

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 12 (1947)
Heft: 10

Artikel: "Impression of an Englishman in Switzerland"
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-943002>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 18.01.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

<u>BROUGHT FORWARD.</u>			£267. 16. 10
Louis Hermann, Hawera	...	£1. 0. 0	
Frid. Gwerder	...	2. 0. 0	3. 0. 0
		<u>TOTAL.</u>	£270. 16. 10

"AUSLANDSCHWEIZERTAG."

On Friday, September 5th, the "Auslandschweizertag" began in Berne. Federal-Councillor Petitpierre, extended to the delegates the greetings of the Swiss Government. In his address, he mentioned that during and immediately after the war 471 Swiss nationals were killed and 172 injured. There were 230 killed in Germany; 146 in France; 23 in Italy, 22 in Great Britain; 8 in Austria; 6 in Poland and 36 in other countries. In addition 70 Swiss lost their lives through various causes. (Imprisonment in concentration camps etc.).

Altogether 74,426 Swiss have returned to the mother country, during and after the war, or 15 per cent of all Swiss living abroad. Those, who have returned came from the following countries; Germany 25,673; Austria 1,799; France, 16,743; Italy, 3,833; Poland 793; other European countries 10,084; and non-European countries 4,282.

Dr. R. Jezler, of the Federal Justice and Police Dept., in Berne, speaking on the question of Dual Nationality, was of the opinion that Dual Nationality should not be abolished without weighty reasons, but that the right of depriving Swiss of their nationality in certain cases should be considered.

Federal Chancellor, Dr. Leimgruber, referred to the proposal of the London Swiss Delegation, that Swiss nationals abroad should be able to secure representation in the Swiss Parliament; in his exposé he said that, according to the present constitution no such representation was possible, but that it was well worth it to study the question with a view to altering the respective constitutional laws.

The question of military tax was also discussed, and it is hoped that the London Delegates will fully report on the result of these deliberations.

The "Auslandschweizertag" was concluded on Sunday the 7th at the War Memorial at Murten, on which occasion speeches were made by Dr. H. P. Zschokke, President of the "Auslandschweizerwerkes" of the N.S.H., Mr. A. F. Suter (London) and Federal-Councillor Kobelt.

At the Luncheon which followed the delegates were addressed by M. Glasson, on behalf of the cantonal government of Fribourg, Dr. Willenegger and Professor Michaud of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique.

"IMPRESSION OF AN ENGLISHMAN IN SWITZERLAND."

(This article is re-printed with due acknowledgment from the "SPECTATOR" August 8th, 1947.)

One risk any intending visitor to Switzerland must be prepared to face - of dying of a surfeit in his first week. To be seated, an hour after leaving the aeroplane, before a steak representing much more than a week's meat ration at home, to be served with two meat meals daily and invariably offered a second helping - all this is an experience to which the Englishman's wartime and post-war digestive system is ill attuned. But custom can blunt pleasure as well as sorrow, and what ought to seem excessive (as in fact it is) soon assumes the dimensions of the merely adequate. Meals are a material

A me Altjohr-Obet, do isch es de Bruuch,
 do macht me sich lostig ond hauts öppe ruuch,
 do chömets denn zäme de Hans ond de Fritz,
 ond händ ä paar Fläsche ond verzelleit enand Witz
 sie plauderet ond mämmellet, wie's ä so goht,
 d'Ziit goht eme, ond 's werd denn halt spoht,
 entlech gegen Morge do findet sie sei Ziit,
 Zunge wärdet schwär ond de Heiweg ist wiit,
 do trampsenn use of dem lange Weg,
 de Hans ond de Fritz sind núme guet zweg,
 sie gönd Arm in Arm ond verwechslet no Bei,
 ond plampet omerand, chönd fast núme hei,
 d'Chleider verhödlet ond d'Schueh volle Chaat,
 ond müend no acht geh, dass sie's nöd öberschloht,
 erst deheime do chonnts ne in Sii,
 es tüeg ne nöd guet, de viele Wiis
 noch ä paar Stonde, da Chopf ist so schwär,
 s'ärgst ist denn obere, de Mage ist lär,
 denn sägetz zue sich selber, was bin i för en Porscht,
 Gester hani z'viel g'soffe ond hüüt hani no Dorscht,
 do machsts ehrni Gedanke, ond nänd sich denn vor
 jetz werd denn núme so viel g'soffe im neue Johr!

