

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 19 (1955)
Heft: [11-12]

Artikel: A double centenary at Zermatt
Autor: Williams, Cicely
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-942498>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. [See Legal notice.](#)

Download PDF: 31.01.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

to the road again. In order to make the details of these invaluable services better known, the Swiss Federal Railways have just published a small booklet entitled "Car conveyance through Alpine tunnels" which sets out in four languages (German, French, Italian and English) the unloading regulations, the maximum acceptance dimensions of vehicles and the fares for cars and passengers, not to mention timetables and special facilities for motor-cycles, side-cars, motor scooters and luggage trailers and caravans.

Air Transport of Motor-cars Between Switzerland and Great Britain

A British air navigation company is to run a direct service between the South Coast of Great Britain and Basle, during the winter months of 1955-56. This service is intended specially for the purpose of facilitating the enjoyment of winter sports in Switzerland, for British visitors. The flights will take less than three hours. This air-bridge will start operating as from the middle of December. Each aircraft will be able to carry three motor-cars and fifteen passengers.

Development of Swiss Investment Trusts

Investment Trusts have developed in a remarkable manner, in Switzerland, during recent years. In 1954, there were twenty-six such Investment Trusts, of which sixteen specialised in the investment of securities and ten in that of real estate. The total amount of certificates issued comes to nine thousand million francs. Although their headquarters are in Switzerland, the activities of these Trusts are devoted mostly to foreign markets. As a matter of fact, two-thirds of the investments are made abroad. The average yield from this kind of investment amounted, in 1954, to 3½ per cent.

Subsidies to Swiss Agriculture in 1956

More than 40 per cent. of the subsidies provided by the Swiss Government in its 1956 Budget will be devoted to agriculture. It is necessary, primarily, to ensure that the country will be adequately supplied with cereals. Wine-growing and the dairy industry will also benefit from State aid.

A Swiss Show of Industrial Production

The fortieth Swiss Industries Fair will take place in Basle from 14th to 24th April, 1956. This is the leading industrial exhibition in Switzerland, where the main export groups such as watchmaking, textiles, textile machinery, general engineering and the electrical industry will be prominently represented. At the 1955 Fair, there were 30,000 visitors from foreign countries, some 1000 of whom came from overseas.

BROADCASTS FROM HOME

Radio Time-table

Australien	HER 5	11.865	25.28
Neuseeland	07.15-09.45	HER 7	17.784 16.87
Ferner Osten	HER 8	21.520	13.94

A DOUBLE CENTENARY AT ZERMATT

By CICELY WILLIAMS

"The mountaineer's true home"—that is how a famous alpinist of the nineteenth century described the Monte Rosa Hotel at Zermatt. Today mountaineers of all nations would re-echo the words.

It is just one hundred years since Dr. Lauber's little inn—the first ever opened in Zermatt—was taken over by Alexander Seiler, who christened it Hotel Monte Rosa. By that act the Seiler dynasty of hotel-keepers was founded and from that day the development of Zermatt as a first-class resort was assured. Materially Zermatt owes everything to Alexander Seiler and his excellent wife. No place, however grand its scenery, can flourish without a good hotel. Seiler was the hotelier "par excellence" who thoroughly understood the art of inn-keeping. He knew just how to welcome the arriving guest, thirsting for mountain conquests; how best to cater for the comfort of those engaged in such pursuits; and how to bid farewell to the successful and the disappointed.

And today, let it be said, the same spirit still obtains at the Monte Rosa where the house of Seiler still reigns. The bowl of fruit in the bedroom to welcome regular guests; the personal interest shown in alpine exploits however trivial; the little comforts awaiting the weary mountaineer; the so-called "farewell chocolate" when the moment comes to leave. All these are modern expressions of the customs introduced by Alexander Seiler in 1855 and the years that followed.

1855 was a remarkable year—it saw not only the opening of the Hotel Monte Rosa but also the first ascent of the great Monte Rosa itself. On July 31st the Dufourspitze was climbed by a British party consisting of the brothers G. and C. Smythe, Birkbeck and the Rev. Charles Hudson—who ten years later perished in the Matterhorn disaster—with the Guides Lauener and Zum Taugwald. It was a great event—the highest point in Switzerland had been scaled, the Golden Age of mountaineering, and of Zermatt, was ushered in.

