

# Woman's Observer

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1951 May: The boat train from Folkstone to Victoria, packed with people and luggage: waiters balancing among the chaos with trays held high laden with "Afternoon Teas". It was like a fairground, hilarious, to say nothing of the noise.

★ ★ ★

*The Underground in London ... absolutely marvellous and if I remember right my journey cost 5d. I savoured it by staying on the Circle Line three times to the very end, getting out, carrying my luggage over some steps and getting into another carriage.*

★ ★ ★

The overnight sleeper to Scotland with couchettes; being woken up in the morning with a cup of tea – for which one paid, but it was very nice all the same.

★ ★ ★

*Edinburgh – full of surprises with its wide avenues, the gardens below the length of Princes Street with a railway station at either end; the Castle, Arthur's Seat – this marvellous rough mountain jutting out of the city like a crouching lion; Capitol Hill with its follies. Delightful Edinburgh ... was it perhaps something out of Hans Christian Andersen's story-books? Might one see a toy*

**OVER 30 years ago a young hotel secretary in St. Moritz received a picture postcard from a friend in Edinburgh. She studied the view of the city and Arthur's Seat – and decided straight away that this was where she wanted to live.**

**She was as good as her word. She took a post with an Edinburgh family and left Switzerland for Scotland. It was there she met and married her husband, and today, as**

**Mrs Dorothy Chiverton, she lives in Bristol.**

**But Dorothy still remembers very closely her first impressions of Britain – the sounds, the shops and at least one unhappy experience with the food!**

**Her recollections convey all the excitement, curiosity and confusion of a new arrival in a foreign country – feelings which many of our readers will recognise.**

## How Britain looked

*soldier floating out of the castle on a moonlit night?*

★ ★ ★

*Princes Street Gardens – I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw people walking, sitting, picnicking on the lawns. Too good to be true! What a life! I just stood and stared and marvelled.*

★ ★ ★

*A suit for 57 shillings? There it was, painted in huge letters on a warehouse wall in Princes Street "The Fifty Seven Shilling Tailor". I intended to find out if it was true, but never did.*

★ ★ ★

*On to Scotland, to the house*

*where I was to stay in a border town. Oh horror, when I hungrily dug my teeth into a piece of bread thickly spread with white honey which turned out to be fat! Did I spit it out? I can't remember. They called it dripping, but they could at least have warned me.*

★ ★ ★

*The sweets problem gave me several sleepless nights. Every Saturday I had to take the children to the sweet shop to spend half of their pocket money (the other half was invested in holiday savings) on sweets. I just could not believe that children were deliberately made to eat*

*sweets. They only lasted to the end of the day, or perhaps halfway to Sunday. It worried me terribly. Weren't their pudding plates every day filled with rich sweet puddings, and the food more than plentiful? Gradually I weaned "my children" to longer-lasting purchases.*

★ ★ ★

*Also in Scotland I had my first ever glimpse of the national sport. I was on my way back home on a grey drizzly November day when I came level with the football ground. An incredible sight stopped me in my tracks: On the muddy ground was a huge "ball" of human bodies silently and*

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Dorothy Chiverton (left) chats to a friend at this year's August 1 celebrations . . .



. . . and pictured with two children she cared for in Edinburgh in 1952

## Eating out? Here comes the Chalet look

### . . . 30 years ago

heavily rolling backwards and forwards. I was appalled. "A fight", was my first thought. Should I call the police? But glancing round the field I saw on-lookers, hands in pockets, just standing there intently watching. Then, all of a sudden, the "ball" exploded. Bodies went flying hither and thither and out shot the football, sadly squeezed out of shape! Madness! I had enough and stalked home in disgust.

★ ★ ★

On one of my afternoons off I took a stroll into the countryside towards the Pentland Hills. There I came upon vast meadows where the grass was springy like a

cushion, and in parts soft and fine like velvet. I took off my shoes and walked about with great delight. Never had I come across anything like it. There was no one about apart from two people visible on the horizon. Now I think it could have been the golf course.

★ ★ ★

A sale: I had never in my life been to a sale. I was at Binns in Princes Street where I found my exciting bargain – a lovely "hugging" little hat in white straw edged with navy velvet – for a mere ten shillings. It represented a quarter of my weekly wage but it lasted many useful years.

AUTHENTIC Swiss people living in and around Uxbridge will be able to visit a not-so-authentic Swiss restaurant this month when England's first 'Swiss Chalet' opens.

The restaurant chain, which specialises in charbroiled chicken and rib dishes, is big in Canada where all the premises are purpose-built in a chalet style.

Canadian diners are served by waitresses in cute outfits, based loosely on Swiss national costume – and all that Canadian snow must really set the scene during the winter months.

Back in Uxbridge, however, things are a little different. The only Swiss thing about the outside of the restaurant will be the name, though there will be a chalet design over the service bar.

The food, we are told, is mainly plain roasted chicken. "The original recipe must have been

Swiss," says Jeff Hammerschlag, director of the British company holding the franchise, "but it is over 30 years since the first restaurant opened in Canada, so things must have changed a bit."

And what about those sweet, attentive young things in national costume?

It seems that they are not considered suitable for the British diner. The staff over here will be sensibly clad in red and white uniforms and will take your order by means of a small computer key-board.

Swiss Chalet's Uxbridge restaurant will have a Remanco terminal at the cashier's desk and take-away, with three more at servers' positions. There will be two remote printers in the kitchens and a management console in the manager's office.

At least the efficiency sounds Swiss!



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