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## Swiss Lady at Swiss Court

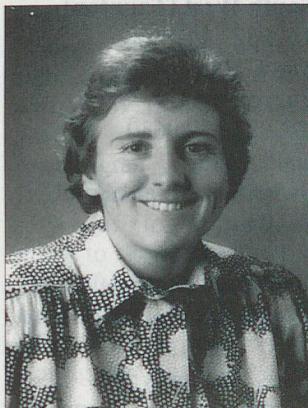
As the Swiss National Tourist Office in London celebrates its centenary, it is all set to get a new boss. On 1 October 1993 Eva Brechtbühl will take over as director of the SNTO in Swiss Court, London. Her responsibility for the promotion of Swiss tourism will cover both the United Kingdom and Ireland. An employee of the SNTO for twenty years, she has previ-

ously worked in various marketing related areas at Head Office in Switzerland. Subsequently she took up posts at SNTO bureaux in Rome and Toronto. For the last four years she has been director of the SNTO's Brussels office. It has long been a secretly harboured professional ambition of Eva Brechtbühl to entice more British visitors to Switzer-

land. But she has also expressed a personal desire to become acquainted with some of the less well-known corners of these islands during her stay in Britain - possibly by bicycle. Mrs Brechtbühl succeeds Joe Buhler, who has climbed on his bike and taken up a position as head of the SNTO office in New York. [EL]

## Embassy Doors Open

In an attempt to bring the activities of the diplomatic service closer to the Swiss people, Federal Councillor Flavio Cotti, head of the Department for Foreign Affairs, decided that selected Swiss embassies around the world should hold an open day on 1 August. The London embassy accordingly opened its doors both to Swiss tourists and citizens living in the UK - and about 150 people took up the unique opportunity to see how the embassy works. The ambassador, Franz Muheim, welcomed visitors and gave them a broad introduction to the function of the London embassy. Visitors were then accompanied through different embassy departments (cultural, commercial, military, scientific, visa) where staff explained the sort of work which was carried out. There was also a chance to view the ambassador's official residence, in the company of the ambassador's wife. Embassy officials told the *Regional News-UK* that they were particularly pleased to see so many young people, who asked questions on a variety of topics ranging from careers in the diplomatic service to the efforts of the cultural section to promote the activities of Swiss artists



New Directions: Eva Brechtbühl (SNTO); Doris Hardaway (SBS); the Swiss Embassy in London.

abroad. All in all officials deemed the event a great success and welcomed the chance to meet ordinary members of the public. There are, as yet, no plans to make the event an annual affair but an embassy spokesman suggested that another open day might well be organised at some point in the future.

## New SBS Social Worker

Doris Hardaway has taken up her appointment as the new secretary and social worker at the Swiss Benevolent Society in London. Doris has to her credit not just a Swiss nursing diploma

but also a full commercial training. She worked in the nursing profession in Switzerland for a number of years and then, after marriage to a British husband, she came to live in this country, where she has acquired experience of the English health care system in a number of hospitals. Doris succeeds Anna-Regula Sharp who has worked for more than twenty-five years with the society. Although she will continue to serve on the SBS's executive committee, Regula Sharp's retirement marks the end of an era during which the level of work and support given to the Swiss community by the society reached standards of service of which the society can be justly proud. Nevertheless, in recent years the economic recession has not gone unnoticed by the SBS. The society has become all too aware of an increase in the difficulties which compatriots have faced in the current economic climate. A growing number of appeals for help have been received from people who are unemployed. At the same time the society has faced difficulties in attracting new financial support to fund its work. There is a marked reluctance, for example, to signing new covenants with the effect that donations which could otherwise be gained through the refund of income tax are reduced by 25%. [RS/VB]

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\* denotes organisation based in London area

## Prize Logo Competition

The Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom is looking for a new logo. Entries are welcome from both professional and amateur designers and should be submitted by 30 November to FOSSUK president Jeffrey Long, 115 Ladbroke Road, London W11 3PR. Applications should be marked 'FOSSUK Logo'. The winning logo will be used on all FOSSUK stationary and for special events and other materials. The winner will receive a prize donated by the Swiss National Tourist Office of an eight day Swiss Pass.

