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How Zurich remembers Joyce - with Irish stew and Guinness



The memorial above James Joyce's grave in Zurich

THIS month sees the end of a year of celebrations marking the 100th anniversary of the birth of Irish novelist James Joyce.

Most attention has been centred inevitably on Dublin, the city Joyce immortalised in his writings and the place from which he fled in exile to give impetus to his literary genius.

But there have also been celebrations in Zurich, the city in which Joyce wrote much of his epic novel "Ulysses," and where he died in January 1941.

Joycean scholars met in Zurich on the anniversary of his birth and Zurich University staged a workshop. Professor Heinrich Straumann, who knew Joyce, lectured on his reminiscences of the writer, while the Embassy of Ireland in Switzerland staged a photographic exhibition.

But perhaps the main event was the reading of Joyce's "Ulysses". Forty people participated in reading the entire 1,000 pages of the novel in German at 16 places in and around Zurich with which the writer was associated.

Joyce first visited Zurich in 1904 at the age of 22 accompanied by his new wife, Nora Barnacle from Galway. After exploring in vain the possibility of teaching English in the city, he moved to Trieste in northern Italy but on the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 Joyce returned to Zurich.

The next four years were not only spent in

teaching English but also creating "Ulysses" from a Homeric myth into a complex and controversial epic of the 20th century.

Zurich was conducive for Joyce's writing. Its two rivers (the Limmat and the Sihl) and the Lake of Zurich were favourite haunts of his. He believed that ideas are born in water, and there are many such references, both explicit and subliminal, in "Finnegan's Wake."

There's one portrait of Joyce taken with his back to the camera at the junction of the Limmat and Sihl rivers. It's a portrait which Joyce evidently liked very much because he said this, at last, was a photograph that he could take pride in.

Soon after the First World War, Joyce moved to Trieste again and later Paris, but when the Second World War broke out he returned to Switzerland, the country where he felt at ease.

"Here we still know where we stand," he said, looking round a panelled inn soon after his arrival in December 1940.

It was in Zurich where he died on January 13, 1941, suffering from a duodenal ulcer. Joyce is buried in the city's Fluntern cemetery and a statue of this great European literary figure has been erected above his grave.

The cemetery is not far away from Zurich city zoo, something which seemed to appeal to his wife, Nora. She said after his death,

"He was awfully fond of the lions. I like to think of him lying there and listening to them roar."

For the visitor to Zurich, there is more to see of James Joyce than his statue and grave. There's also the James Joyce pub which is much more authentic than you might imagine. It is not one of those kitschy places which tend to exude a false atmosphere. In fact most of the fixtures come from a Dublin bar which Joyce himself used to frequent.

When Jury's Hotel in Dublin's Dame Street was pulled down, the 19th century fittings from its Antique Bar went under the auctioneer's hammer. They included the wall decorations, the counter, the bar fittings, mirrors, doors and even the clock.

They were bought for Sfr. 350,000 (now about £100,000) and transported to the heart of Dublin's banking area to that of Zurich. The James Joyce pub in Pelikanstrasse, which was opened in 1978, is owned by the Union Bank of Switzerland. On the 100th anniversary of Joyce's birth, Irish stew and Guinness were given away just for the asking.

The bank also struck a limited set of James Joyce medals in silver and gold and put them on sale.

And what of James Joyce's work today? To the casual reader, the collection of short stories, "Dubliners," is perhaps the most

accessible. "Ulysses" and "Finnegan's Wake" need a lot of time, understanding and patience.

But even if you give up, it could be some consolation to consider that James Joyce gave food for thought to the intellectuals of this world for ever.

★ ★ ★

SWISS watchmakers have come up with a new precision-made product - a miniature compass that assures Moslems around the world that they are facing Mecca when saying their prayers.

The "Mecca Module" costs around Sfr. 1,500 (£400) for the standard model. Platinum and jewel-studded versions can cost 10 to 100 times more. The module is the same size as a wristwatch and consists of a small diamond floating in a mineral crystal. From more than 300 cities worldwide, an emerald points permanently towards Mecca.

