

Tourist news

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EUROPABUS HOLIDAYS IN SWITZERLAND

Europabus alpine circular tours have been available in Switzerland for the last 25 years. The conducted "Swiss Highlights" (three days from Geneva, Sw.Fr. 365), "Swiss Alps and Lakes" (four days from Zürich at Sw.Fr. 530) and the "Grand Alpine Tour" (seven days from Zürich and Geneva at Sw.Fr. 895) take holiday-makers by post-coach through the varied and ever-changing Swiss countryside.

Some of the features of the alpine circular tours are: the Julier, Maloja, Simplon and Susten alpine passes, a trip on the Gornergrat near Zermatt or by cog railway to the Jungfraujoch, the sub-tropical vegetation of southern Ticino, the blue lakes of the Engadine region, the cities of Berne, Geneva, Lucerne and Zürich, the vineyards overlooking Lake Geneva, the world-famous resorts of St. Moritz, Zermatt and Interlaken, the romantic township of Gruyères and many little mountain villages.

Included in the prices are travel, accommodation with half board in double rooms with bath, service charges, taxes and guide's services.

SWITZERLAND'S FIRST NATURE PROTECTION CENTRE OPENED

The Swiss Nature Protection League has opened the country's first nature protection centre on the Riederalp in Canton Valais. The centre is housed in the famous Villa Cassel which the London financier Sir Ernest Cassel had built at the beginning of the century.

It is situated at an altitude of 6,575 ft, above Europe's longest glacier

at the edge of one of Switzerland's finest nature reserves. This place of encounter with nature gives the visitor an idea of the Aletsch Forest Reserve and its flora and fauna as well as an insight into current research work.

A slide show with commentary and an alpine garden illustrate the theme of the exhibition. There are also regular daily guided excursions as well as courses and study weeks. Accommodation is provided for 60 visitors.

KELLER AT THE KUNSTHALLE

An exhibition devoted to the works of Swiss sculptor Gottfried Keller is being staged by the Berne Kunsthalle until 26th September.

Keller was born in Thun in 1910 and died in Berne in 1974. After teaching art, he himself studied sculpture in Munich and Paris and during the last 29 years of his life taught at Berne's Arts & Crafts School.

The Keller exhibition is completed by works by some of Keller's most prominent and still active pupils – among them Luginbühl, Megert, Hutter, Schneider and Gottardi.

BERNE – BOTANICAL GARDENS

Three new show houses have recently opened to the public at the Botanical Gardens of the University of Berne. The new buildings are situated on the banks of the River Aare near the northern end of the Lorraine Bridge. They house a variety of plants from different climates, including tropical palms, ferns and desert flora and fauna.

TOURIST NEWS

DAY CARDS ON SWITZERLAND'S RHAETIAN RAILWAY

The Rhaetian Railway are again issuing this autumn Day Cards valid on three days (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) on their entire network. These tickets are obtainable for travel between 21st September and 25th November 1976 and cost Sw.Fr. 32 in second class or Sw.Fr. 48 in first class. Children from 6 to 16 years pay half fare. The Swiss Postal Coach Service in the Grisons and the Furka-Oberalp Railway offer excursion tickets at reduced rates to holders of these Day Cards.

ZWEISIMMEN – HOLIDAYS FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

Zweisimmen is offering for the first time this summer special packages for ladies of 62 years and over and gentlemen of 65 years and over. The cost is Sw.Fr. 190 for five nights' full board at the Hotel Terminus.

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BASLE'S CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HAS A NEW PRESIDENT

At the end of June the Basle Chamber of Commerce celebrated its centenary. Its President, Dr. Louis von Planta, reviewed the history of the institution whose origins have to be seen in connection with the Federal Constitution of 1874 and the new Constitution of the Canton of Baselstadt a year later. The development did not run in the direction the founders had envisaged, but like a red thread, the problem of dividing the tasks between state and private economy went through the history of the Chamber of Commerce. And its missions in the future would be no easier, as the slow but certain growth of centralisation in the state would make it still more difficult for private economy to have enough scope. Dr. von Planta announced that the Chamber of Commerce would mark its centenary by commissioning an economic history of the Basle Region.

The new President of the Basle Chamber of Commerce was elected in the person of Mr. J. Peter Christen, well-remembered from his stay in England from 1946 to 1967. He worked with Sandoz Products Ltd. in Leeds, became Director in 1950 and Joint Managing Director in 1957.

