

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: - (1955)

Heft: 1263

Artikel: From "the Dorchester" to an alpine Hut

Autor: [s.n.]

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-694603>

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FROM "THE DORCHESTER" TO AN ALPINE HUT.

Exactly sixteen hours after I had left the Dorchester Hotel at Park Lane where I had dined, wined and danced in the company of Diplomats, Lords, Knights, and the "ordinary" people, I found myself in an Alpine hut somewhere in the Surrey "mountains" taken by "Swissair", but this time by coach instead of by one of their luxury airliners.

During the journey to "The Cricketers" at Chertsey, a notice was put on a screen, "No smoking, fasten the belts", and a very smart stewardess handed out chewing gum, and boiled sweets. From time to time a bulletin was passed along denoting the exact endroit we were passing through.

Before I go any further I must explain that "Swissair" invited about 150 people mostly from Touring Agencies to what they call an "Après Ski" party at their mountain "Chalet sur Thames".

Arriving at the "Chalet", we found about two inches of snow on the ground (or something which looked like snow) and a big fire in a brazier lit up the Chalet, it looked quite enchanting, and very real.

Inside the "hut" a great number of skis stood along the walls, and on each of the tables little oil lamps were placed which shed their subduel light on a happy crowd of skiers, most of them dressed in sports attire. Some of the pretty young ladies present reminded me of the "smart set" one finds in the cocktail bars of the luxury hotels at St. Moritz, who, though dressed as skiers, seldom have a pair of skies on their dainty feet.

In one of the corners of the hut was a little bar, which seemed to be one of the chief attractions, where free drinks of all sorts could be obtained, opposite in another corner a small band, or "Bure-musig" consisting of four musicians, dressed in Swiss costume untiringly played a number of waltzes and "Laendlers". They had arrived the same morning by "Swissair" from Switzerland.

From the ceiling an immense cow bell was suspended, which was used to make announcements from time to time.

Mr. A. Kuhn, the competent and handsome Sales Manager of "Swissair", arrayed in a red sweater, dark trousers and mountain boots, welcomed the revellers on behalf of his company, and wished them a happy evening "high up in the mountains".

Although there was little space available for those who wished to indulge in a "hop", the dancers somehow managed to wriggle through.

Mr. A. Kunz, of the Swiss National Tourist Office showed a film portraying skiing. About 8 o'clock delicious hot sausages were served, and when the company had stilled their hunger they at once returned to the dancing floor, with renewed energy.

There was singing and yodling, and charming Swiss girls in national costume, went round with refreshments of all kinds.

Unfortunately, owing to my having been out the previous night at the Dorchester "Chalet", and feeling somewhat jaded I was unable to stay to the end, but by the time I left the "Alpine hut" the proceedings were in full swing, and the revellers seemed to be enjoying themselves royally, judging by the noise they made.

Long after I left the "Alpine hut", some of the familiar Swiss tunes haunted me. I must congratulate the young, enterprising and enthusiastic team of "Swissair" for their original idea, which is real and useful propaganda for Winter Sport.

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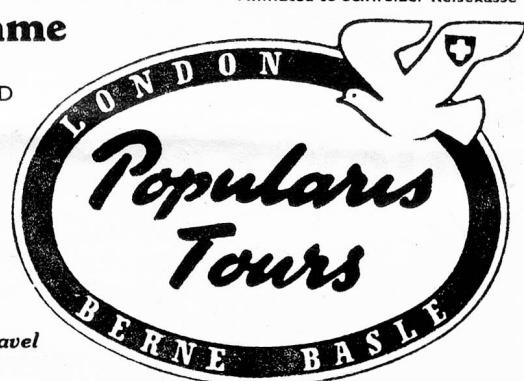
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