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: - (1971)

Heft: 1626

Rubrik: News from the colony

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: 20.01.2026

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

NEWS FROM THE COLONY

"HEAL'S DISCOVER SWITZERLAND"

Heal & Son Ltd. is one of the finest furniture shops in London. It is a few blocks away from its main rival, Maples, at Tottenham Court Road. But the competition is not too sharp, however, because Heal specialise in modern objects and decorative wares, whereas Maples is more interested in traditional furniture.

"Heal's Discover Switzerland" was the sign of an exhibition taking place at the shop and the start of an intensified sale of Swiss products. It received publicity in the *Observer* colour supplement, in the *Guardian* and probably got coverage in other nationals as well.

A special breakfast was held on October 5th to accompany the preview of the exhibition. It started at 8.30 a.m. Mind you, it was a hard-won breakfast, because guests were first required to play a little game, consisting in collecting 22 little cantonal shields from a multitude of stands in every department. These cardboard shields lay in bowls at those stands with Swiss articles on sale. The participant thus was in the obligation of finding them and making a thorough tour of the whole store, which was quite interesting.

The breakfast took place in the store's restaurant on the fourth floor. The caterers were Swiss Centre Restaurants and they had prepared a divine *birchermuessli*, a wide assortment of Swiss breads and cheeses.

From one of Heal's store-buyers we learnt that this emphasis on Swiss goods was an entirely new policy. Buyers from Heal had been "shopping around" in Switzerland for almost a year, and were amazed by the variety and quality of what they saw. It was a new discovery, said the store-buyer. To my question whether the style of household articles was up to the Scandinavian standard, he said that what they had discovered in Switzerland matched Finnish and Danish production both in style and quality. He conceded that the prices were rather high in the main, but were justified by the high standard of workmanship involved.

Most of Heal's stock is British-made, but the firm seems keen on presenting a remarkable choice of foreign made goods. One of the reasons for dealing with Switzerland was her membership of EFTA and the easier terms of trade which this implied.

An idea of the Swiss articles currently on sale at Heal's can be grasped from their catalogue. Samples are Swiss upholstery in hide (De Sede, Klingnau); Swiss fabrics (Baumann, Langenthal); Coir carpeting (Ruckstuhl, Langenthal); cotton bed-linen (Schlossberg, Zurich); Swiss blankets (Swiss Cloth and Blanket Company, Pfungen); glass (Roberto Niederer, Zurich) and stainless steel ware (Zug).

Again, all these goods are far from cheap, but should certainly find a market among the upper-income groups which are increasingly open to the Continent.

THE "CURLY HORNED COW"

This heading is the suggestive title of a new anthology of Swiss/Romansch Stories and Poems published by Peter Owen Ltd. This event of its publication was marked by a reception at the Residence of the Embassy attended by 130 people, the majority of whom were English.

One may legitimately ask what chances of commercial success a book containing the translated version of German-Swiss poems can possibly have. I asked this to Mr. Peter Owen, founder of the publishing firm that bears his name. He said that the chances that the book would sell were remote, but that he was practically secured against a loss by the fact that the publication was sponsored by UNESCO.

In fact, the *Curly Horned Cow* is a work contained in the UNESCO Translation Series of Representative Works. The Peter Owen Prospectus says of it that it is a selection from Romansch literature ranging from the seventeenth century to the present day. "These languages, used in Switzerland, have an interesting and hitherto untranslated literature, which in recent years has enjoyed a revival. Some of the original texts face the poetry translations".

The selection, editing and prefacing has been carried out by Mr. Reto Bezzola. The translation from the *Ladin* and the *Surselvan* has been a co-operative effort by five persons.

Peter Owen Limited seem to know how to choose their authors. They introduced Hermann Hess, Jean Giono and Blaise Cendrars to this country, and have an impressive list of other leading foreign authors. The *Curly Horned Cow* comes as the third edition of a Swiss author, not counting the many novels of Blaise Cendrars. The last one, *Noah's Ark* by Hugo Loetscher was also introduced in a reception under the auspices of the Embassy.

Mr. Owen said that he lost money on that title. That rather clever little book (only 139 pages) was selling at £1.75. The edition of 2,000 copies was far from exhausted. Mr. Owen says that the market for novels is extremely tight and that he could not have expected any significant success anyway. Choosing original authors was in his line, but that always involved the risk of a loss.

SWISS RESTAURANT TO CLOSE DOWN IN PORTSMOUTH

In Commercial Road, Portsmouth, very near the Theatre Royal, there is a restaurant offering a vast, glassy front and advertising continental cuisine. Two small Swiss shields can be seen on each side of the entrance. This restaurant is owned by Mr. *Bartholomew Albertolli*, whose father had emigrated from Tessin in 1895 and worked at the Cafe Royal in London, haunt of Oscar Wilde, under its proprietor Mr. Nicole, before creating this restaurant in Portsmouth.

Now the son, Mr. Bartholomew Albertolli, has sent me a proud cutting from *The News* of Portsmouth, with the information that his Commercial Road establishment will be demolished in the course of a local re-development plan. Mr. Albertolli and his family will be leaving the premises after having run them for 63 years.

According to the Portsmouth *News*, this restaurant was a "Victorian gem" responsible for bringing continental cuisine to Portsmouth. Owing to its proximity to the Theatre Royal (whose future is now in the balance) the Albertollis have served many famous show-biz guests. These artists and the Portsmouth upper-crust used to come to their restaurant after performances at the Theatre Royal. Laurel and Hardy, Frankie Howerd, the Beverley Sisters and many others are well remembered at the *Café Continental* on Commercial Road.

THE COMMON MARKET IN THE BIBLE

Those people who attended the morning service of the French-speaking Swiss Church on Sunday, 10th October, had a theological surprise. Listening to an 80-year-old guest preacher, they were told that Britain's application to the Common Market was predicted in the Bible. The clue can be found in Daniel 7, where the grisly description of a monster with 10 horns seen by Daniel in a vision is seen as a reference to the future Europe, which, with Britain and the other candidates in, will be made up of ten nations. (Our understanding of the sermon could be wrong, however. Our preacher may have wanted to say that the inclusion of ten countries in Europe would be full of foreboding—ten being a mystical number.) Our preacher also found references to Albania in the Old Testament and saw in the third chapter of Peter II a firm indication that we were nearing the end of the world.