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«Grün 80»

(Green 80)

During the past summer the Basle Region was host to the «Grün 80» (Green 80), the second Swiss Landscape and Horticultural Exhibition. It lasted 184 days and was visited by 3.6 million persons.

The aim of the exhibition was not only to provide a «Showpiece» but also a setting in which the visitors could experience «Nature» in a realistic way and to create a lasting impression of the benefits to be obtained by preserving the natural habitat. It may well be that the average visitor only admired the beautiful surroundings and did not realise the actual intention of the exhibit organisers. Never the less a «Petition» («grünes Manifest») has been signed by more than 10 000 people supporting a motion that an even balance should be created and maintained between the existing fertile land and the needs of the development-planners and that the environmental problems be brought to the attention of those in government responsible for such matters.

The 46-hectares-site which included the summer villa of Christoph Merian as well as the Basle Botanical Gardens was divided into six sections viz. «Earth», «Green University», «Beautiful Gardens», «Land and Water», «Sow and Reap» and «The Market», so that visitors to the exhibition were able to obtain a clear, overall view. From Spring to Autumn there was continuous abundance of flower displays and shows. In addition there was a monorail operating on a length of 2.6 kilometers as well as a 76 meter high viewing tower. Cantonal Weeks and other numerous arrangements were made to provide lively additional attractions and exhibitions in order to enhance the «Grün 80» summer.

Although the number of visitors exceeded the expected total of 3 million by 600 000 at

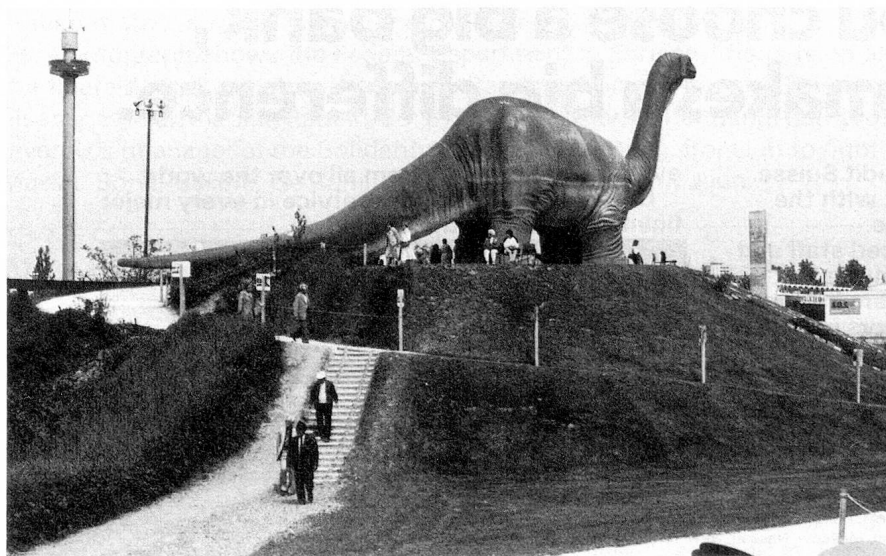


the close of the exhibition, there was an overall deficit of 4.6 million francs. The main reasons for the deficit were that during the first half of the exhibition, exceptionally bad weather curtailed attendance figures and also the fact that there were more «Season Tickets» sold than was originally expected.

The financial deficit, however should not be looked at from a purely financial point of view as the remaining land and constructions, in addition to having an estimated value of 27 million francs, provide considerable amenities for leisure time activities. They include the «Green University», a vast parkland and two lakes that were artificially created. Although the future plans for the area are, as yet, not definite, it is envisaged that The City of Basle's Garden Nursery Department may find a long sought-after site for their requirements.

Left homeless at the closure of the exhibition was the «Grün 80» mascot – a 10 meter high, 27 meter long, 30 000 kilo dinosaur, which was still available for purchase at a cost of 100 000 francs.

Nelly Haldi



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