## Around and About

### FOSSUK: Cevey Condemns Cuts

The Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom (FOSSUK) held its annual general meeting in London in June and welcomed a new member: an application from the Swiss Business Forum to join FOSSUK was unanimously approved. The Forum seeks to draw its membership from the ranks of owners and managers of Swiss-related businesses and will hold workshops on matters of current interest to the business community. After approving the youngest affiliate member, FOSSUK was addressed by Jean-Jacques Cevey, the new president of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) and by Rolf Bodenmuller, head of the Service for the Swiss Abroad in Bern. Cevey was making one of his first visits abroad



Guests Rolf Bodenmuller (extreme left) and Jean-Jacques Cevey (second from right) at FOSSUK's reception.

since assuming office and he began by issuing a forthright condemnation of the Swiss government's decision to cut by 10% the overall grant it gives to the OSA - and the swinging 30% cut in the subsidy given to the *Swiss Review*. Thereafter he concentrated on the ramifications of the EEA referendum result, fearing that it would be the Swiss abroad who would bear the chief consequences of the 'no' vote, in the form

of growing discrimination against Swiss in EC countries. He made a plea to anyone who has been subjected to discrimination on these grounds to contact the OSA with the full details. Bodenmuller, by contrast, alerted representatives to the introduction of the new Swiss ID card, which the Swiss abroad may purchase at a price of Sfr.25.-. These cards will be valid as travel documents within Europe and will be issued from

1995. Further information about them will be available in due course from the consulates in London and Manchester. He also drew attention to the publication of a new, free guide for the Swiss abroad, which includes practical information for Swiss citizens living abroad. But on this too there was news of financial cutbacks. Originally it had been planned to publish editions of the guide in English and Spanish (as well as in German, French and Italian), but these plans have now been abandoned for financial reasons.

Following an invitation from the Midlands Swiss Society, it was agreed to hold next year's agm in Birmingham - possibly in conjunction with a Swiss week in England's second city.

## Edinburgh

Edinburgh Swiss Club has decided to make a special effort to bring young families into the club, possibly with a view to setting up a special group like the Mothers' Group in London. The club plans to arrange a special children's party in December and invites all parents with young children from anywhere in Scotland to take the opportunity of meeting other Swiss with

young children. Ursi Ross is coordinating the event and looks forward to hearing from anyone interested. Meanwhile the club will be holding its AGM at lunchtime on Saturday 27 November in the Albany Hotel, 39 Albany Street, Edinburgh. For further details about this and other events are available from club president Trudi Bott (Tel 031 331 3366). [TB]

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### Obituaries

*Mrs A Hannay-Stocker of the Yorkshire Swiss Club, died on 2 August 1993. Virgil Berti, of the Unione Ticinese, also died suddenly in August. A full obituary of Mr Berti will be published in the next edition of the Regional News-UK.*

## How It All Started

*Continuing our occasional series on the origins of Britain's Swiss societies, Suzy Allan describes the origins of London's Cercle Genevois.*

A *Societe des Genevois de Londres* was founded in 1680, but the official record of the society dates from 14 June 1914 when a group of Genevese met at the Hotel Mont-Blanc to commemorate the centenary of Geneva becoming Swiss. They had such a marvellous evening that it was decided to meet again in December to celebrate the *Escalade*. These dinners were held annually, from 1923 until 1940 at Pagani's Restaurant in Gt Portland Street. No small affair these banquets: no less than seven courses and men only. All pure *Genevois* ladies were invited for the

first time in 1938 for the 25th reunion, but not again until 1948. No reunion was held between 1940 and 1945, when a modest dinner took place at Brown's Hotel in Dover Street. Since the war membership of the *Cercle* has become more international.

Very few pure *Genevois* belong now, but the *Cercle* does its best to keep the *Escalade* as traditional as possible and, of course, there will always be a marmite to break.

And what is the *Escalade*? For Genevans it was a great victory over Charles Emanuel, duke of Savoy, who wanted to annex this small but important republic. During a dark night in December 1602 he sent troops to scale the city's walls. The assault failed and so Geneva kept its freedom.

## Letters

### Independence Spells Isolation

Sir,

Having read your letters and reports on the EEA and the army, I am appalled. It is one thing to be neutral but quite another not to defend one's country when attacked, not to mention the humanitarian help an army could give if the Swiss people did not put their heads in the sand by refusing to join the EEA.

