**Zeitschrift:** The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

**Herausgeber:** Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

**Band:** - (1952)

**Heft:** 1188

**Rubrik:** Roundabout Switzerland

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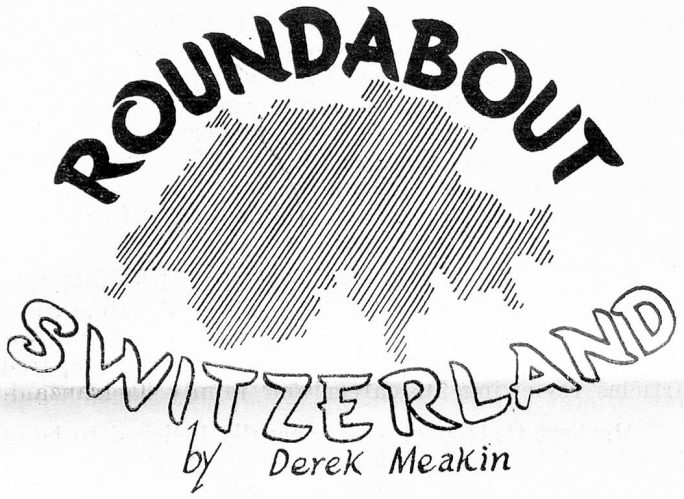


Which was the most memorable moment of the three-day stay in Davos and its neighbourhood I have been describing in this series? Was it sipping pink gins in a dimly-lit bar with spy-catcher Eric Saunders? Or almost freezing to death in a giant refridgerator with Everest climber André Roch? Or watching the spark of hope lighting up in the eyes of British TB sufferers fighting their way back to health in a Swiss sanatorium?

No, it was none of these, interesting though they all were. But I doubt whether I shall ever forget drinking some delightful cream-topped coffee with a couple of pretty girls in one of the highest restaurants in Europe.

The girls were twinkling-eyed Ursula Kindschi and a young tornado on skis who goes by the formidable title of Fräulein Doktor Hildesuse Gaertner. Ursula, principal attraction of the Davos Tourist Office, had offered to show me around. And twenty-seven-year-old Hildesuse, twice German woman ski champion, had joined us for a quick drink before skiing down our 8,730-ft.-high mountain to catch her train home.

We had our coffee in the Weissfluhjoch restaurant, high above the Davos valley. Serving us was the proprietor's wife, Mrs Fopp — a real Grisons name, this — who spends nine months out of every year in an ideally-situated home overlooking a fascinatingly-beautiful semi-circle of pointed peaks.

Husband John Hans Fopp, who used to run the Post Hotel in Arosa, had the restaurant built in 1932 at the same time as the funicular, which is their only link with the valley below.

Listed among the six highest restaurants in Switzerland, it has accomodation for 20 visitors, and Mrs. Fopp told me that on Sundays during the height of the season all the tables in the 250-seat restaurant are occupied.

But at times life can be lonely, too, and during a particularly severe winter they can be completely isolated. Two years ago the snow was so deep that the funicular was unable to operate for more than a week, completely cutting off the family and their one solitary guest. Fortunately they had in substantial reserves of food but their water supply suffered as they relied on the funicular to transport it by the tankful.

It is at moments like these that their son, 18-years-old Beat, comes into his own. He is a ski champion himself, which is not surprising considering that for many winters now he has been skiing down to school in Davos every day.

Despite the extra cost of transporting food Mrs. Fopp claimed that her prices were no dearer than elsewhere, but I thought the simple meal I had of ham omlette, ice cream and fruit was expensive at 7frs. 50 (12/6d.) — much more than I would have paid at a restaurant in the valley.

The speciality of the Weissfluhjoch restaurant is carrot cake, so I asked Mrs. Fopp to let me have her recipe for the benefit of readers of this column. This is it:

*Ingredients* — 1 lb grated carrots, ½ lb sugar, ½ lb grated nuts (preferably hazel nuts), a tablespoonful kirsch, 1 grated rind of lemon, 4 eggs, 2 oz cornflour, a teaspoonful baking powder.

*Method* — Mix well sugar and yokes of eggs, add carrots, nuts, kirsch, lemon, cornflour and baking powder. Then add egg whites beaten stiff. After cooking for an hour in a moderate oven allow to cool and decorate with icing.

I have since come across a more economical recipe that may prove more suitable in austerity Britain. The ingredients are: 3 eggs, ½ lb sugar, ½ lb grated carrots, ¼ lb grated hazel nuts or almonds, 3 tablespoons of flour or mixed flour and cornflour, 1 grated lemon rind, juice of half a lemon, 1 tablespoonful kirsch, 1 teaspoonful baking powder. The method of preparation is the same.

Here's hoping that you will find the carrot cake just as nice in your own home as I did sitting on the terrace of Mrs. Fopp's restaurant high among the Grisons Alps!

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