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Talerschwingen

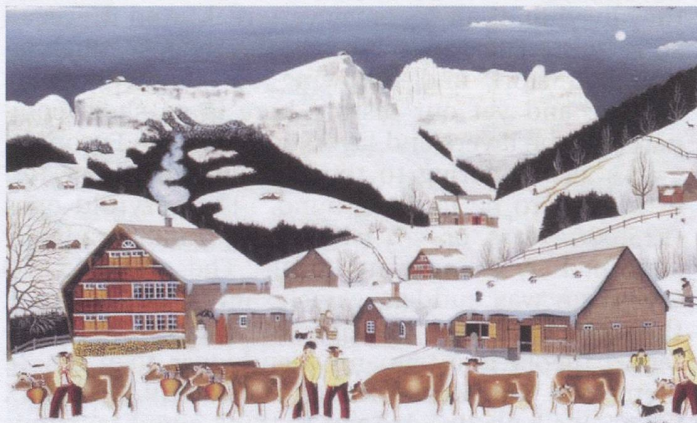
Talerschwingen became popular in Appenzell and Toggenburg about 100 years ago. Thereby a five-franc piece is rolled around the inside of an earthenware bowl, which is held on the palm of one hand and slowly rotated. Three bowls of different diameter, used simultaneously, produce a sound reminiscent of distant cowbells, which harmonises well with yodeling.



Talerschwingen is a serious affair

Albert Manser, the most prominent of the Appenzell naïve painters

Albert Manser, born in 1937, grew up on a farm in Appenzell. He loved drawing from an early age. After school he did an apprenticeship as a confectioner and soon his cake decorations were works of art.



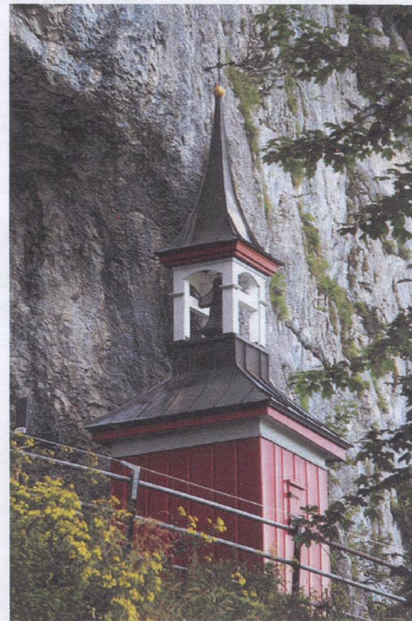
Appenzeller Bauern mit ihrem Vieh vor Bauernhöfen im Winter

In his spare time he painted scenes from the rural life he knew from his childhood. In 1967, encouraged by Ida Niggli, he gave up his day job and became a full-time painter. He had many exhibitions all over the world. He is regarded as one of the most important naïve painters of today.

Wildkirchli's long history

Wildkirchli is the name of a system of three caves in the Alpstein massif of Appenzell Innerrhoden. They are notable for the traces of paleolithic habitation, dating to ca. 50,000 to 30,000 BC. Even earlier are remnants of cave bears found in the caves, dating to ca. 90,000 BC.

The **Cave Bear** (*Ursus spelaeus*) was a species of bear which lived in Europe during the Pleistocene



Wildkirchli chapel

and became extinct at the beginning of the Last Glacial Maximum about 27,500 years ago. Both the name *Cave Bear* and the scientific name *spelaeus* derive from the fact that fossils of this species were mostly found in caves, indicating that this species spent more time in caves than the Brown Bear, which only uses caves for hibernation. Consequently, in the course of time,

whole layers of bones, almost entirely those of cave bears, were found in many caves.

Death during hibernation was a common end for cave bears, mainly befalling specimens that failed ecologically during the summer season through inexperience, sickness or old age. Some cave bear bones show signs of numerous different ailments, including fusion of the spine, bone tumours, cavities, tooth resorption, osteomyelitis, rickets and kidney stones. Paleontologists doubt adult cave bears had any natural predators, save for pack hunting wolves and cave hyenas which would probably have attacked sick or infirm specimens.



Berggasthaus Aescher - Wildkirchli

Today, the caves are a tourist site. They can be easily accessed on foot via a short trail down from the cable car station at Ebenalp *from the internet*