It seems to me that to agree to the few laws that have to be accepted is a small price to pay since, without joining the EEA, Switzerland will be bypassed by the other European states.

Switzerland will not lose more sovereignty than any other European state. Too much independence spells isolation.

I left Switzerland more than forty years ago. I want to be proud of my country and I do not want to have to defend its actions. No army, indeed! My father would turn in his grave!

Yours faithfully,

E Davies,  
Leatherhead, Surrey.

### Scottish Lesson for Swiss

Sir,

In the last *Swiss Review* the inappropriately named J R Schwytzer condemns the mythology of Swiss independence - the William Tell phenomenon - and is keen for Switzerland to become a region of the EC, that league of declining imperialist states, which, having oppressed smaller and weaker nations for long periods, wish to strengthen their exploitation of their economic and social colonies.

In selling off Switzerland for the temporary comfort of joining a club of ageing bully-boys, J R Schwytzer might like to consider the significance of the heading *Regional News-UK* for my nation - Scotland. Scotland is unique in having a legal system which is very ancient and retains its authority within Scotland while at the same time having its laws made by the English majority in the British state. We have a judiciary but no legislature. This is the prototype of the EC - a classic example of empire-building by treaty. The Swiss are often upset at being mistak-

en for Germans, French and Italians. The Scots are similarly upset to be taken for English. The Swiss are fortunate, however, in retaining their independence. In Scotland we look back to a mythical freedom fighter who died in the cause of Scottish independence and who was a contemporary of William Tell - William Wallace. Perhaps J R Schwytzer should think more deeply about his homeland and about the country in which he now resides.

Yours faithfully,  
IA MacSheumais,  
Kinghorn,  
Fife.

### Myths

Sir,

As a young doctoral student with single Swiss nationality, I can not leave unanswered J R Schwytzer's letter: it purports to dispel myths of one sort and yet does its best to uphold others.

To engage in a mild sort of separatism as Switzerland did on 6 December is just another way to emphasize one's own uniqueness and that of one's neighbours. That these neighbours have themselves ambivalent feel-

ings about Europe was demonstrated impressively in France. To call the extremely narrow outcome of the French referendum on Maastricht last year as a victory, as has been done, is surely perverse.

The movements towards European unification are increasingly out of touch with the population of Europe. In Britain the government staved off a referendum on Maastricht because it knew that this would mean defeat. But the Danes, by turning the treaty down, put themselves in an excellent negotiating position to amend it on more crucial issues.

Has Switzerland 'prolonged the recession' by rejecting the EEA? The fact is, we simply don't know. What we do know is that lowered barriers did not prevent the EC from stumbling into the deepest recession since the war.

Would Switzerland, in accepting the EEA, have played 'an active role in shaping the future of our continent'? On the contrary: it is by saying NO that we have made an impression.

To maintain that the voice of tiny Switzerland, as a

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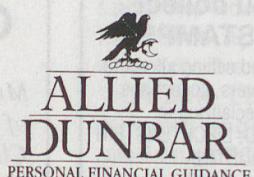
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## Letters *continued*

member of the EEA, would have an effect on further proceedings is nothing but wishful thinking. When it comes to the future of Europe, it is the opinion of the big ones that counts.

But what about education? True, there might now be fewer exchange programmes. At the same time, however, the influx of foreign students to Swiss universities will remain under control. And that, no doubt, will be of benefit to young Swiss, because overcrowded universities in Germany and Italy would bring foreign students in their thousands to Switzerland. Soon conditions would be as bad as they already are in many countries, with ever more disciplines under *numerus clausus*. Another good education system would go down the drain.

But the question is ultimately this: can conflicts in Europe be prevented by unifying economically? Already economic 'collaboration' and the infusion of funds into southern Europe are creating bitterness, above all in Germany. The millions of economic aid that have been pumped into Italy's *mezzogiorno* have

done nothing but boost corruption. They have left the north feeling cheated and brought Italy to the brink of disintegration.

Can we really trust the community's commitment to security if it has done its very best to ignore such a tragedy in its own backyard? And must not all cheers of *vive l'Europe* go silent when we consider the EC's shameful record on Bosnia?

Yours faithfully,  
J Nathan,  
London.

