

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: - (1963)

Heft: 1445

Artikel: Zurich

Autor: [s.n.]

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-696464>

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: 17.01.2026

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

ZURICH

Short Survey of the History of the Guilds

In 1336, Rudolf Brun, offspring of a noble family, overthrew the decayed town-government of Zurich by a *coup d'état* and set up a new constitution which was put down in the so-called "Sworn Letter". Before this riot, only noblemen, land-owners and rich merchants had been able to take part in the government, but now the craftsmen and smaller merchants, united in guilds, had their share in the command of the city. Each of the thirteen guilds delegated their guildmaster to the council, in which the corporation of the "Constaffel", i.e., the guild of the citizens already formerly privileged, were equally represented by thirteen members.

The medieval guilds, "Saffron", "Tomtit", "Smithy", "Loaf", "Tanners", "Shoemakers", "Ram", "Carpenters", "Tailors", "Boatsmen", "Camel" and "Balance", formed the foundation of the professional, political and military life of the citizens. Further, they were the centres of social activity, as each guild owned its house of meeting, to which an inn was attached.

As the centuries passed by, the guilds lost more and more of their professional character and became unions with political and social ambitions within the strongly secluded class of the burghers.

After the revolution of 1798 the guilds were deprived of their political importance and were dissolved, but took up their social activity again in 1803. In 1866 the guilds entirely lost their influence in Zurich's professional life, and from then a number of new guilds of a purely social

character were founded in the various quarters of the city.

Nowadays the main activity of the guilds consists in the organization of Zurich's annual Spring Festival, the "Sechseläuten", or "Six o'clock chimes". This most popular Festival takes place every year in April and received its name in remembrance of that Monday on which, according to old tradition, the churchbells peal out again at 6 p.m. instead of 5 p.m., to announce that the day's work is over.

GUILDS

Saffran: merchants, spicers.

Schneidern: cloth-shearers, tailors, furriers.

Meise: wine-merchants, wine-dressers, painters, saddlers.

Weggen: bakers, millers.

Waag: wool- and linen weavers, hatmakers, cloth-merchants, dyers and bleachers.

Schmiden: sword makers, armourers, pewterers, bell founders, surgeons.

Gerbe- und Schuhmacher: tanners, shoemakers.

Widder: cattle-dealers, butchers.

Zimmerleuten: carpenters, masons, cartwrights, turners, joiners, coopers.

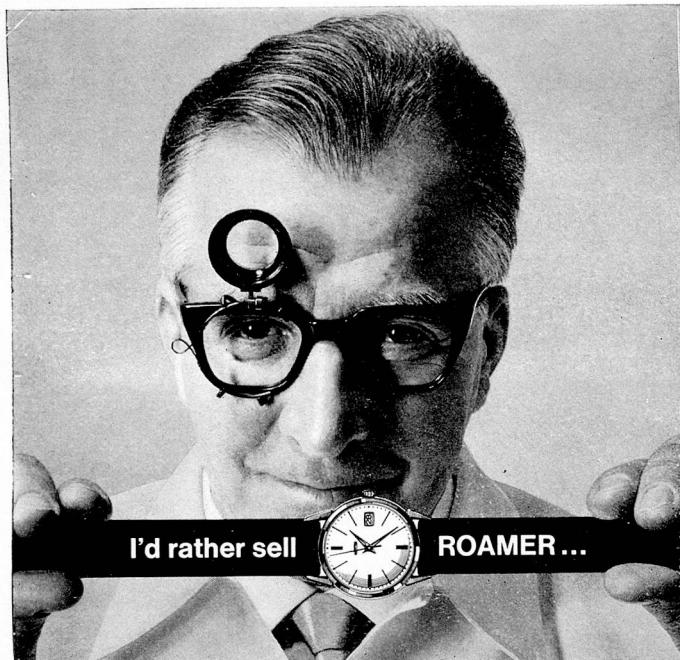
Schiffleuten: fishermen, boatsmen, rope-makers.

Kämbel: gardeners, oil merchants, dealers.

Constaffel:* patricians.

*At the sign of the hound, Guild-house: the Rüden.

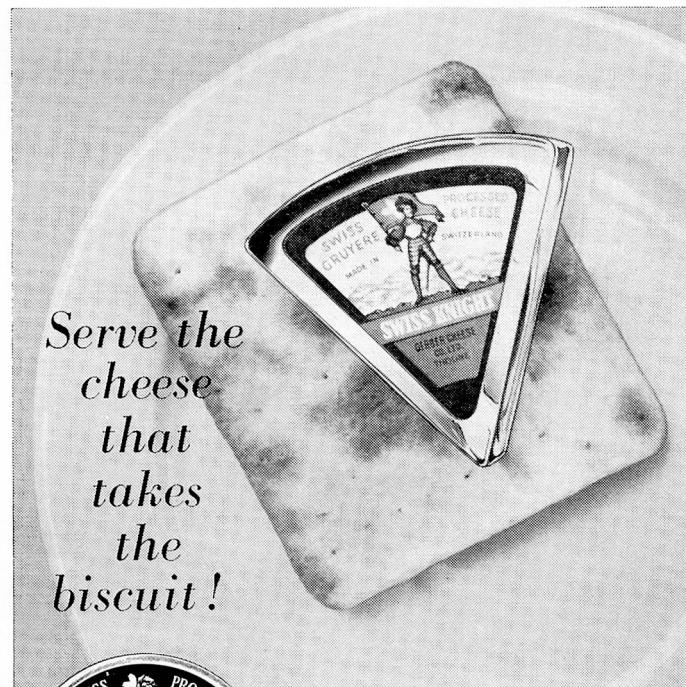
[S.N.T.O.]



The advantageously priced Swiss precision watch of world fame. Produced entirely under one roof by 1,200 highly skilled craftsmen and women in a factory established 1888.

ROAMER
OF SWITZERLAND

ROAMER WATCHES (England) LTD.
29/35 Farringdon Road, London E.C.1



This is the one. The processed Gruyere customers ask for *by name*. Swiss Knight. People know Swiss Knight. They remember its flavourful sharpness—the taste that says "Made in Switzerland".

Available in 4 oz., 6 oz., 8 oz. and assorted packs. For special caterer's prices, please contact.

The Nestle Co. Ltd., Sales Div., Hayes, Mddx,