With an estimated one billion Moslems around the world, the new product is considered by the manufacturers to be "a very marketable item."

★ ★ ★

THERE were only three strikes in Switzer-

land last year, reveals a government report, and only one of those lasted longer than a few hours.

All three stoppages involved pay demands. The lone strike that lasted one full day involved only 15 workers.

The worst year for strikes in Switzerland over the last 20 years was in 1976, when there were 19 labour disputes.

★ ★ ★

DO YOU suffer sleepless nights from snoring - other people's snoring, that is? If so, relief is on the way. A doctor has come up with a cure which, he admits, is not so much a sensational breakthrough by modern medical research but rather a remedy passed on to him years ago by his dear old grandmother.

The remedy is revealed in Health File, a publication issued jointly by leading companies in Switzerland's Basle-based medicals industry.

The key to the cure is the way we lie in bed. "In order to be able to snore," it is explained, "one must lie on one's back. To prevent such a position in bed, a little glass marble or ball is covered with cloth and then sewn into the pyjama, in a central place in the back between the shoulder blades.

"Thus the habitual snorer, when turning

on to his back, will feel the pressure and quickly roll over to one side or on to the stomach. He will continue to sleep - but stop snoring."

★ ★ ★

IT WAS one of the soccer sensations of the year.

Italy, in their first game since winning the World Cup in Spain, played Switzerland in a friendly match in Rome - and lost 1-0.

It was Switzerland's first victory in Italy, their first goal there in 35 years and Italy's first home defeat in any international for more than a decade.

Swiss newspapers headlined the victory on their front pages while Italy's shocked Press reported that their team's Madrid magic was already beginning to fade.

In the Swiss national league, reigning champions Grasshoppers of Zurich have gone to the top of the table for the first time this season and currently lead Servette of Geneva on goal average.

They took over top spot after an exciting last-minute 2-1 home victory over the previous league leaders, Servette.

SWISS SOCCER

Football league tables up to and including November 5

| 'A' Division | Pl | W | D | L | Gls | Pts |
|--------------|----|---|---|---|-----|-----|
| Grasshoppers | 11 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 31 | 13 |
| Servette | 11 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 21 | 6 |
| Zürich | 11 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 24 | 13 |
| Xamax | 11 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 24 | 16 |
| Young Boys | 11 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 17 | 15 |
| Vevey | 11 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 24 | 20 |
| Basle | 11 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 19 | 13 |
| Lucerne | 11 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 25 | 21 |
| St. Gallen | 11 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 23 | 13 |
| Sion | 11 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 20 | 12 |
| Lausanne | 11 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 18 | 15 |
| Wettingen | 11 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 18 | 22 |
| Bellinzona | 11 | 2 | 1 | 8 | 12 | 36 |
| Aarau | 11 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 7 | 21 |
| Bulle | 11 | 0 | 3 | 8 | 8 | 36 |
| Winterthur | 11 | 0 | 2 | 9 | 8 | 27 |

| 'B' Division | Pl | W | D | L | Gls | Pts |
|----------------|----|---|---|---|-----|-----|
| Chaux-de-Fonds | 10 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 30 | 5 |
| Chiasso | 10 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 25 | 10 |
| Biel | 10 | 7 | 0 | 3 | 21 | 10 |
| Lugano | 10 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 26 | 16 |
| Laufen | 10 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 17 | 10 |
| Chênois | 10 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 14 | 12 |
| Fribourg | 10 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 18 | 14 |
| Nordstern | 10 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 17 | 16 |
| Grenchen | 10 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 12 |
| Mendrisio | 10 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 15 | 22 |
| Baden | 10 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 10 | 15 |
| Ibach | 10 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 10 | 18 |
| Monthey | 10 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 11 | 18 |
| Bern | 10 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 13 | 21 |
| Rüti | 10 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 11 | 29 |
| Locarno | 10 | 0 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 23 |