## And More Myths

Sir,

Referring to the letter by J R Schwytzer, criticising the beautiful letter from Mrs Vreneli Inwood-Bryner, I would like to say that what is meant by the uniqueness of Switzerland is the fact that in a mad world German, French, Italian, Romanche speakers, protestants and catholics, can still manage to live together without hating and killing each other.

If to maintain this wonderful confederacy, it is necessary to cultivate a legend, a myth, which helps to cement our union, then so be it. And why should we not be proud of our country, as foreigners are proud of theirs.

Like everybody else, Mr Schwytzer thinks only of himself. Had the majority of voters said 'yes', he would have been a winner. And I doubt if he would have given a thought to the losers.

I too am a Swiss national married to an EC national. We were better off before entry to the EC. Now we are going to have Maastricht imposed upon us, without a referendum, and, to add insult to injury, without the social chapter.

Yours faithfully,  
Edm<sup>é</sup> Read-Maerki,  
Welling, Kent.

## Fastidious French

Sir,

Having read Mrs F R Cobb's letter in *Swiss Review* 2/92, I cannot rest before putting an alternative view before your readers.

We spent last Easter with my mother-in-law in Salvenach (FR). It was interesting to listen to *Radio Suisse Romande* and to compare comments on the south Jura with those in the local German language press. In the former one heard of the plight of francophone families 'isolated' in German-speaking areas; in the latter protests that no one ever mentions German speakers in the same situation. Why not, one must ask. Simply because all the German speakers I know in Welsch areas have learned to speak French. We often visit my wife's cousin who married a French speaker and lives in his French speaking village. Over dinner we speak German to her but French to him. She always spoke to him in French, not because he couldn't understand German, rather because he refused to speak it. We once came across a group of old men in our village, one of whom was speaking French, the rest German. My wife asked him why he didn't speak German. He said that he had lived there for at least twenty-five years and understood German but refused to speak it. How many German speakers would get on so well in a French speaking village?

The year before I had to help my elderly mother-in-law with letters she had received from her insurance office in Fribourg in French. I wrote a strongly worded letter to them that it was not very sympathetic to write in French to an elderly lady who had a German name

and lived in a German speaking village.

I could go on for pages, but what I have written should make the point that Switzerland is a wonderful example of how people speaking different languages can live together in harmony, provided that no one group tries to make out that it is a special case, meriting special consideration.

It would be tragic if a policy of linguistic cleansing were ever to be encouraged in language-border areas of Switzerland.

Yours faithfully,  
J F R Craven,  
Ringmer,  
East Sussex.

## French Contempt

Sir,

In reply to Jeffrey Long's letter about the absence of native French-speakers from the FOSSUK representation in the OSA, I must make one final point.

There is a vast difference between bland, general and not very pressing 'invitations to submit nominations' and energetic canvassing aimed at persuading suitable candidates to come forward.

Now that a team of six for the OSA fields but one solitary 'Latin' and then to suggest 'The French' - a designation, incidentally which smacks of sheer contempt - serve in subordinate capacities for FOSSUK is merely adding insult to injury.

Yours sincerely,  
Mrs F R Cobb,  
Canterbury,  
Kent.

Due to pressure of space other letters have been held over to the next issue. Ed.

## Regional News-UK

The editor welcomes readers' views and comments, as well as reports from Swiss clubs and societies. Letters and articles for the next issue of the *Regional News-UK*, to be published in December, should be forwarded to Dr David Ditchburn, Department of History, University of Aberdeen, King's College, Old Aberdeen AB9 2UB (Tel 0224 272999; Fax 0224 272203) by 20 October 1993.

## The Quiet Pioneers

This year the Swiss National Tourist Office in London celebrates its centenary year. In the second of a series of articles on the history of what is now London's most famous foreign tourist office, Heidi Reisz traces the SNTO's progress since the war.

With the war over and the SNTO unscathed, the government lifted the ban on travel in 1946 - and large queues of would-be travellers besieged the SNTO. The small premises could not cope with the huge demand for tickets and information. Mr Ernst, the manager, was instructed by his head office in Switzerland to seek larger premises.

Given that vast areas of London had been destroyed by bombing and that office space was at a premium, it says much for his patience and bargaining powers that in April 1949 the new offices of the SNTO were opened at 485/9 Strand, Trafalgar Square.

Tom Eales, who now works on the information counter, joined the SNTO as an office junior at around this time and vividly recalls the huge queues that formed outside the neighbouring Swiss bank as people tried to get their £25 travel allowance.

