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MOBILE FACTORY FOR THE MANUFACTURE OF DUROPLASTIC FOAMS

A company in Lausanne has developed a miniature factory for the on-site manufacture of duroplastic foams of varying densities and with a wide range of industrial applications.

They can, in fact, be used in the construction of rural dwellings, silos, cattle sheds, cold rooms or deep-freeze units, special foundation rafts, furniture, containers and special over-size packaging, boat hulls, etc; the properties of these foams make them ideal as thermal insulation for cisterns, tanks, façades of buildings, roofing, mains piping, etc, as well as the anti-corrosion protection of ships and machine tools, not to mention the waterproofing of roofs and floors.

The mobile factory developed by this Swiss firm can produce up to 200 cubic metres of foam a day with a density of 40kg/m^3 . Thanks to its powerful generator it works entirely autonomously.

It can be driven at the speed of an ordinary lorry and can be equipped with special all-purpose tyres for use in countries whose road network is as yet undeveloped. This mobile factory enables countries building up their industrial potential to avoid heavy investment outlay on the building of a conventional factory, which would moreover require the construction of a road or even a railway network for supplying the basic materials and enabling the finished products to be marketed.

ELECTRONICS TO THE RESCUE OF THE PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED

Thanks to the "Linguaduc" range of appliances produced by a Swiss firm in Berne, specialising in the manufacture of medical articles, the seriously handicapped, and even the totally paralysed, can now — without any outside help — put on the light, telephone, turn the pages of a book and even type a letter.

The "Linguaduc", in fact, enables people deprived of the use of their limbs to control various appliances with their tongue. It consists of a sensor placed near the patient's mouth, a mounting attachment and a housing containing the electronic and electrical control parts. Orders are transmitted by the tongue, or rather its moisture.

All the disabled person has to do is touch the contacts of the sensor with his tongue, in order to control the various electronic circuits. With the "Linguaduc" a paralysed person can switch on the various electrical devices connected to the appliance such as, for example, a call bell or alarm signal, a radio or television set, a telephone, an electrical typewriter, the automatic opening or closing of a door or window.

The appliance can also easily be adapted for use at work points in industry.

The Swiss make noise!

Six Swiss visitors helped to shatter the tranquillity of the Essex countryside when they visited these islands on Sunday 6 April.

Who were they? — You might well ask. They were the Swiss team who competed in the International Side-Car Moto-Cross event sponsored by Strand Glass Co Ltd, and promoted by Halstead Motor Cycle Club.

And how did the Swiss team fare? Judging by the official results, not too well. But when it is pointed out that only two machines were able to race (because of mechanical troubles in the third) fourth place was more than laudible!

Very bad weather had made the course at Little Loveney Hall, Wakes Colne, extremely wet and soft. This course is usually considered dry and sometimes too dusty, but on the day water had to be pumped out of one pit, and after the second race a bottom loop



had to be eliminated in the interest of good racing because of mud. Despite the atrocious conditions, a crowd of 5,000 came to watch and fortunately the sun shone for most of the five hours of very exciting racing.

The course had three jumps and varied terrain ranging from steep banks and muddy pits to exciting corners and fast straights. Overall it challenged even the most experienced riders.

The Strand Glass International Side-Car Moto-Cross is a team event of two races, each of 30 minutes plus 2 laps. Five countries were represented — Holland, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland and Great Britain — and each team consisted of three of the best side-car riders from the country.

Switzerland raced with one-third of the team short as Hans Klauser blew his engine during practice. Despite this handicap the Swiss achieved fourth

position, which might have been third but for the fact that one of their riders received some assistance during a race when stuck in mud, disqualifying them from that leg of the race.

And the official results: Overall position: First, Holland; Second, Great Britain; Third, Denmark; Fourth, Switzerland; Fifth, Sweden.

And those who represented Switzerland: Fritz Gerber, who first came to prominence in 1970 when he was the Swiss Champion. Probably his best seasons were 1970 to 1973, but last year raced at Kajbornesbusch. Unfortunately he had mechanical problems and did not score.

