

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: - (1974)

Heft: 1679

Rubrik: Swiss events

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Download PDF: 03.02.2026

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Published Twice Monthly at
63/67 TABERNACLE STREET
LONDON E.C.2
Tel: 01-253 2321
Telegrams: Paperwyse London
**PREPAID SUBSCRIPTION RATES
(POST FREE)**
UNITED KINGDOM
24 issues £2.40
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SWITZERLAND and elsewhere
12 issues Frs. 13—or £1.30
24 issues Frs. 25—or £2.50
Swiss subscriptions may be paid into
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IN PLACE OF COMMENT

In the absence of our Editor who is visiting the Continent at present, it falls to me to endeavour to give some comment upon affairs which may be of interest to the Swiss Colony. The great difficulty arises here that not being of Swiss origin myself and in fact having only visited Switzerland once in my life, I would hesitate to try and foist any views I may have on to natives of that Country.

I have in the course of my duties with the *Swiss Observer* met many Swiss people in person and have spoken to many more on the telephone. In the main I have found them pleasant to converse with and reasonably understanding when the Paper has been late in being published. It is acknowledged that this has happened on occasion, very often through circumstances beyond the control of the Editor. Occasionally one is faced with expressions indicating that "it wouldn't happen in Switzerland", but being of a mild disposition I always allow for the annoyance of the moment and console myself with the thought that it is doubtful if any Country can claim complete perfection.

The time is now rapidly approaching when we natives of the U.K. will be going to the ballot box to cast our votes for people to represent us in Parliament. Opinion Polls at the time of writing this, seem to indicate that there is no great difference between the percentage of voters who will favour either the Labour or Conservative Parties, the final result at this stage is very much in the balance and it could so happen that the Liberal Party who have done very well in Local and By-Elections, could hold the balance between the two Major parties and find themselves effectively in power. In view of our present troubles the results will be very interesting.

We British must be a perverse lot. We have the Miners and the Railway men digging their heels in and the Government not budging, with the resultant crises. A friend of mine who has lived in Madrid, Spain, for the past 7 years recently returned to this Country for a short stay. I asked her what were the main differences she had noticed on coming back and she replied that when she first went away everything in the Country

seemed to be going along very nicely and everyone was gloomy and grumbling. On her return, the first thing she noticed was that in spite of all the troubles everyone appeared to be much more cheerful and she had seen more smiling faces than ever before. The same thing happened during the War, when we were on our own, the spirit of the people was uplifted and most people were "chummy" and cheerful. Seems that we thrive on trouble. I think it should be mentioned here that in spite of "work to rule", one day strikes, etc. which have occurred on our Railways, the incidence of absenteeism in Offices and Shops has been extraordinarily low, this is very encouraging when one considers that some commuters have to travel quite long distances; in the ordinary way by train. They have found alternative means of getting to work, buses and underground. It lengthens the travelling time of course, quite considerably and adds to the stresses and strains of working in the larger Cities and Towns, particularly London. However, in spite of all this people remain quite cheerful. Of course once at work, for at least two days per week, no electric lights are allowed and no electric heating at all during the whole of the week. The S.O. Office manage with paraffin heater and paraffin lamps.

It is hoped that the meanderings above will not be too disappointing to those who look forward to the more intelligent Comment by our Editor. You can be assured that the latter will appear in the future issues.

HJT

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SWISS EVENTS

TUNE IN TO THE SWISS SHORT WAVE SERVICE

The Swiss of Britain are known to be among the most regular listeners of the Swiss Short Wave Service. However, some of our readers may have forgotten the existence of this service. Provided one has a radio which can pick up short wave transmissions, one can have a good reception of the services in German, French and English. The Swiss Broadcasting Corporation's European and Overseas Services have recently sent us their 1974 pamphlet. We've printed below the pages referring to the German, French and English Programmes. The SBC also transmits in Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic and Esperanto.

Note that Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) is one hour ahead of British Winter time: 09h GMT is 8 a.m. in this country. The list printed below is not complete. For example, the programme "Point du Jour" starting daily at 8h GMT includes a feature on Swiss cooking on the third Saturday of every month, and a commentary on Swiss history by Henri Guillemin on the 4th Sunday of the month. For full details, ask for the pamphlet by applying to the Schweizerischer Kurzwellendienst, CH-3000 Berne 16, Switzerland.

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF TOURISM AND VACATIONS

The 16th International Exhibition of Tourism and Vacations will be held in the precincts of the Palais de Beaulieu in Lausanne (Switzerland) from 23rd February to 3rd March, 1974. The number of national tourist offices taking part breaks all records; Australia, New Zealand, the Fiji Islands, Cyprus, Japan, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, West Germany, Iran, The USSR, Hungary, Tanzania, France, Morocco, Tunisia, Italy, Kenya, Bulgaria, Rumania, Yugoslavia, the Lebanon, Egypt and Turkey are all organizing stands. This year — a great year for records — a record number of exhibitors is also expected in the photographic sector, which is particularly popular with the general public; the 23 firms taking part will all be ready to advise and even initiate the many keen amateur photographers, who will be provided with charming models ready to pose for their cameras. In the leisure sector, visitors will be able to admire the latest appliances produced by 23 leading manufacturers. Camping and caravanning enthusiasts will be equally favoured, there being 15 exhibitors in the caravanning sector, six in the camping-bus sector and fourteen tent manufacturers (i.e. over 80 makes). There is also a record number of participants in the nautical sector, 38 exhibitors having decided to display their latest products at the Lausanne Exhibition.