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More than just cherry trees:
Aernschd Born on Basle Rural.
(Photos: zvg)



Basle Rural in the eyes of a commuter between town and country

Local countryside from close quarters

As a townsman I have very clear ideas about the countryside. Cherry trees in bloom. A peaceful way of life. Locked in the past. The people of Basle Rural are not very interested in Basle City,

*Aernschd Born**

Europe, the world. Their world ends at the garden gate – or at most at the border of their half canton.

This is one reason why the people of Basle Rural dropped Basle City 162 years ago. With their elemental peasant strength they won their battles against the well-born city dwellers. Since then Basle City and Basle Rural have lived apart. Separate beds. Separate tables. A separate children's hospital for each half canton. And even separate griefs...

This split apparently caused wounds which are still open today. Listening to talk on this subject you might think you can still hear the sounds of battle.

It seems a long time ago that Basle Rural gave asylum to political refugees persecuted during the German Revolution. Basle Rural, the most enlightened

canton of Switzerland. A long time ago ... Last century ... And today?

The first band to try out my songs rocked in Gelterkinden in upper Basle Rural – when I was still an apprentice thirty years ago.

But when a few years later I wanted to sing dialect songs together with a singer I knew, it was impossible. He lived five kilometres away from me, in Muttentz, but his dialect was completely different from our cityspeak. Different endings, different expressions, different rhythms. Basle City and Basle Rural – not even a shared culture.

Being part of village life

As a long-haired hippy the first job I got after some time abroad was at a newspaper kiosk in the main street of Binningen, Basle Rural. The customers put just as much confidence in a 22-year old freak like me as in my 60-year old boss. I felt absolutely no mistrust or rejection as "the youngster". Quite the contrary.

The youth centre in Binningen lasted two decades. An important part of it was the little Joli Theatre in the basement. It was run by a young outsider, Niggi Ulrich, who now runs the canton's cultural department.

My first shared home was in Birsfelden, Basle Rural. When a few years later I needed financial help for a play about

squatters at the Basle City Theatre it was Basle Rural that contributed the most. The title was provided by 80-year old folk poet Helene Bossert from Liesstal, Basle Rural, who also played one of the main parts in the play.

Five years ago I wanted to run my music on solar energy, and it was the half-canton of Basle Rural which covered most of my costs. I have had at least five times as many concert requests from Basle Rural as from Basle City.

Again and again Basle Rural turns out to be more bountiful than tight-fisted Basle City. ■

The Ping Pong scheme

*Ping Pong – originally known as "Visit Switzerland – See the World" – is one of the few projects to have outlived the 700th anniversary year of the Swiss Confederation in 1991. The scheme offers Swiss Abroad an opportunity of getting to know their old homeland better by staying with a Swiss family. This year's Ping Pong is under the aegis of Canton Basle Rural. Information may be obtained from Stapferhaus, CH-5600 Lenzburg.
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