

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: - (1981)
Heft: 1776

Artikel: Philosophy that produces impressive progress
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-687533>

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swissair

1931
1981

Philosophy that produces impressive progress

ON THE occasion of Swissair's 50th anniversary I am very happy to have this opportunity of reviewing in these pages the progress of the region under my responsibility.

Swissair is one of the oldest established foreign airlines in London. We started to fly between Zurich, Basle and London on April 1, 1935, with 14-seat Douglas DC-2s and opened year-round services in December of the same year. In 1936, our first full year of operations, we carried 6,325 passengers to and from London.

In 1951 we set up our own UK sales organisation and opened our first London ticket office. The same year we moved to premises in Regent Street where we remained for 16 years, adding in this period new administrative offices overlooking Piccadilly Circus.

Flights between Zurich and Manchester started in 1948 and in 1950 we established our own sales office in Manchester to develop our business in the North of England. Subsequently, office were opened in Birmingham, Glasgow and Dublin.

In the early 1960s the long standing idea of a Swiss Centre in London finally took shape and in 1966/67 we were able to put all our central London sections and our air travel office under one roof.

We have found it of great advantage to be in the same building as our friends from the



By LOUIS NART

Swissair General Manager, United Kingdom, introduces a special report on the golden jubilee of Switzerland's national airline

Swiss National Tourist Office, the Swiss Bank Corporation and Swiss Fair Ltd., thereby joining in the overall promotion of the Swiss image and Swiss interests in London.

The Swiss Centre offices have enabled us to install the most modern facilities and computer equipment for reservations and accounting and so provide the highest service standards for our customers. They also allow space for future development and organisational improvements.

Our provincial offices have also been moved to more favourable locations, and have

been expanded and linked to the computerised reservations system.

Cargo has not been forgotten. In recent years we set up near London Heathrow a separate cargo sales and reservations unit, equipped for instant space availability information and bookings.

Airport offices and ticket counters at London Heathrow and Manchester have been modernised and given computer booking facilities.

Ireland is the latest part of our region to join the Swissair network with a service between Zurich and Dublin which started in 1979 and is developing promisingly.

The progress of our business has been impressive: total passenger traffic on the UK-Switzerland routes grew to 103,000 in 1955, 160,000 in 1960, 370,000 in 1970 and to well over half a million last year. Similarly, our cargo traffic expanded from 338 tons in 1955 to some 5,000 tons in 1970 and over 10,000 tons in 1980.

In this anniversary year we are in a sound competitive position.

Our offices and facilities are well adapted to the demands of the air travel and cargo markets and our 200 staff in the UK and Ireland are devoted to the traditional Swissair service philosophy. It is this philosophy which determines our policy in the present environment.

Contrary to some of our competitors we are maintaining our two-class system of first and economy class in Europe and throughout the network. Our new DC-9-81s, now flying most services between Zurich, Geneva and London, have a particularly well equipped first class with its own galley and toilet, while economy class on all our DC-9 aircraft compares very favourably on seating comfort and in-flight service standards.

However our promotional fares are no higher than our competitors', including a new excursion fare between the UK and Switzerland this summer.

In conclusion I should like to thank all our friends in the Swiss community in our region for their loyal support. Without it we would not now face the future with the same degree of confidence.



The Douglas DC-2 which inaugurated the service between Switzerland and London in 1935. It only carried 14 passengers, yet 6,325 flew the route in its first year.