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SWISS OPEN-AIR MUSEUM

The idea of open-air museums came from Scandinavia, that is to say museums of rural buildings and other installations which show lifestyles and rural culture of times gone by. The houses are grouped according to region, and we find a multi-purpose building dating to 1797 from Ostermundigen with a granary, a half-timbered house, a "Hochstudhaus", from Madiswil, which was originally built in 1710 and has been added to by a granary from Kiesen. There is a retired farmer's cottage with an oven, from Detligen and a field barn (1702) from Faulensee. The ovenhouse from Oberwangen serves as the ticket office. The "Alter Bären" from Rapperswil (Berne) houses the restaurant today. An old house from Adelboden (end of seventeenth century) has a boiler for pigfeed. In the group of Eastern Switzerland we find a house from Richterswil, Zürich, probably from 1770 and a multi-purpose building from Uesslingen in the Canton of Thurgau. There are some more, most of which are open to the public, and various crafts like basket making, weaving, lath-box making, spinning and charcoal burning are shown.



On the Ballenberg near Brienz an open-air museum on farm culture has been established in a 50 hectare park. The museum displays some of the most important settlement patterns in Switzerland. Picture by courtesy of SNTO.

FUTURE PLANS

There are plans for more buildings, and the Foundation Ballenberg at Brienz intend to make it into a representative collection to show the most important forms of housing and settlement in Switzerland. Old ways of living and working have undergone a marked change during the last decades. The characteristic farmhouses, once an expression of national consciousness, are now mere relics of a culture that no longer exists. For that reason, the Foundation considers it its main task to preserve some of the most valuable and historically significant country buildings without alterations to either the interiors or the outside, and to install in each house a wide variety of objects, furniture and tools.

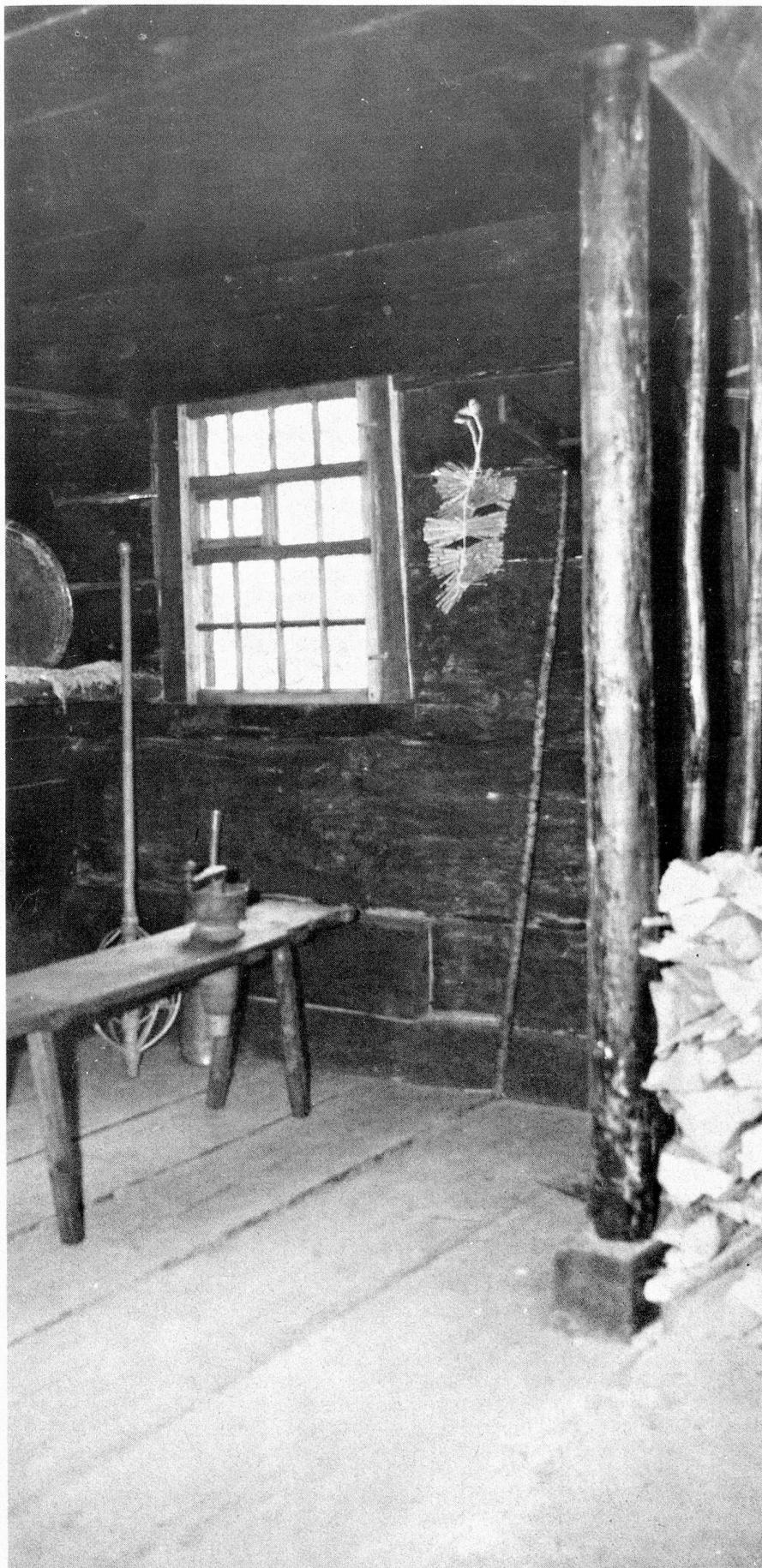
At first, the idea that an open-air museum in the Bernese Oberland should also show houses from other regions did not find favour. But once one has visited Ballenberg, one realises the value of what the Foundation is trying to do, so far with great success. These remarkable testimonies of past craftsmanship, architectural skills and cultural lifestyles will be preserved and handed down to future generations.

