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RENOVATIONS

Zurich's most expensive renovation job. After 2 1/2 years of work, the office building Metropole on the Stadthausquai in Zurich is back to its original splendor. Built in the 1890's, this late baroque building is one of the most beautiful examples in Switzerland of this type of construction. All wall sculptures and decorations have either been repaired or totally replaced in their original forms. The work has cost over 15 million Swiss francs.



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CHAMPION PIPE SMOKER

In this time of anti-smoking campaigns, championships in pipe smoking must be a dying sport. Nevertheless, a Swiss, Jacob Herren from Berne has recently won the European pipe smoking championship after smoking his pipe for 2 hours 52 minutes and 11 seconds. 288 participants, who battled for this trophy, had to smoke a brand new pipe containing 3 grammes of tabacco without being allowed to light it again if it went out. The world record stands at 3 hours 6 minutes and 58 seconds. At the same venue were presented the largest pipe in the world - 9 m long, 7,4 m high, weighing 3,5 tonnes - and the smallest pipe - 17 mm long with a bowl only 7 mm deep.

DUAL CARRIAGEWAY ON THE LOETSCHBERG-SIMPLON LINE

After 15 years of construction work the BLS (Bern-Loetschberg-Simplon) company could at long last inaugurate the total doubling up of its railway line from Bern through to Brig including the Loetschberg tunnel between Kandersteg and Goppenstein. The dual carriageway will allow the BLS to triple the capacity over that route. With the Gotthard line slowly reaching saturation point, this improvement on the Loetschberg-Simplon route is a welcome relief.