cheap fare policies".

IN travel agencies up and down the country, salopettes and Yeti boots are replacing bikinis and pina coladas on the brochures. **It's time to think about ski-ing holidays.**

For some holiday-makers, the excitement comes from the pure sensation of racing down a virgin slope completely alone.

For others, it will be the joy of sitting with old friends around a fire at the end of the day.

Ski-ing holidays have become very popular now with many British people, so if you are thinking of visiting your native snows this season don't delay.

You may find that the Brits have beaten you to it!

Your holiday films are quite safe now

SECURITY inspections are an inconvenient but necessary routine at the majority of international airports, where baggage is usually monitored by x-ray equipment.

Many travellers carrying film are wary of the procedure, as these rays can leave traces on light-sensitive materials such as film.

Their films, exposed or unexposed can be damaged.

But, for travellers passing through Zurich and Geneva airports these fears are unfounded.

The intensity of the x-rays used there is so low that films passed through the equipment 50 consecutive times have suffered no damage whatsoever.

This encouraging statistic is the result of a series of tests carried out by the security officials at Zurich Airport along with several film and magnetic tape manufacturers.

A wide range of black-and-

white and colour films of various sensitivities were subjected to the standard x-ray exposure 50 times in a row.

None of them displayed the slightest defect.

The first minute traces of fogging did not occur until the films had been put through the equipment 330 consecutive times.

X-rays have a cumulative effect. The minimal amount of radiation released through exposure to x-ray equipment increases until a threshold is reached or surpassed.

In the case of film, the limit is approximately 1 milliray. When this value is exceeded, the film begins to fog.

The x-ray inspection equip-

ment used at Zurich and Geneva airports is a highly sophisticated state-of-the-art technology.

A piece of baggage is exposed to 0.005 millirays for only 35 millionths of a second, which is 200 times less than the threshold.

As it has been proven beyond all doubt, x-ray inspection of film materials, as well as video and magnetic data processing tapes, pharmaceutical products and food items, is absolutely harmless.

The security officials of both airports insist therefore that all carry-ons undergo this monitoring procedure.

The fact that Zurich and Geneva boast the most up-to-date equipment does not mean that caution should be thrown to

the wind at other airports.

If less sophisticated equipment is used, it is entirely possible that the critical threshold could be reached.

In such cases, special radiation-proof sacs can be used for the protection of film.

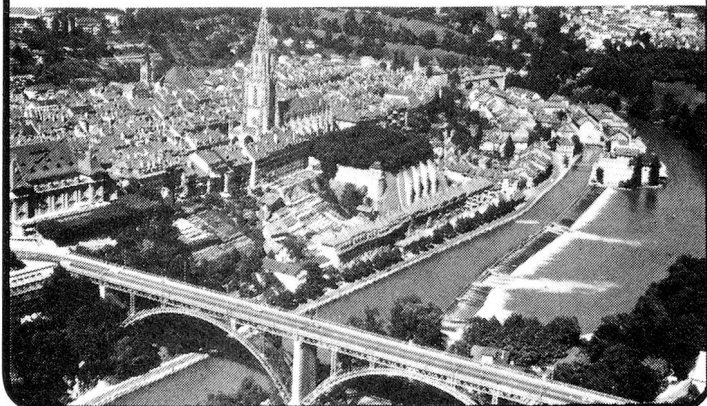
THE International Ski Federation, meeting in Sydney, has chosen the Swiss resort of Crans-Montana to host the Alpine events in the 1987 World Ski Championships. The Federation also re-elected its Swiss president, Marc Hodler, who has held the post since 1951.

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