A. Moosberger.

theme to dwell on but they serve as symbol of the general lavishness which, next to its mountains and lakes, is Switzerland's salient characteristic to the Englishman, and most other Europeans today. Shops and markets are full of fruit and vegetables, apples and pears, plums and apricots and nectarines and peaches and cherries and bananas (as many of these last as you want) mostly at prices well below what they would cost if you could get them in England.

For that matter all the shops are full of everything. Shabby Englishmen, straining the currency restrictions to renew their wardrobes without coupons - I have just seen walking the streets of Thun a pair of unmistakable Swiss shoes that will soon be evoking astonishment and admiration in the Banbury road - and some of them debating whether to invest in shirts that would perplex Piccadilly or risk finding themselves before the coupon-period ends with no shirts at all. Most of these things cost rather more at the current rate of exchange (about 17.35 to the £) than in London, but ladies' underwear, I learn on good and entirely suitable authority, is much cheaper, particularly but what need, after all, to particularise? As for the confisseries and chocolate-shops they are beyond anything the Englishman of today can imagine; the local demand must be enormous, for every third or fourth shop seems to offer such wares. Shops full of cheeses flank shops full of cutlery and others full of leather-ware. It is all part of the general lavishness; even the lavatory-cisterns do their work with a vigour and a volume that would horrify the Metropolitan Water Board. Electric lights blaze all night. Only coal is short and dear.

But of course, there is far more than that to Switzerland, and the common things here strike the traveller returning after seven or eight years with a new freshness. Never, even before the war, do I remember Switzerland as quite the garden it is today. The number of millions of geraniums alone is beyond computation. It must run easily into scores, for not the humblest wooden chalet is without its adornment of scarlet and green along every window-sill. Trees here are not planted so much by rivers of water as by pools of water, pools some of them several miles long. Never, I should imagine, did any country know how to make so much of water and greenery. You look across the brilliance of flowers and the green of mown grass to the brilliant blue of the lake, with more emerald grass beyond, and above that the deeper green of the pines, and capping all the eternal snows. That is Switzerland, and the

first week of it leaves the English man dazzled and bewildered.

And yet there is more still to it than that. Sensuous satisfaction is well enough, and we are entitled to a little of it in all conscience. But it is in other spheres that the contrast between this country and our own becomes disturbing. With the air of prosperity goes an unmistakable air of tranquility. It is only when the sight of so many quiet untroubled faces in the streets strikes you that you realise how much of that is absent in the streets of English towns. The children are the healthiest I remember seeing anywhere, and the liveliest and the happiest, and a glance at the young men and girls of twenty shows how little the promise of childhood has failed. They work hard and they work well, and they know how to make the most of their pleasures - swimming or rowing or cycling (the cycles in Switzerland seem to be little fewer than the geraniums), climbing, making music or listening to it, or simply sitting and eating ices or sipping coffee or light beer and talking to their friends at the crowded tables packed close outside cafes great and small.

Cleanliness, in the trains, in the trams, in the hotels, in every public building, is as conspicuous as it ever was. The spotless third-class carriages with their varnished slatted seats are cooler as well as cheaper than the second or first, and the visitor, unless he suffers from undue pomposity, soon decides which it is wise to choose. You get your lunch on the train, and with great respect to the L.N.E.R. and L.M.S. you draw inevitable comparisons in regard to food, service and comfort. However, the cost is equivalent to a little more than 5/-; meals are not cheap in Switzerland. Nor are many other things, perhaps most things.

What a country to return to, you tend to say, as you stand in some small Swiss town on a bridge over a blue rushing river, with old red gables overhanging it here and flower-clad slopes lining it there and the white mountains piercing the heavens somewhere in the distance. Yes, no doubt, in some ways. But it is not always Summer in Switzerland, and not nothing but sunshine when it is Summer. And there are higher destinies in life than to retire to a perennial garden. The garden here, the garden of Switzerland, is thoroughly right in itself. The men and women who have made the garden have worked hard to make it and work hard today to keep it what it is; lives are far fuller and richer for being lived in the midst of what they have created. We have not the same right to enter into their labours.

A well-run, or well-ordered country. A country where the little courtesies that do so much to smooth life are observed. You can go to a shop, ask for something that they haven't quite got, spend ten minutes turning over this garment and that, and be sped on your way, as you depart empty-handed, with a pleasant and perfectly sincere "à votre service." We, of course, are tired; our nerves are over-strained. This people is neither tired nor strained. It has suffered directly from neither of the wars, and seeing what the country is and how it lives one can understand the passionate determination of the Swiss that nothing, not even membership of the United Nations, shall be allowed to embroil it in the quarrels of greater neighbours. Meanwhile, it can at least give rest and, in the literal sense recreation, to tens of thousands of English men and women (not even Switzerland, it must be recognised, could lure Scotsmen from Scotland) this Summer.

