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Sharing the heartache of acclimatisation

SOPHIE Forrester was born Sophie Zimmerman, the daughter of a farming family in Oberfeldern, Canton Lucerne.

She came to England in 1952 – supposedly to spend six months improving her English – then after just three weeks she met the man who was to become her husband.

Thirty years and three daughters later she is living in Southampton with her husband, happy with England and the English. But even with the support of a loving husband, she recalls and describes the “heartache of acclimatisation” and wonders if *Woman's Observer* could help other women to share those feelings. Sophie says:

“I would like to see a corner for advice to both long and short-stay immigrants. I am thinking of practical problems cropping up such as bringing up children and the attendant difficulties with schools, church, community and language differences apart from all the heartbreak matters such as homesickness and the comparisons with one's native country which are inevitable and always present.

“It would be nice to have a



Sophie Forrester . . . “We need space for the non-heroines”

page written for the non-heroines who read it. I have always thought that one could be forgiven on reading the *Swiss Observer* for thinking that most of us are merchant bankers or embassy officials all wonderfully well off and being sent to those wonder-

ful conferences I never seem to be invited to.

“I would love to see a more intimate page. I am thinking perhaps of a diary, an excerpt, perhaps, of an *Auslandsschweizerin* who had to make a career of it, not the more spoonfed temporary immigrant sent here for a time by a firm or organisation or embassy. There is this large difference in empathy and it must be stressed.

“Perhaps there could be a profile of such a person; I have met them sometimes and so admired them. They are women who have made such a sustained effort to integrate and have shown such courage and wisdom that they have become a great example, at least to me.”

It would be very rewarding

indeed if these pages could become a regular forum for the views of Swiss women living in England – and for those of English women married to Swiss men.

Are the temporary immigrants feather-bedded by their multinational employers, or do they find life just as bewildering? Have cheaper air fares made homesickness a thing of the past? Are English schools everything that a Swiss mother would want? What's the biggest single mistake a new arrival can make?

Your opinions and experiences can make interesting reading, as others have already proved. So if you ever intended to put pen to paper for us, do it now. We're waiting to hear from you.

In search of wonderful kohlrabi . .

DOROTHY Chiverton, who wrote for us in November about her first impressions of England, has a few words to say about her favourite food.

“Kohlrabi! Who wouldn't like it, crave for it, especially when not available?

“This delicious root with its delicate flavour was just not to be found in England in the early years of my marriage. (Now, seeds are available in garden shops.) So when at last we had a garden, it was sown out with great excitement from seeds received from Switzerland.

“What a treat to get the root

direct from garden to saucepan to table. There was nothing better. My husband couldn't extol its virtues enough to friends and acquaintances (but why he eats so little when we have it I don't know).

“Imagine my shock and hurt when reading the Rev. Ellison Platt's entry on October 16, 1944 in the book “*Padre in Colditz – the Diary of Ellison Platt*”:

‘As from today the bread ration is cut by 200 grams a week and the potato ration by 150 grams a day. These are to be compensated weight for weight by millet, peas or

kohlrabi. If we get either of the first two it will be acceptable exchange for the bread is terrible, and we have learned to do rather wonderful things with millet.

“But if kohlrabi is the most frequent exchange it will be most unacceptable. The man who thought of bastardising turnip and cabbage might have expended his genius producing something less tasteless and insipid. A better cabbage or a better turnip would have been a worthy accomplishment but why the worst of both?”

“Really, Mr Platt – ich bin platt. Keep yer cabbage and turnip. I still prefer my kohli”.

● **Footnote:** The good news for Dorothy – and other kohlrabi enthusiasts – is that the vegetable is now sold in Sainsbury's supermarkets when it is in season.

The English kohlrabi season is from July to September, though Sainsbury's did have a limited supply as late as November at the princely sum of 44 pence a pound!

At the end of the English growing season they look to the Mediterranean countries for supplies

Sbrinz in the strudel

BROCCOLI Strudel features Sbrinz, the "grand old man" of Swiss cheeses.

Dark and hard-rinded, it is left to dry and cure for up to two years – which gives it its extreme hardness, grained texture and sharp, mature tang.

Ingredients:

10oz made puff pastry (250g)

12oz broccoli (300g)

2 eggs

2½oz grated Sbrinz Switzerland (70g)

Pinch of nutmeg, pepper, salt and cayenne pepper.

Method:

Roll out the pastry to a rather long, rectangular shape about 3mm in thickness. Spread the cooked broccoli on the centre part of the pastry.

Whip the egg whites and mix them with the cheese. Season with the nutmeg, pepper, cayenne pepper and a little salt and spread on the broccoli.

Fold the two outer thirds of the pastry over the broccoli, brush the edges with egg yolk and press them together.

Put the strudel on a baking sheet with the "welding" below, decorate with pieces of pastry and brush the surface with egg yolk. Pierce the pastry with a fork.

Bake for about 20 minutes at 425°F (220°C), gas 7.

LIKE TIME ITSELF, QUARTZ MARCHES ON



Technical expertise and original design are two of the outstanding features of a Swiss watch

IN 1981, nearly two out of every three watches exported from Switzerland were still mechanical models. But quartz watches are becoming so popular that by the end of last year the ratio was expected to be one to one.

The Swiss watchmaking industry is still concentrating almost exclusively on the analogue time display system (with dial and hands) which allows it to create really good looking models.

In addition to new designs there is a series of technical novelties: quartz alarm watches, the first use of the extra long life lithium battery, very compact movements setting new records of slimness, "families" of movements, extra thin and designed for volume production, and instrument watches measuring pulse or temperature.

The Swiss related industries sector ranges from complete watch production to window dressing material and gemstone setting tools.

Outer, or "dress", components for watches probably make up the largest single sector – cases, bracelets, hands, dials and watch glasses.

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