

# My first trip by air

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Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1938)**

Heft 875

PDF erstellt am: **24.09.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-694506>

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**P. F. BOEHRINGER.****A Mile Post.**

One of the features of the "Swiss Observer" has been and still is, to relate the happenings and the life story of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.

Innumerable reports of Meetings, Dinners, Banquets, Concerts, Lectures, Sporting Events, etc., have appeared in its columns during the last 19 years of its existence.

Far too often, the Editor's pen was taken up to write the last Farewell to some prominent members in our Colony, who have given a part of their life work to make our country better known to our English friends, and thus have helped to foster the friendly feelings, which fortunately exist between our two countries.

Such work, in order to be profitable had to be done, to a great extent, through the existing Swiss Societies, and whilst we are not in favour of creating a "Personen Kultus" in our paper, we feel that it is only right and proper, that members of the Colony, who have given their time and energy for such important work, should get this acknowledgement, and such an acknowledgement should not only come when they depart from us "never to return."

To-day we wish to send many happy returns of the day to a man, who deserves well to be mentioned in the paper of which he is the founder.

M. P. F. Boehringer, who hails from the ancient city of Basle, has recently entered into the 60th year of his earthly pilgrimage. Many are the services which he has rendered to our Colony during the forty years of his sojourn in this Metropolis.

It is in some way a precarious undertaking for an Editor to write about his own publisher, as whatever he writes he may well be accused of rendering a biased account, and yet who should know better how to report about a man, with whom he has worked for many years in almost constant harmony.

If I mention almost, I wish to say, that in every paper, small or big, there must at times occur differences of opinion or policy, and as often is the case, an editor pays not enough attention to the financial side of such an undertaking, which is, as far as the Publisher is concerned, of vital interest.

However, if differences have occurred, they have been settled amicably, and the Editor trusts, that the mutual collaboration, for the welfare of our paper will continue if only for the patriotic work which has always been the guiding star of this publication.

The writer could write columns about the work done by M. Boehringer in the Swiss Colony, but knowing that this "glorification" would not be agreeable to the recipient, he will, for once, curb his pen and relate only a few facts, which he feels should be recalled.

Soon after his arrival in London, M. Boehringer took a great interest in the work of the Swiss Mercantile Society, which Society elected him as President in the early years of his stay. Some twenty years ago, the S.M.S. honoured his manifold past services by making him an Honorary Member.

Three times M. P. F. Boehringer was elected President of the City Swiss Club, namely in the year 1920, and again in 1936 and 1937, and one of his principal endeavours during the tenure of this office was, to bring our countrymen in closer contact with our English friends, in this he was highly successful, one need only remember the very splendid Annual Banquets of the City Swiss Club, over which he presided and at which eminent English personalities were present.

M. Boehringer is also a member of various other Swiss Societies which are indebted to him for his advice and help. In addition he takes an active part in several English institutions of a philanthropic nature.

Entering now into his 60th year, which is a mile stone in a man's life, we wish him a long and successful life, coupled with the hope that his experience will always be available whenever it will be required.

We also thank him for the services rendered, not only to our paper and to the Swiss Colony, but to our country at large.

ST.

**DON'T FORGET THE APPENZEL.**

We make this appeal to our readers following a short stay in that lovely little canton — or should one say: those lovely little half-cantons? — during which we had occasion to talk to several leading hoteliers. Their great and unanimous complaint is that hardly an Englishman ever sets foot on Appenzeller-ground. The reason why is easy to discern. Appenzell has no records in height and grandeur and climbing-danger to offer the would-be visitor. Consequently nothing like the same enterprise in building modern hotels was shown here as in the more famous playgrounds of international tourism. And as also much less propaganda has and is being expended on behalf of Appenzell.

And yet it is unquestionably fully equal, if not superior, to any other spot on earth for certain holiday-requirements which most of us — excepting the very young — put in the first place. It combines a tranquil loveliness of green pastures and undulating hills with all manner of the more strenuous climbing possibilities, adequate for all but the most inveterate break-neck Alpinist. The Säntis and several lesser peaks offer the finest views in all directions — well beyond the lake of Zurich, the lake of Constance, into the Vorarlberg and up the Rhine-Valley into the Engadin mountain, as well as on the central peaks, such as Tödi, Vreneli Gältli, etc. The Appenzell is so compact in all its attractions, not forgetting the beautiful dwelling houses and their ever merry inhabitants, that it might almost be likened to a toy-model of all that is most delightful in Switzerland.

A journey on the Appenzeller railways alone is a wonderful experience — from St. Gall via Teufen to Gais, then to the town of Appenzell itself and on either to Wasserauen or Urnäsch as starting points to the Säntis. From Wasserauen it takes one hour on foot to the most lovely Alpine lake, the Seealp, and thence four-and-a-half hours via Meglisalp to the peak. For those less strenuously inclined a "Postauto" runs from Urnäsch to Schwägälp and the suspension lift up to the Säntis. This lift-railway, the "Säntisbahn," is not only the highest and most modern in Switzerland, but one of the most perfect engineering marvels in the world. In ten minutes it takes you with hardly a vibration from 4,466 to 8,148 feet above sea-level. Each hanging cabin holds thirty-five passengers. The flying ascent over the awe-inspiring rocky face of the mountain, with the radius of the views widening ever more is unforgettable.