After their three or four weeks, or what it may be, they will turn regretful steps homeward, pondering on one conclusion forced inevitably upon them. In England we are living as circumstances compel us to live; here in Switzerland men and women are living as men and women ought to live. This is the right and normal life - not, of course, merely materially. What we have been missing these last years most of us have not quite realised till we were able once more to get away and look at England from outside. The vantage point, no doubt, is almost unique. There can hardly be another country in Europe where contentment is as widely spread as in Switzerland. It does not alter the fact that the unique is no more than what the normal ought to be, and our unending task must be to bridge the gulf. The secret of the means must be discovered somehow. Of course, the differences between Switzerland and England are too fundamental and too numerous for any comparison to yield far-reaching results. It can

only yield suggestions and stimulus. The Englishman in Switzerland cannot quite dispel the reflection that he will be returning in a week or two from sunshine to sombreness, figuratively as well as literally. But he can at least resolve that what he has gained in Switzerland shall be turned as far as may be to turning sombreness in England into sunshine.

DELICIOUS SWISS FOOD SPECIALTIES
ARE DIFFERENT - AND EASY TO PREPARE.

Scenic Switzerland has a reputation for watches, cheese, textiles, yodelers and contented Holsteins. But visitors to neat Swiss cities and chalet-embroidered resorts find more here than breath taking scenery and a friendly people with a knack for mountain climbing and skiing. They find the Swiss are also mighty skilful in the kitchen.

Gourmets who slalom around Switzerland find every region has its own specialties. What's more, many of them are easy to prepare right at home.

Here is a dish from Zurich - imported from the old section of town near St. Peter's Church where many fine restaurants are located in colourful Guild houses that date back hundreds of years. "Leberspissli" is a calf's liver specialty. Just cut the liver in slices about two inches square, and wrap the slices in sage leaves. Then alternate each liver square with a slice of bacon on a wooden skewer and cook in a frying pan with butter and onions.

Another Zurich favourite is "Geschnetzeltes Kalbfleisch" - minced veal to you. Simply slice a cut of veal into small bits, broil in butter under a slow fire and serve with your own favourite cream sauce. For the real Swiss touch, a white wine sauce should be used. In Zurich, this specialty is always accompanied by "Rösti" - Switzerland's national potato dish.

Prepare potatoes this way, and you will understand why an entire meal is often made out of Rösti, with tomatoes or salad. First boil the potatoes, then peel and slice very thin and press into a loose cake. Fry in butter until golden brown.

Famous for its dairy products, it is natural that Switzerland has many specialties made with cheese. Especially popular is "Fondue" - a sort of glorified Welsh rarebit, that originated in the French speaking part of the country. This recipe for the Neuchatel Fondue is just one of several varieties. Rub a little garlic on the inside of an earthenware dish. Shred about one pound of imported or domestic Swiss cheese. Pour one pint of dry white wine into the dish and heat almost to the boiling point. Now add the cheese, about one tablespoon of flour, and salt, pepper and nutmeg to taste. Stir constantly with a wooden spoon or fork until the Fondue starts to bubble. Add six tablespoons of Kirsch (white cherry brandy) and serve, keeping the Fondue hot over an electric gridle or alcohol lamp. Fondue is never served on separate plates. Everybody impales small squares of French bread on a fork and dunks into the "community" Fondue, which should be accompanied by white wine and kirsch. Fondue parties are great fun for picnics and weekends in the country.

Schaffhausen, an antique town near Zurich, has a specialty that is popular throughout Switzerland, too. Onion pie! Peel and cut two pounds of onions in small pieces. Turn in butter until glazed or brownish in colour. Prepare a regular pie dough and place in pie form. Spread the onions on the dough, and add a sauce of two well beaten eggs with cream added. Cook in a slow to medium oven for about twenty minutes, or until the pie crust is done.

Over in the Grisons region - where St. Moritz, host to the 1948 Winter Olympic Games is located - dried meats and sausages are unusual delicacies. These local Grisons specialties are almost impossible to get here. But this recipe for a Grisons meat pie will win you plenty of compliments. Mix 3 - 4 ounces of veal, and 3 - 4 ounces of pork, with 2 ounces of finely sliced bacon (preferably fat)