

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:	- (1977)
Heft:	1735
Rubrik:	Business news

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: 15.02.2026

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

BUSINESS NEWS

SWISS PRECISION ENGINEERING COMPANY CELEBRATES CENTENARY IN SWITZERLAND AND HALF CENTURY IN BRITAIN.

During 1976 the Swiss company of Sphinxwerke Müller & Co AG of Solothurn, is celebrating its 100th anniversary. At the same time in Great Britain the subsidiary company Müller & Co (England) celebrates its 50th anniversary.

For a precision engineering company, Müller had unusual origins. One of the co-founders, Josef Müller was running the family flour milling business with its associated bakery. Having inherited the business from his father, Josef Müller was seeking more ambitious outlets for his talents and soon came to the conclusion that the family business had its limitations.

At the same time his fellow countryman, Jakob Schweizer was endeavouring to capitalise on an invention which he had just completed. This was an automatic machine for the production of watch screws. Hitherto the

Swiss reputation for the fine precision work involved in watchmaking had been founded on the painstaking hand work of 'outworkers' who, in their own homes, turned the screws on hand lathes and slotted each one individually with a file. This produced neither the quality nor the quantity demanded by the growing watch industry.

In 1872 the two men met and each realised the possibilities that a partnership offered. From then onwards the Müller family milling business became of less importance. In 1876 the company of Müller & Schweizer was founded at Solothurn in the premises of the old mill, known as the Schanzmühle.

The next notable stage in the development of the company was in 1886 when a hydro-electric generating plant was constructed four-and-a-half miles from the works at the village of Kriegstetten on the river Oesch. Power was transmitted to the factory to drive an electric motor which had replaced the steam engine, which itself had been a replacement for the original gas engine. The generating equipment was designed by Charles Brown who became one of the founders of Brown, Boveri & Co. The installation was Europe's first long distance electrical power transmission system for industrial use.

The Schweizer design of movable lathe headstock has remained basically unchanged in today's Swiss automatic screw machines, compared with the fixed

headstock of modern American automatics. The town of Solothurn also owes much of its present prosperity to the efforts of the two men and their successors in the company.

Following the death of Josef Müller, the company was then run by his children and in 1916 was transformed into a joint stock corporation. The company is still a family concern and has among its directors descendants of Josef Müller.

In 1926 following expansion in Europe, a company was set up in England as a sales and distribution organisation. This was evidently successful as in 1932 a factory was established in London at Park Royal.

Mr. P. B. Hartmann, together with other Swiss technicians, came to England for this purpose and his influence in the establishing of one of the largest independent automatic precision turned part companies in the United Kingdom, is still very much in evidence. His 50 years' active service with the company covers a period as Technical Director and from 1949 to 1971 as Managing Director. He now serves in a consultative capacity and at 75 years of age still plays an important role in the fortunes of the company.

Unfortunately, during the early part of World War II the factory was bombed. The decision was made to move to Cleobury Mortimer in rural Shropshire. Despite wartime restrictions on materials and labour, a factory was built and

Geneva and the Alps.....

... from only £45

If you propose flying to Switzerland this winter then take advantage of CPT's unique service.

- ★ 6 departures every week by British Caledonian jet from Gatwick to Geneva. Any combinations of days (excl. Tuesdays) from 1 night to 13 weeks. Prices from only £45.00. (Flight timetable shown below).
- ★ Wide choice of Geneva hotels from 2 star to De Luxe.
- ★ Special Christmas and New Year flight programme at normal prices.

And for Skiers

- ★ Skiing in Courmayeur Weekend and 1 and 2 week ski holidays to this fabulous resort, with prices from £49.00 for a weekend and £65.00 for a week.
- ★ Alpine Express service to other leading Swiss and European airports with prices from only £45.00.
- ★ Special bus and coach transfers to many of the top resorts in France and Switzerland and reduced car hire rates — ideal for small groups of independent skiers.

DAY PERIOD	WEDNESDAY 2/11 - 29/3	THURSDAY 3/11 - 30/3	FRIDAY 4/11 - 31/3	SATURDAY 17/12 - 25/3	SUNDAY (1) 18/12 - 26/3	SUNDAY (2) 6/11 - 26/3	MONDAY 7/11 - 27/3
OUTWARD							
Flight No.	BR417 1210 1435	BR425 1725 1950	BR403 1405 (1630)	BR637 1040 1305	BR635 1015 1240	BR421 1725 1950	BR407 1405 1630
Dep GATWICK							
Arr GENEVA							
RETURN							
Flight No.	BR418 1535 1600	BR426 2050 2115	BR404 1710 1735	BR638 1405 1430	BR636 1330 1355	BR422 2050 2115	BR408 1710 1735
Dep GENEVA							
Arr GATWICK							
Continental Times 1 hour earlier	22 + 29 March	23 + 30 March	24 + 31 March	25 March	19 + 26 March	19 + 26 March	20 + 27 March



**Crawford
Perry
Travel Ltd**

260A Fulham Road, London SW10 9EL
Telephone: 01-351 2191/6
Telex: 919078 "SKI CPT G"

For details of our complete Winter
Programme please call our office or
return the attached coupon. →



Ski Courmayeur

Geneva

Name _____

Address _____

production established. The factory was used to produce parts for the war effort, including components for 20 mm cannon shell fuses.