But in spite of all this beauty the hotels are barely half full in the height of the season and all the railways, bar the "Säntisbahn" keep running at grievous losses. The German visitors — formerly the mainstay of near-by Appenzell — are restricted not only in numbers but no less severely in their cash-allowances. And France and England hardly know of this paradise on earth. So once again we would appeal to our compatriots to remember Appenzell, not only when making their own holiday plans but also when advising their English friends. And don't forget — the winter-sports facilities are just as attractive in places like Wasserauen, Schwägälp, Wildhaus, etc.

Dr. E.

**MY FIRST TRIP BY AIR.**

The special private coach from Victoria arrives at Croydon at 8.30 p.m. We are handed out flying papers and board the Dutch 21 seater American Douglas C3 plane and start to the minute at 8.45 a.m. as per time-table.

Although nobody is likely to make a first aeroplane trip without certain palpitations of heart and the conscious need of being reconciled to God and men, I must confess that the size, comfort and mechanism of these KLM planes is so overwhelming that after half an hour's journey my feeling of safety was perfectly restored and I wondered at my foolishness in having delayed air travel for so many years.

We travel at 2,000 ft. high over the garden of England, and the lovely towns and villages alternating with dark woodlands and square patches of yellow, gold, green and brown make a wonderful chessboard picture. We glide along Rochester, the Isle of Sheppey and over Thanet, passing out to sea at the North Foreland, close to Broadstairs.

The white cliffs off Deal and Ramsgate are soon out of sight, and passing over the quicksands of the Goodwins, one shudders at the thought of a forced landing. Only clouds and seafoam are beneath us until we spy a group of fishing boats, the first reminder of the nearness of human beings the other side of the North Sea. The clock shows 9.45 a.m., exactly one hour since our start, and we cross over the delta of the river Maas, 300 Km. from Croydon as the crow flies. Holland presents a similar chessboard picture to Kent, except for a few stronger patches of red and orange, and the typical cycling tracks alongside the public roads. Rotterdam is reached at 10 o'clock and we alight for coffee and half an hour's break.

We are off again at 10.30 a.m. along the Rhine, and are soon lost in a sea of mighty white clouds which hide the whole face of the earth, and compel blind flying. I could never have imagined such huge mountains of clouds, and our pilot has to rise higher and higher to escape them. It is 11.30 and passengers are handed a report from the pilot's cabin as follows:

Position: Over Dortmund.

Altitude: 2,700 metres.

Speed: 280 Km. per hour.

Outside temperature: 0.6° Centigrade.

Arrive in Prague 1 o'clock.

Unfortunately, the busy Rhine towns of Germany could not be located.

By 12.20 p.m. we approach the Thüringer Wald and Erzgebirge, and for the first time we ran into an air pocket, and our smart Dutch stewardess nearly drops her tray. Now we cross the frontiers of Germany for the second time, but up here in cloudland there is nobody to check up our passports and visas; what hopes for sanity and progress may not be found in this fact!

We reach Prague exactly at 1 p.m. in hot sunshine, having taken 4½ hours for this flight of 1,030 Kms. This is the end of our exhilarating journey and the shadow of the DC3 against the white clouds below will long remain in my memory.

C.B.

**EDITOR'S COMMUNICATIONS.****1st of August Celebrations Abroad.**

Perusing a large number of Swiss papers, I have noticed that practically every Swiss Colony in the four corners of the earth, has *officially* celebrated our National Day.

It is to me, and I am sure to many of my compatriots in this country, a matter of deep regret, that the London Colony, which is one of the most important colonies, has for the last few years not been able to officially celebrate the anniversary of the birth of the Swiss Confederation.

One reason given, was, that a great number of our countrymen are absent on this date, it may be so, but I am sure that amongst the 8-9,000 Swiss who are residing in London, one could muster at least a few hundred, who would be willing to assemble on this day to pay a befitting tribute to their country on this conspicuous anniversary.

The Swiss Colony has on many occasions shown their deep attachment to their mother country, and I am convinced that a 1st of August celebration in London would be welcome by many. Let us hope that the year 1939 will again witness a patriotic gathering on the

1st of August.

**FIRST OF AUGUST BADGES.**

A number of 1st of August badges (Swiss National Day) are still unsold; those of our compatriots who have forgotten to purchase this badge, can obtain one at the Swiss Legation, 19, Montague Place, Bryanston Square, London, W.1, by sending P.O. value 1/- (one shilling).

As the result from the sale of these badges is for the benefit of the Swiss abroad, we sincerely hope that many of our readers will avail themselves of this opportunity.