'Instead of everyone being entitled to holiday money, only a certain

amount was allocated each month for foreign currency allowances and it was given out on a first come first served basis,' Mr Eales recalls. 'I remember leaving the office at 6pm some nights and seeing queues that stretched two or three blocks. People literally slept on the pavement for the night to be sure of their allowance.'

Tom also remembers how quick the Swiss National Tourist Office was in reacting to changes in allocation. 'We would have artwork waiting at the printers before budget speeches so, when allowance increases were confirmed, we could print posters and distribute them to London travel agents almost the same day.'

The economic situation improved dramatically so that by the late fifties and sixties, shorter working hours and higher incomes meant that more people could afford to go on holiday. New kinds of accommodation such as holiday apartments, chalets, camping and caravaning developed to meet the growing demand and air travel became increasingly affordable.

'When I first joined the tourist office, we executed immense amounts of paperwork because we organised our customers' entire travel itinerary and booked their rail and channel crossings, making bookings on British Rail and railways in France, Germany and Italy as well as Switzerland,' said Mr Eales.

'As travel became increasingly popular, so the number of tour operators grew and travel agencies became commonplace. People who were not accustomed to travelling found it easier to buy a package than try to arrange their own

schedule and our role became increasingly one of providing information rather than making bookings.'

At around that time, the Swiss National Tourist Office was an accessory to an April Fool's hoax which has now become anecdotal. BBC Television broadcast a programme about the harvesting of spaghetti on trees in Ticino, the Italian part of Switzerland. There was enormous world-wide response to the story, with well over 100 news reports as a result.

As pioneers in the art of marketing holidays, SNTO's activities consistently reflect the mood of the time. To celebrate the 250th anniversary of the birth of Jean-Jacques Rousseau in 1959 the theme of the SNTO's promotional programme was 'Back to Nature, Back to the Art of Travel'. The success of the theme and a world-wide trend towards more restful holidays led to the SNTO expanding this thinking in the following years with the slogan: 'Roam the continent - rest in Switzerland'. 1965 was dedicated to the Alps and 1966 and 1967 were topical with the exhortation: 'Bound for the Moon? Explore Switzerland First' and 'Come and Join Us - and Stay Healthy'. The theme for 1968 and 1969 was 'Swiss Time - Holiday Time', suggesting quiet but active holidays.

Says Mr Eales, 'There has been a distinct change in the kind of people taking holidays during the years I have worked with the SNTO, as one might expect. During my earlier years it was relatively wealthy people who expected the very best service. As times changed people began to look for warmth and hospitality. The profile is also younger, with youngsters camping and tak-

ing student rail tickets as they travel around Europe on their own.'

'There is also more demand for activity holidays. White water rafting, parascending and hang-gliding are just some of the daredevil sports that younger people want when they book holidays. Everyone expects to find Switzerland immaculately clean and well-ordered though and are delighted when the reality lives up to expectation.'

In 1963 the Swiss parliament added to the SNTO's statutes that 'promotion abroad shall also aim at furthering understanding of the special political, cultural and economic characteristics of Switzerland'. This statute drew the SNTO into major fairs, Swiss Weeks and other events that aimed to promote the Swiss culture as well as tourism.

Thus, the centenary of the first conducted tour of Switzerland, undertaken by Thomas Cook in 1863, was marked by 110 scouts from Briatin walking from Basel to Lausanne, a distance of 103km, and climbing two mountains. As if the physical demands of the centenary event were not enough, the youngsters then had to sharpen up their wits to answer 100 questions about Switzerland before they were treated to a prize ceremony around a traditional scout camp fire. And in 1965 the Year of the Alps was celebrated with major exhibitions, features and newspaper articles - with perhaps the greatest spur to the public's imagination being a series of six films about the climbing of the Matterhorn, a mountain which the British made their own when those adventurous Victorians were the first to ascend it.

