

# Editorial

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# Editorial

Unfortunately this month Paul was unable to write his editorial as he has been sick. A passenger of one of the touring groups from Switzerland left their homeland with a bug and unfortunately infected some of our members with it ... and sadly for Paul he was one of them. He is on the mend and we look forward to your editorial next month. I'm sure we all wish you and Christine a speedy recovery. Therefore in the absence of Paul's editorial I thought I would put in a contribution about Interlaken and the surrounding area as the Congress for the Swiss Abroad will be held there later this year.

## **Interlaken, capital of the Bernese Oberland**

Interlaken is the "capital" of the beautiful Bernese Oberland and world-reknown as a leading winter and summer resort. It is also a departure point for

memorable excursions throughout the Bernese Oberland. Its name is derived from the Latin "inter lacus", meaning "between the lakes". To the visitor, Interlaken creates the clear impression of being a single town. In fact, it is made up of three politically independent municipalities - Interlaken, Matten and Unterseen. The focal point of Interlaken is the Hoheweg, which stretches for about 700 metres. Half-way along this main street is the historic "Hohematte", an open green area covering some 35 acres. Originally owned by a monastery, it affords a particularly impressive view of the distant Jungfrau. A decree dating back more than a century stipulates that the land will never be built upon. The Hoheweg itself is lined with fine hotels, attractive shops, cosy coffee houses and restaurants. It leads to the Interlaken West and Interlaken East railway stations, with their

landing stages on the Lakes of Thun and Brienz.

## **From Interlaken you may wish to visit some of the following :**

**Bonigen** - only a five minute bus ride from Interlaken - is a quiet and relaxing holiday spot on the Lake of Brienz.

**Grindelwald - the Glacier Village** - is a delightful destination for individualists. The resort enjoys a most scenic setting, satisfying the diverse holiday demands of its guests. Grindelwald is an unspoilt setting of breath-taking beauty. Both its glaciers reach almost into the village itself, while the glacier gorge and mysterious blue ice-grotto are also outstanding natural attractions.

**Jungfraubahnen** - More than a century ago a far-sighted Swiss launched a project to build a railway to 3454 metres above sea level, and today the Jungfrauoch is still the highest railway station in Europe. In 1893 Adolf Guyer-Zeller hit upon the idea while hiking in the Jungfrau region. Construction work started from the Kleine Scheidegg in 1896. It took sixteen years instead of the planned seven, and costs totalled CHF 15 million instead of the budgeted CHF 10 million! But he was right about the ultimate financial success of the Jungfrau Railway, which opened on 1 August 1912 and made a profit from the first full year of operation. The Jungfrauoch enjoys a spectacular setting in the heart of the Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn region, and is a focal point of the bid for UNESCO recognition as a World Natural Heritage. The route from the Kleine Scheidegg covers 12 km, almost all of it through the tunnel hewn out of Alpine rock. Stops are made at the Eiger North wall, Eiger Glacier and Sea of Ice stations, where huge observation windows offer breathtaking vistas of the valley below. A particularly popular attraction is the Ice Palace, created in the 1930s by local mountain guides. Located 20 metres under the Aletsch Glacier, it displays superb sculptures of wildlife and other impressive exhibits, carved out of natural ice. The most ambitious project of recent times has been the Sphinx Observation Building, which opened in 1996 after three years' construction work under the most extreme climatic conditions. The glass and steel structure provides a 360-degree Alpine panorama of breath-taking beauty. The trip to the "Top of the World" is spectacular.

## **Lauterbrunnen Isenfluh**

Probably the most beautiful of the glacial valley in the European Alps. Scenic attractions include the 4,000 metre snow-capped peaks and

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imposing waterfalls.

**Beatenberg** - Sun terrace of the Bernese Oberland, 600 metres above Lake Thun with a breath-taking view of the Eiger, Monch and Jungfrau.

**Murren** - is situated on a sunny, sheltered plateau high above the Lauterbrunnen Valley. Murren is a car-free resort, and guests are assured quiet and relaxing holidays.

**Wengen** - The perfect place for rest and relaxation yet spiced with an exciting array of sporting activities. Summer or Winter - wonderful Wengen is just the place to make your heart jump for joy!!!

**Ringgenberg** - Goldswil - faces south on a sheltered corner of the Lake of Brienz. A nearby lake, the "Burgseeli", offers a true paradise for nature-lovers and water enthusiasts alike.

**Iseltwald** - this hospitable fishing village on the Lake of Brienz is a favourite holiday spot. It enjoys a quiet location and offers many hiking possibilities.

**Brien Rothorn Bahn** - Dream of Steam in the Bernese Oberland. On this alpine tour all the puffing is done by the train!!! A trip not to be missed, with spectacular views (in good weather of course!!).

**Swiss Open-Air Museum Ballenberg** : Switzerland as it used to be. More than 90 century-old buildings from all over Switzerland, 250 farmyard animals, "historical" gardens and fields, demonstrations of typical crafts and many special events all create a vivid impression of rural life in bygone days. Ballenberg is in fact absolutely unique.

**Jungfrau Marathon** - (if the timing is right as I'm unsure when this is held ... but it wouldn't be for me anyway!!!) This is the toughest marathon in the world! Starting from Interlaken, it covers the classic distance of 42.195km and a difference in altitude of 1810 metres!!! The course is set amid Switzerland's superb Alpine setting of the Eiger, Monch and Jungfrau mountains, and ranges from idyllic Lake Brienz to the foot of the Eiger North Wall!

I hope that this gives you an insight of where you can go and what you can do in an area of the Bernese Oberland ... I'm sure that you would love it and I really wish that you could all see this absolutely beautiful part of Switzerland!!!

Regards

**Marianne**

## President's Report

I'm sure that you have all enjoyed this beautiful, warm weather we have been having recently ... but to be truthful I am now enjoying a little cooler nights!!!

Our picnic was a great success, although our Kiwi-Swiss numbers were down a little this year ... but there was a huge amount of sport and culture on that weekend ... and I hope that you all enjoyed good crowds and participation of activities at your picnics.

I really would like to urge all parents and/or grandparents to take their children to functions organised by the local Swiss Clubs, because these children will be the future of their clubs ... and although support of most of the Swiss Clubs is currently

good, we would wish this to continue in the years to come. All clubs organise a variety of activities for the young and not-so-young, and I am certain that some of these activities would appeal to every generation ... be it jassen, steinstossen, schwingen, shooting, keglen, just social gatherings and chatting, delicious meals with tremendous variety, participation in various parades, walks etc ... so come along and support these events. There will be something to your liking!!!

Looking forward to your participation,

Regards

**Marianne**

## Spruch des Monats

### Skinny Dipping ... !!!

An old farmer in Georgia, had a large pond behind his house, all fixed up very nicely, with picnic tables, basketball court etc!

The pond was properly shaped and was suitable for swimming in! One evening the old farmer decided to go down to the pond, as he hadn't been there for a while.

As he neared the pond, he heard voices shouting and laughing with glee!!! As he came closer, he saw a group of women skinny dipping, in the pond! He made the women aware of his presence and they all swam to the deep end of the pond!

One of the women shouted, "we're not coming out of the water, until you leave"!!!

The old man replied, "I didn't come down here to watch a bunch of naked ladies swim, or make you, get out of the pond ... I'm here to feed the alligators"!!! Within seconds, all the naked ladies, hurried out of the pond!!!

The Moral of the Story is : Old age and cunning will always triumph over youth and exuberance!!!

**Contributed by Walter Seifert.**