M.M.



At the Ballenberg museum this barn dating to about 1830 is a major attraction. Picture by courtesy of SNTO.

A SCANDINAVIAN IDEA



A charming glimpse inside an old farm house is one of the charms of the Ballenberg museum.
Picture by courtesy of SNTO.

MANUAL OF SWISS TOURISM

The "Manual of Swiss Tourism", which has just come out, is the first complete directory of the Swiss travel industry. This 560-page work of reference contains thousands of addresses, gives information on all the organizations listed and indicates useful contacts. It also covers travel agencies, the Press, hotel chains, tourist offices, transport firms and tourist personnel training institutes in the country. This manual, planned to be brought out regularly each year, will be an invaluable work tool for all circles interested in Swiss tourism. It is available from *Urs Meierhofer, Studio de Tourisme, Case postale 238, CH-1000 Lausanne 22*.

SWISSAIR TO MAINTAIN LOW DENSITY SEATING

Swissair has decided to maintain low-density seating in its wide-body aircraft, in keeping with its commitment to high standards of service and comfort.

The airline rejected the idea of increasing the seating configuration from nine to ten abreast on its Boeing 747s and from eight to nine abreast on the DC-10-30s. In doing so it took into consideration the wishes of its regular and frequent travellers as well as those of the full fare passengers who from April this year will be able to reserve a particular seat on long haul routes at time of booking.

With its decision in favour of quality and comfort Swissair also indicated its resolve not to engage in "mass tourism" beyond the present scale. It considers its associate companies, Balair and Compagnie de Transport Aérien (CTA), better suited to the requirements of this particular market. Balair is shortly to take delivery of a new DC-10-30 aircraft seating 345 passengers.

It is intended in future to seat frequent and business travellers in the front sections of wide-body aircraft and tourist groups in the rear section so that passengers travelling together can also sit together.

Swissair has also decided not to introduce a three-class system. It considers the differences in economy class tariffs to be justified by the conditions attaching to them and sees no reason why users of special tariffs should receive inferior service.