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## The Rogeri Trio

The Rogeri Trio are set for a busy autumn. A South West Arts regional tour will be followed on 12 December by the trio's most prestigious engagement to date, a debut at London's Wigmore Hall. Formed in 1990, the trio has impressed audiences and critics alike. *Musical Opinion* praised the 'impeccably high quality' of the trio's playing and sensitivity to nuance and *The Strad* described it as 'the true spirit of chamber music'. Performances have included Classic FM's *Platform Live!*, the Swiss Festival, St James's Piccadilly and Oxford's exquisite Holywell Music Room - but a special occasion for Swiss-born violinist Nadia Myerscough was the trio's recital at the Swiss ambassador's residence last June. The trio performed works by Haydn, Villa Lobos and Swiss composer Frank Martin.

Ambassador Franz Muheim also attended the trio's triumphant Purcell Room debut later that month. The programme that night included Frank Martin, Tchaikovsky and Fauré, whose *Trio in D Minor*

allowed London-born cellist Peter Adams to display the depth of feeling and accomplished technique which enabled him, at 21, to become the youngest-ever professor appointed at the Royal Academy of Music. Peter's cello, made by Rogeri of Brescia in 1697, gives the trio its name and it complements beautifully the rich, subtle tones produced by Nadia's 1600 Maggini. Brazilian-born pianist Clélia Iruzun (whose many prizes include the Young Concert Artists International Competition in 1985) completes the trio. The Rogeri's special rapport has been enhanced by Peter and Nadia's marriage on 18 September, when Swiss jazz ensemble *Machmax* flew over specially to play at the reception.

The cosmopolitan roots which distinguish this trio have enabled its members to both study and perform internationally, in places such as South America, the Far East, Europe and the United States. Nadia studied with Franco Gulli and counts the coveted Artist Diploma from the Music School at Indiana University and the B J Dale Prize from



The Rogeri Trio

the Royal Academy, where she studied with father Clarence Myerscough, among her many awards and scholarships. Her recent Swiss tour with the Lucerne Festival Strings, playing Diethelm's specially-commissioned *Die Ulkiade*, conducted by Rudolf Baumgartner, was a triumph.

As well as the standard works, the trio's interest in rare repertoire has enabled them to intrigue and captivate audiences with unusual programmes. Villa Lobos's three trios (unearthed by Clélia in Rio de Janeiro) and Grieg's *Andante con moto* are rare discoveries. In

addition the trio seize upon complex works, such as Frank Martin's *Trio on Irish Folk Tunes*, which requires technical virtuosity, a mixture of Celtic and European idioms and a free, uninhibited style.

The Rogeri Trio's Wigmore Hall debut will include Villa Lobos's *Trio no. 2*, Haydn's *Trio Gypsy Rondo* and Arensky's *Trio in D Minor*. The concert will be held at the Wigmore Hall, London (Tel. 071 935 2141) on Sunday, 12 December at 4 pm - what better way to warm up a chilly December afternoon?

## CHEESES FROM SWITZERLAND

Proudly presents a regular RECIPE SERVICE featuring a member of the SWISS ALPINE SKI TEAM

### Steve Locher's Favourite Recipe - POLENTA CHEESE SLICES

#### Ingredients:

1 litre (1 3/4 pints) milk  
salt  
350g (12oz) polenta cornmeal (Bramata)

#### For the cheese mixture:

150g (5oz) Emmental SWITZERLAND, grated  
150g (5oz) Gruyère SWITZERLAND, grated  
50g (2oz) bacon, cut into thin strips  
1 heaped tbsp flour  
pepper, nutmeg, paprika  
1-2 eggs  
1/2 tbsp flour  
peanut oil for frying



SWITZERLAND

1. Add the salt to the milk and bring to boil in a pan. Gradually add the cornmeal and, stirring constantly, cook until a thick paste is formed.
2. Spread the mixture on a wet wooden board or baking sheet to a thickness of 1.5 cm, then allow to cool.
3. Combine the ingredients for the cheese mixture, adding enough egg until it has reached a firm consistency.
4. Cut the polenta into diamond shapes or triangles, spread with a thin layer of the cheese mixture, then sprinkle lightly with flour.
5. Sauté in hot oil on both sides, first with the cheese down, until golden brown. Allow to drain on absorbent kitchen paper. Serve hot with steamed vegetables.