This summer, therefore Zermatt celebrates a double centenary and great festivities, fitting

to such an occasion, have been organised. At the opening of the climbing season a "Mountaineering Week" has been arranged. There is to be a 30 per cent. reduction on the guides' tariffs and also on the Zermatt-Gornergrat railway. The Hotels Seiler, meanwhile, will apply their minimum rates for all guests during that week.

Famous mountaineers of all nations will arrive in Zermatt during the week—Sir Arnold Lunn, Geoffrey Winthrop Young and Christian Rubi to mention only a few. If the weather is good there should be great alpine exploits among the Zermatt mountains and no doubt many climbers, for sentimental reasons will turn their steps towards the Dufourspitze. During the first week-end of September the season will end with a great reunion of the Seiler family together with friends of the family, business associates and faithful old employees. What a gathering of the clans there will be and what tales of olden times will be related.

How great have been the changes in the world between the placid, prosperous Victorian days of 1855 and the post-war, atomic age of 1955! But among the mountains there is something permanent and indestructible—yesterday, today and forever the Monte Rosa massif remains unchanged, and with it the Monte Rosa Hotel.

Climbers fighting their way up the snows and rocks of the Dufourspitze see the same stars gleaming in the sky overhead and the same indescribable beauty of the sunrise when they reach the summit. They will return, as did that first pioneer party, to the hospitable roof of the Monte Rosa Hotel. In the old salon, the scene of so many famous gatherings, they will talk over their adventures and the spirit of the pioneers and the kindly presence of Alexander Seiler will hover benevolently around them, for here in Zermatt past and present are forever one.

NOTICE

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

It will be very much appreciated if, when changing address, all persons will be good enough to notify the Swiss Consulate, P.O. Box 386, Wellington. This will minimise delay in delivery of mail and greatly facilitate the Consulate when matters of an urgent nature have to be dealt with, besides eliminating additional work for the postal authorities when endeavouring to trace addressees.

Sunday Ban on Cars in Basel

Basel, Switzerland.—Although the beautiful Swiss Rhine city of Basel, with an approximate rate of one motor vehicle on seven inhabitants, is one of Europe's most automobile-conscious communities, the local Police Department has

proclaimed a ban which looks rather anti-motorist at first sight. With the exception of the trolleys no vehicle traffic whatsoever is permitted in the centre of the city on the two Sundays preceding Christmas, which are popularly known as the silvery and the golden Sunday. At second sight, however, this decision looks rather wise. The historic nucleus of the city, with its maze of narrow, winding streets, is also the shopping centre with no end of elegant show windows. In accordance with a local tradition these shops stay open on pre-Christmas Sundays, and the crowds of shoppers and sightseers therefore will for once be able to roam the city, unhampered by motor traffic.

Fernand Leger's Last Masterpiece

Courfaivre (Jura), Switzerland.—A stationmaster and an art-minded parson have been credited with successfully making this tiny Swiss village in the Jura mountains well known in international art circles. Courfaivre, it is true, was not entirely unknown abroad, since it is a centre of the motor-cycle industry. One day it was decided that the village church, dating back to the year 1702, be restored and expanded. When the question of some new artistic interior decorating was brought up, the stationmaster enthusiastically reported on a set of glass paintings which he had discovered in a French town just across the frontier. The parson took a trip to that village and also located the artist who lived in Paris. The church authorities got in touch with him and assigned him to design the stained-glass windows for Courfaivre. He was Fernand Leger, the famous painter, who died on August 17th, 1955, soon after accomplishing his last masterpiece—for the village church of Courfaivre. Thanks to the enthusiasm of local art-lovers, Leger was able to create, for the church of a remote Swiss mountain village, his own everlasting memorial in an array of strangely beautiful stained-glass panes.

Weekend Across the Atlantic

Zurich, Switzerland.—"Time and again it has seemed to me that I must drop everything and flee once more," wrote Mark Twain more than one hundred years ago in one of his travel books. He hardly would have fancied that a century later such dreams could come true within one single weekend. For thirty-three modern Mark Twains, the story-writing and photo-shooting half of a group of distinguished participants in TWA's Super-G Constellation Preview flight, a weekend jaunt across the Atlantic with a visit to Switzerland was, of course, a wonderful adventure but by no means a sensation. Among the visitors from the United States, representing the press, the travel-writers' guild, the Civil Aeronautics Board and the American Congress,