Hans Klauser, also a very experienced international. He is now involved in the business side of motor cycles, importing Westlake engines from England. In 1971 he and Nick Thompson

duelled for position at the first year of the European Championship. Thompson was second and Klauser third. Klauser had a set-back in racing when his passenger was killed in a road accident, and for the past two years he has been training a new passenger.

George Tabarin, a new name, is a protégé of Albert Courajod, maestro of Swiss racing for years when he used to win every race he entered. Tabarin qualified only last year for international racing, and this was his first time in England.

Holland certainly deserved their win. Willi Van de Laan, the youngest member of the team, gained the best positions for the Dutch with a second and a first. Ton and Fons van Heugten, the brothers, followed each other over the finish line in both races; in the first Ton took fifth and Fons sixth, and in the second Ton took third and Fons second.

SPORTS NEWS

SOME SWISS SIT DOWN TO SKI

Ski-bobbing, sit-down skiing that once was most popular with the over-the-hill gang, is today a serious racing sport with its own world championship competition. Participants come from special clubs and associations that have sprung up throughout Central Europe since 1965.

The ski-bob has become more sophisticated since it was introduced as a ski-bicycle by a Swiss cycling champion in the early 1920s. The modern version is equipped with a comfortable upholstered saddle, shock-absorbing springs and runners constructed with a special fast coating. The rider, who steers the vehicle with a handlebar wears shoe-skis to provide better directional control.

Collisions between skiers and ski-bobbers have been resolved by creating separate runs for those who prefer their skiing seated. It gives the "bobbers" a chance to improve their skills, as well as to avoid disapproving scowls from the traditionalists.

The problem-solving Swiss have even worked out a method for transporting the vehicles uphill. Special hooks have been attached to ski-lifts. Some vehicles can be separated easily, placed in cablecar cabins, and be reassembled at the top of the slopes.

According to instructors, the sport can be taught in two or three lessons. Athletically inclined people can also just do-it-themselves for it is basically easy and quite safe. Clothing used for ski-bobbing is the same as for skiing.

A list of resorts which have

facilities for ski-bobbing is available free by writing to the Swiss National Tourist

Office, 1 New Coventry Street, London W1.

HAS PRESIDENT THIEU TRANSFERRED HIS MONEY TO SWITZERLAND?

The charter company "Balair" denied reports that it had transported from Indochina some 16 tons of gold on behalf of former President Nugyen Van Thieu. Reports to this effect were circulated both in Basle and in Saigon, where it was said the company refused to load the gold for technical reasons.

However, Balair stressed it had never accepted any shipment of this kind. The company has been used for airlifting humanitarian aid to Saigon.

The rumours nevertheless sparked off questions about the Government's attitude to an eventual transfer of funds by the fallen South Vietnamese President. The answer from official circles is that he would have to pay the negative interest

rate on his deposit, like everybody else.

There is nothing the Government can do or would do to prevent such transfers which belong to the realm of private banking operations. Banking secrecy would, for a start, prevent the authorities from laying their hands on the funds and this may well be the case when the present regime's successor asks for the money.

Cases like these arise from time to time. An Ethiopian delegation recently made a vain trip to Switzerland to get hold of Emperor Haile Selassie's fortune. Another important case, which has strained relations with Algeria, concerned the ownership of the war treasure of the National Liberation Front of that country. The case was brought to the Federal Court which upheld a previous decision that the treasure should not return to Algeria.

Successful time keeping!

The British Overseas Trade Board supported 31 British firms at the third European Watch, Clock and Jewellery Fair held in Basle last month.

The joint venture displays, organised in collaboration with the British Export Council for Jewellery and Giftware and the British Clock and Watch Manufacturers Association, were nearly twice as large as those last year.

Exhibitors showed both traditional and modern styles. In the horology

section products ranged from the reproduction of famous British designs up to the most modern electronic timekeepers and mass production clocks.

In the jewellery section emphasis was on the latest British art, but displays of traditional silverware also attracted attention.

Exclusive to Swiss manufacturers until three years ago, the show is now opened to other European countries and will remain a meeting place for specialists.

A sheaf of gold encloses the Omega watch crowned by a crystal of faceted quartz and suspended from a necklace of golden beads. One of a limited edition designed by Andrew Grima for Omega.

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OMEGA

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