SERVES 4 PERSONS

## Book Review

*Sue Style, A Taste of Switzerland (London: Pavilion Books, 1992. Illustrated with photographs by John Miller. pp160. ISBN 1 85145 692 9. £15.99)*

Swiss food has many similarities to British food in its basic ingredients : milk, cheese, cereals, pork and veg, especially potatoes. But Swiss food is better, much better. The British boil their potatoes, but the Swiss go one better and fry them after boiling, thereby making Rösti; the British will flavour their boiled potatoes with salt and (if you are lucky) butter, but the Swiss will add some grated Appenzeller Räss cheese and a little cubed bacon. In their sausages the Swiss put meat and spice; the British add rusk and chemicals. To continue to draw such unequal comparisons would be invidious. We get the picture that Swiss food consists of 'staple foods, simple pleasures, robust flavours' and fresh ingredients. In her book Sue Style's fine manners never stoop to drawing such comparisons. But then she does not need to draw them - it's obvious that Switzerland is a place of high quality and class.

Not simply a cookery book, *A Taste of Switzerland* is something of a description, or rather encounter, with Swiss culture. After a light (though not flippant) introduction to the history of the Swiss Confederation, followed by a chapter on local festivals, we get into the real food chapters which are divided according to food substance rather according to menu courses. There is a chapter on each of : bread, dairy products, sausages and meat, game and mushrooms, and fruit. There is a particularly juice-inducing chapter on

chocolate, which also gives us a resumé of the Swiss chocolate manufacturing industry.

The book contains many stunning photographs of Swiss scenery. Unfortunately not every recipe has a corresponding photograph showing the finished product. But the book need not be used for practical purposes and would suit the armchair traveller and gastronome just as much as the 'hands-on' reader.

As might be expected in such a gastro-cultural guide there is a chapter on Swiss

Old Swiss Hotel (for honeymoons and business deals); the mountain hotel; the lake-side hotel (for jilted lovers); the restaurant *avec chambres* ('stunning food'); and the small village inn. Sue Style takes us to four of the above and tells us how great they are. These hotels apparently have no faults whatsoever - not even their prohibitive prices. Sue tells us rather smugly that the only way most of us are likely ever to see the inside of these places is if 'news of that unexpected legacy from great aunt Jocelyn drops on

**By Graham Ryan**

attitude of the Swiss. We see glimpses of Swiss attitudes when told that 'a certain degree of unconventionality is regarded with some suspicion'; the chatty and complacent tone is belied by the statement that the Swiss can be an intolerant and suspicious lot.

In gushing forth unstinting praise of all things Swiss, the author proves herself incapable of admitting the possibility that superlative tidiness and prosperity may also have a 'flip-side' in cultural pathology. The level of this culinary and cultural guide is revealed in the author's own words when she claims : 'On the surface, Switzerland, with its breathtaking scenery and apple-pie ordered villages, certainly gives a delightful impression; dig deeper, however, sample some special holiday dishes, or participate in one of the many festivals which punctuate the Swiss year, and you will be treating yourself not only to some wonderful foods, but also to a lesson in the folklore, history and traditions of the country.'

This is as 'deep' as the author is prepared to 'dig'. With its charming anecdotes and elegant layout, this is a book written by someone aspiring to be an entertaining and engaging, if rather superficial, dinner guest who would have us believe that there is no more to Switzerland than food, festivals and fine hotels. It is perhaps in this repressed fine-manneredness that the reader may most fully appreciate the ambiance of Switzerland; so it is truly a taste of Switzerland. But when will somebody write a more balanced account of the place?

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wines. It is mostly uncritical. The 'obvious' question is never asked: if the Swiss are the best in the world at tidiness, punctuality, mountain scenery, bread making, chocolate manufacturing, hotel hospitality and the like, why can't they make the best wine? In fact they don't even come close. Sue would like to gush about the wine the way she has gushed about everything else, but she does not want to appear a fool; so she confines herself to appreciative comments and tactful observations.

The final chapter is devoted to 'The Art of the Swiss Hotelier'. We are given a hotel taxonomy: The Grand

the mat'. I guess that rules out the overwhelming majority of the population of Europe. This is just as well, as such hotels' exclusivity is their selling point; they exist, we are told, especially for 'anyone living a mad, bad life permanently suspended between plane seats and car 'phones.' Oh! to have a mad, bad life.

In this Baedeker-with-recipes there is a lack of critical powers and evaluative comment. Sue remarks that lamb is not often eaten by the Swiss and is regarded as food for *Gastarbeiter*; the use and place of guest-workers is never again mentioned. Perhaps the silence speaks volumes about the