Following the war, the British company reverted to its peacetime activities of producing precision turned parts in a variety of ferrous and non-ferrous metals. Sizes of products range from the smallest screw to larger components up to 42 mm diameter.

The factory is equipped with 250 modern automatic machines (single and multi-spindle) of Swiss, American, German and British origin. As many operations as possible are carried out on the automatics for economic production. There are very comprehensive facilities for carrying out second operations and finishing work including machines, many of which are automated, for processes such as turning, drilling, slotting, milling and thread milling, tapping, reaming and several types of grinding. The company has a staff of skilled tool designers and toolmakers. To produce the type of fine work for which the company is renowned, the tools have to be made to extremely fine limits. Virtually all the tools required are made on the premises.

The high quality is maintained under the supervision of the Quality Control Department with a combination of shop floor and final inspection. There is a well-equipped Standards Room with some of the most up-to-date inspection and testing equipment available.

However well-equipped a factory may be, it cannot manufacture a consistently high standard of products without a competent workforce. Müller are fortunate in having a high standard in their training department which enables work's apprentices to be given all necessary training in auto-setting, tool and gauge manufacturing. Over 98% of the skilled men have been trained by the company.

Mr. R. Burki, whose family have been involved in screw making for many

years, became an apprentice at Sphinx Works, Soleure in 1926. Soon after qualifying he joined the technical team which was sent to England in 1932 to set up the U.K. factory. In 1970 Mr. Burki was made a Director having held various technical and managerial posts. He celebrates 50 years of continuous service with the Müller organisation.

Over the years, the emphasis on manufacturing has changed from the actual production of bench type automatics to manufacturing and supplying customers' requirements in high-quality precision turned parts. These cover all industries including manufacturers of meteorological instruments, scientific and electrical instruments, computers, record players, domestic appliances and optical instruments. In fact, anywhere that precision turned parts and screws are required manufactured to very fine limits, Müller can justifiably claim to be among the top suppliers.

Since the early days in the Schanzmühle, the Müller organisation has grown considerably. In addition to the original premises which have now grown to employ approximately 400 people, there is a company at St. Louis in France producing screws and turned parts; a branch factory at Pruntrut in the Jura district of Switzerland producing carbide tools; and a subsidiary company Fevisa SA in Geneva producing high precision parts, gears and pinions. There are sales offices or agents in most European countries, including a sales office for the British company in London.

A further activity of the company is to act as stockholders and distributors in the U.K. of Small Tool products made at the works of the Swiss company. These tools are all produced very precisely and a speciality is the inclusion of diameters which are extremely fine. Included in the range are twist drills from 3.00 mm diameter down to 0.05 mm diameter (this latter finer than a human hair), and taps and dies in threads from 5.00 mm down to such minute thread sizes as 0.30 mm

A more recent addition to the tool range is the specialist range 'Solodur' solid carbide drills, for use in drilling printed circuit boards. These tools are supplied to a wide range of industries, but especially those concerned with fine work such as jet drilling, instrument making, dental trade, and electrical and electronic apparatus.

SSIH INTER-CITY EXHIBITION

To make jewellers' lives easier SSIH exhibited their product ranges to the retailer in a new way.

A specially-equipped four-coach train has been visiting ten main line stations throughout Britain.

British Rail stations being right in the middle of city centres meant that the retailer was able to visit the exhibition with the minimum of inconvenience.

On board the train were ranges of Omega, Tissot, Lanco, Moeris pocket watches and Hirsch watch straps together with the pre-Christmas advertising and promotion plans.

BALLY

...steps ahead

LONDON · PARIS · GENEVA
COLOGNE · NEW YORK

Branches at:
Oxford Circus
New Bond Street
Old Bond Street
Regent Street
Swiss Centre
Leicester Sq.
Sloane Street
Brompton Road
Kings Road
Hampstead
Golders Green
Also now at
Brent Cross

Step into something Bally...

PARTY TRAVEL TO SWITZERLAND

We operate a small fleet of the highest quality luxury touring coaches and specialise in party travel to Switzerland with over 30 round-trips so far this year. We can operate to any schedule but the most popular and comfortable route is via one of the longer Channel services, overnight with sleeping berths arranged, followed by a day-time coach journey, arriving in the evening.

If you arrange party travel, for any purpose and to anywhere in Switzerland, contact us — we'll give you good service at very attractive prices.

SURREY INTERNATIONAL COACHWAYS

Devon House, High Street, Cranleigh, Surrey. Tel: (04886) 71444