

The "Swiss Oserver" thirty years ago

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yodelling and alphorn blowing. Mr. Albert Kunz announced the winners of the third leg of the holiday competition organised by the Swiss National Tourist Office — the winning cards were drawn on the stage — and presented a gift each to His Worship, the Swiss Consul and the new Vice-Consul. The order of precedence was determined by the skill in blowing the alphorn, Mr. Schillig being the winner, followed by the Mayor who was also presented with the genuine alpine shirt worn by the alphorn artist, Mr. N. Rutishauser. Had His Worship been encountered in some part of Central Switzerland, nobody would have doubted his genuine Swiss citizenship — so strikingly “native” were his features under the white hood.

There was much laughter at Mr. Kunz's version of Swiss history, at some sketches, especially the three-legged antics of Mr. Brierly's “Pete's Feat”. “Show Time” songs by Mr. Freddy Ziegler were performed with much sentimental elegance, and how true were the words of one of his songs “*Auch der schönste Tag geht mal zuende.*” All too soon the happy evening came to an end, the Swiss wine bottles were empty, the *Cervelats* gone, the candles in the red cardboard cups with their white crosses burnt down, the youthful faces a little tired and the crisp summer dresses a little less fresh. (An original idea had been put in words on the tickets: *Wear what you like, but the well-dressed are especially welcome* — advice taken liberally), and the organisers could go to bed with the satisfaction of a well-planned evening successfully brought to a close. 650 new students arrived the following morning — back to the grindstone; the old *Eidgenossen* could not have been more in earnest.

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THE “SWISS OBSERVER” THIRTY YEARS AGO

In the issue of 3rd July 1937, we read of a present to the Swiss Government of a magnificent Persian carpet by the Crown Prince of Iran, in gratitude for his prolonged stay in Switzerland. Nearly £3m. more was to be spent on strengthening Switzerland's defences, on arms, strategic roadways and arsenals. The Cup winners for 1936/7 and the League Champions were Grasshoppers of Zurich. There was also a report of a dinner at the Swiss Legation, at which a number of prominent personalities of British public life were present, and when Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone honoured the Swiss Minister and Madame Paravicini.

The following week we read of a gift of £700 having been sent to the monks of St. Bernard by the President of the British Animal Protection League, in order to build better kennels for the St. Bernard dogs whose reputation had been harmed by the killing of a little girl. Sulzer Brothers were able to settle an impending strike by having an independent commission looking into the grievances of the workers; Escher Wyss were given the order to construct the Cairo Water Works, and Brown Boveri were able to expand again and re-engage 600 of their former workers who had been idle for some considerable time — *tempi passati*. The same issue also carried the first instalment of an article from “The Times” called “A Citadel of Neutrality — The Swiss Citizen Army”.

A week later, a statement appeared regarding the Swiss franc, following speculation as to its stability when France devalued for the second time; the Swiss franc had been devalued nine months previously, and its strength seemed now re-established.

On 24th July, we read that the Geneva Convention

between Poland and Germany concerning Upper Silesia had expired, and that Dr. Calonder (Swiss) had ceased to be High Commissioner there after 16 years in office. Prof. Emil Brunner, eminent Zurich theologian, had been awarded an honorary degree by Oxford University. A whole page (in German) was devoted to the newest Swiss-air aircraft, the DC-3.

The last issue of the month, we learned of a proposed new capital appreciation tax in Switzerland, and that subsidies would be cut still further. There was also a report on an athletic match between the Metropolitan Police “C” Division and the Swiss Mercantile Society at Imber Court, when the S.M.S. won both in athletics and tennis. Incidentally, the reporter, Mr. W. Burren, is, we believe, the only regular press reporter of a Swiss Society who is still actively engaged in reporting today, 30 years later. There was also a write-up of the real ice musical “St. Moritz” at the London Coliseum.

The first issue in August 1937 reported a price increase of 2 cts. on petrol — the “high price” of 45 cts. a litre was going to have a bad influence on motor traffic! There were also reports on various 1st August celebrations, amongst them one at the “Myllet Arms” and one at the S.M.S. (There was no official celebration in those days, a fact on which the Editor commented a week later.)

On 14th August, we read of 1 million francs being put at the disposal of the National Exhibition to be held in 1939, by the Zurich Municipal Council. Swiss trade figures were slowly improving. There was an article on “Switzerland's most Distinctive Antiques” and a letter by Mr. A. Meschini of “Pagani's” telling readers of Sir Malcolm Campbell's intended visit to Locarno, where he was to try out his speed boat.

The following week, an article appeared which might have been written today “*L'Appétit du fisc fédéral*”.

On 28th August, there was a report on the first Swiss railway, the *Spanish Brötli Bahn*; it was used in a week of festivities to popularise the town of Baden as a health resort. There were articles on the Swiss Police Headquarters, the economic distress of the Brienz woodcarvers and the Swiss military exemption tax. There appeared two long letters in support of the Editor's proposal to arrange a 1st August celebration for the Swiss Colony — the writers (S. Bruggisser and W. Meier) were to organise the first official celebration two years later.

GRAND SWISS HOLIDAY COMPETITION

Correct answer of third section: Lake Zurich

The draw took place in Bournemouth (see report of National Day Celebration). The first prize — a month's holiday in Switzerland including travel by Swissair — was won by Mrs. R. Lawrence, 7 Moat Court, Court Road, S.E.9. All prize winners have been notified.

“SWISS OBSERVER” PUBLISHING DATES

The “Swiss Observer” is published every second and fourth Friday of the month. Our next issue will appear on 25th August. We should be glad to receive all articles and reports not later than Tuesday, 15th August. Only short news items can be accepted later.

The next issue but one will be published on Friday, 8th September. All contributions for that number should be to hand not later than Tuesday, 29th August.