

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: - (1979)
Heft: 1757

Rubrik: Letter to the editor

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: 13.08.2025

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

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

The following readers will have their birthdays within the next month: Mr. J. G. Michel will be 71 on the 8th September, Mr. E. Ulmann will be 76 on the 9th and Mrs. Catherine Burren will have her birthday on the same day. Mr. W. B. Sigerist (Territet/VD) will be 88 on the 23rd September.

Mr. and Mrs. H. Weber will celebrate their 27th wedding anniversary on the 20th September and Mr. and Mrs. H. Humbel their 41st on 24th September.

Congratulations and best wishes to these readers and any others of whose special days we are not aware.

Mr. Vogel is getting younger all the time! We would like to apologise for the misprint in the July issue of the *Swiss Observer*: (Birthdays and Anniversaries) Mr. Jakob Vogel was born on 2nd July, 1881 which makes him 98 this year, not 92. Many happy returns!

an office which he still holds with distinction.

When he celebrated his 70th birthday, we stated that it would not have been correct to say that Maurice Roethlisberger lived in retirement, and now, 10 years later, it is still not the case, for he leads an active life. Apart from his activities in the Swiss community, he is engaged in other voluntary work as well. His many friends wish him an enjoyable 80th birthday and many happy returns of it. May he and his wife Helen be granted many more years of health and happiness.

MM

HENRY KNOBEL, 100 YEARS OLD

Our compatriot Henry Knobel was 100 years old on 27th August.

In spite of the fact that he has unfortunately lost his sight and his hearing is failing him of late, he enjoys overall remarkably good

health, which must have something to do with the reputed sturdiness of the Bernese (Henry Knobel originates from Richterswil) and also with the excellent care his daughter, Mrs. Nora Gulati, whom he lives with, is able to give him.

Henry Knobel came to Britain in 1914 and worked as an engineer with Metropolitan Vickers for many years.

He first lived in the North of England and subsequently settled in London with his family. When he was younger he used to attend the Swiss Church in London. Mr. Knobel was widowed 25 years ago, but he was able to celebrate his century with his two daughters, his son, three grandchildren and nine great grandchildren.

Along with his family and friends we congratulate Henry Knobel most cordially (a little late) to his birthday, wishing him the very best for the future.

MAURICE ROETHLISBERGER, 80

It is with great pleasure that we announce the 80th birthday of Mr. Maurice A. Roethlisberger, of 89 Lawrie Park Gardens, Sydenham, London SE26. He will celebrate the big day on 25th September.

He was born in London, but brought up in Switzerland from the age of three. He went to school at Aubonne, VD, and after an apprenticeship and six years of employment, both with the Union Bank of Switzerland, he came to London. A year after joining the Ionian Bank in Coleman Street, he was sent to Greece, but returned to London in 1928. Mr. Roethlisberger was appointed accountant in 1950, assistant manager seven years later and manager in May, 1960. He retired at the end of September 1965 after 41 years with the bank.

He still is a member of several Swiss societies, Swiss Philatelic Society, Swiss Club and the Nouvelle Société Helvétique and the Swiss Mercantile Society. He became Hon. Treasurer of the Swiss Benevolent Society in 1938, having been assistant treasurer for six years. He held that office for 30 years, and the Society in particular and the Colony in general owe Maurice Roethlisberger a great debt of gratitude for much unselfish and devoted work. He was elected a Vice-President of the SBS in 1961,

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Mrs Hill-Moser,

I was interested in the very fair assessment of the relative life in Switzerland and Britain by Gottfried Keller. I would not take him to task in his final paragraph where he says he loves Britain "in spite of its plumbing and cuisine". This is his experience.

In Britain it is French plumbing that is a standing joke. From my own experience I can quote a hotel at Laon where after the first sitting one learnt to fly the moment one operated the W.C. mechanism to avoid the tidal wave that shot out of the pan.

At the Soleil d'Or at St. Dizier (now defunct) the defective waste let the water out quicker than the defective leaking taps topped it up again. At night these had to be plugged with corks to prevent the constant dribbling from keeping one awake. At a holiday flat at Frejus, orders were given that no one must use the W.C. when anyone was taking a shower in the adjacent cubicle. The plumbing arrangement was such, that every time the W.C. was activated water bubbled up from the douche waste. (To be fair this eventually receded.) The gruesome noises one gets in the morning from the French plumbing systems is more the rule than the exception.

Now I have never experienced such things in Britain so Herr Keller must surely be referring to the questionable beauty of the pipes festooned around in some of our older dwellings, which I admit is a sight for sore eyes. Since 1966 the British Building Regulations must be the toughest in the world which as they are strictly supervised by the Local Authorities must surely put our plumbing beyond reproach.

With regard to our cuisine, my experience is that unless you go to a third rate restaurant it is as good as anywhere. Our Swiss guests rave over English food although at home it is prepared by a Swiss. While top restaurants in France will produce food that is a source of delight to us English, you cannot be so sure of getting good food in medium class French restaurants as you can in England. If you like Sweets (puddings) your choice in French is almost invariably confined to the two stock items on the menu — Crème Caramel and Ice-Cream. In Switzerland you have a much better choice but in England it is fantastic. I am sure that if any of my compatriots opened an English restaurant in France, after the first dubious approaches by the French, it would go like a bomb!

Yours sincerely
R. F. Barclay