

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: - (1978)
Heft: 1744

Artikel: A Nostalgic moment
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-688888>

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: 04.12.2025

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

A NOSTALGIC MOMENT



On this Rütli meadow on the shores of Lake Lucerne, Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden signed a pact of mutual defence in 1291, thus founding the alliance which was later to become the Swiss Confederation.



The lighting of bonfires as night falls is one of the ceremonies attached to our National Day.

One early August day in 1291 men from the valley communities of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden met and swore to help one another in warding off attacks and thwarting injustice. The pact — written in Latin and sealed — is still preserved in the Swiss archives at Schwyz. Since 1st August, 1891, the 600th anniversary of this event — the birth of the Swiss Confederation — has been a day of national celebration, though until a few years ago the ceremonies were confined to the evening hours. As night fell church bells rang out through the land and the people of town and city assembled in school grounds and, by the light of bengal flares listened to brass bands, watched the local gymnasts build human pyramids and paid attention to solemn addresses by a representative of the local government. And then, at about 10 pm, the party broke up and each and everyone went his own way to finish the evening.

Now, the evening event has grown into a day's holiday. The bells still ring, the fascination of the tall bonfires, and the windows decorated with glowing Chinese lanterns remains. The Swiss flag with its white cross on a red background decorates public buildings and many private houses. The speeches — including one from the Confederation's President to all the people — have become a platform for statements on current affairs.

In the founding cantons, in rural areas and among Swiss people overseas, 1st August still remains a celebration during which thoughts go back to the origins of the homeland. But for the country's children history takes second place to the lanterns and fireworks associated with Switzerland's National Day.

Pictures and story by courtesy of SNTU.

•Message Continued from Page 15

the pious ones, the doctors of the law and of theology. This is a warning for me. He loved the sinners, the poor, those who asked for his help. He did not fight to defend his life and his property — but he defended his friends and everybody who was maltreated. He stood for the truth — and it cost his life. But he knew, it was not the end. That is how God thinks and acts — a God of great freedom.

This is how I feel and what I think and believe — and I wish you could do the same. In the Name of God — a Life worth living! whatever your Creed. May your God go with you.

Fr. Paul Bossard.