During his stay in Great Britain he was popular not only in the Swiss Clubs in Manchester and Yorkshire, but also much liked as an active member of many London organisations. His offices included Hon. Treasurership of the City Swiss Club and of the Swiss Hostel for Girls, of whose Council of Management he later became a very active Chairman. He did extremely valuable work as chairman of the Swiss Economic Council, and he was also deputy member for Great Britain North of the Commission of the Swiss Abroad in Berne.

In May 1961 he started his work as Chairman of the Swiss Economic Council in London, and one of the tasks he set himself was to create an Anglo-Swiss Trade Promotion Centre, which was realised a few years later. That the Centre did not succeed was perhaps because Peter Christen had to return to Switzerland in 1967, at a time when his energetic personality, his wisdom and experience would have been needed most.

Now he has been given an important and honourable appointment in Basle as President of the Chamber of Commerce, and all his many friends in Great Britain wish him success and satisfaction in his new field of activities.

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NESTLÉ WINS ITS LIBEL SUIT

Switzerland's largest company won a suit for libel brought against a group of young people devoted to the welfare of developing countries who, in a pamphlet, had accused it of "killing" babies by its marketing techniques in poor countries.

Nestlé felt it could not react passively to a pamphlet entitled "Nestlé toetet Babies" and to a brochure called "Die sanften Killer". The trial which followed in Berne resulted in thirteen of the accused being sentenced to fines of 300 francs and four of them acquitted. A third of the costs were awarded to the accused, a third to Nestlé and a third to the State.

Both parties seemed to be reasonably satisfied with the result, although the accused have decided to appeal before the Berne Cantonal Court. They claim that the Judge had contradicted himself

in announcing his decision, when he recognised that Nestlé probably used advertising techniques which, in view of the differences between the mentalities of the West and of those countries where baby milk was marketed, could be considered as excessive.

The main argument of the "Groupe Tiers Monde", who published the "Nestlé kill babies" pamphlet, was that by its advertisements, the Swiss company was inducing African mothers to feed their babies with their marketed product where they were perfectly able to do so themselves by natural means. The brochure claimed that thousands of babies were being "killed" by the forced and ill-considered introduction of baby food unsuited to conditions prevailing in the third world.

THE LADIES MARCH ON

Sweeping changes in the status of married women are in the offing. Cantonal governments are currently examining the draft of a new federal law that would remove the last traces of the Swiss woman's subordination in marriage (see Gottfried Keller's Letter from Switzerland).

The fact that the proposed legislation would enable married people to chose between the husband's name as a bachelor and the wife's maiden name is only one of the radical changes suggested. The envisaged law would also end the wife's economic dependance on her husband. A new status, similar to the one practised under French law, would apply to the goods of the household.

Both partners would have personal rights on the goods they bring before marriage and the goods they supply to the conjugal association. Should the marriage be dissolved, each partner has the right to half of the profits obtained by the other during the marriage.

The property of the couple would therefore legally fall under joint control. The proposed law would also enable married partners to adopt the status of separation of goods whereby each partner retains exclusive rights to the property brought into the marriage contract.

The "democratisation" of marriage would also apply to the important decisions of the household. Although it seems likely that decisions of this kind are today taken jointly by the great majority of Swiss households, the law would sanction this complete equality in the decision-making process. In particular, the partners would decide "together"

where they are going to live. The married woman would have the legal right to take independent paid work. She would also be legally entitled to some measure of financial independence should she renounce any outside work in the interest of the family.

DAWN SWOOP NETS 'SWAMI'

The spiritual leader of the controversial mystical group known as the Divine Light has been arrested in Winterthur. Swami Omkarananda, 47, was arrested in a dawn police swoop on the various houses of the movement following bomb attacks against the homes of a police chief, a lawyer, a State Councillor and a series of attempts at poisoning people in Winterthur.

A 51-year-old women's hairdresser, a 26-year-old woman secretary and a 35-year-old West-German woman student were arrested at the same time as the Swami. Police later explained that they had good reason to believe that the four were involved in the actions for which other members of the Divine Light had already been arrested.

140 policemen were involved in the swoop against the nine houses of the Centre. The operation took place on a Saturday morning at three o'clock and lasted six hours. Some guns and ammunition were discovered during the search.