

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

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1937)

Heft: 828

Rubrik: Notes and gleanings

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: 14.05.2025

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

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KYBURG.

It will probably come as a shock to most of our readers to find Kyburg attempting once again to entertain them with selected cuttings from the British Press. The reason why he has been pressed into service is that our dear Editor has gone for a few weeks' well deserved — at least he calls it that! — holiday in our beloved homeland, to recover from the many shocks he gets during the year, and to get fit for the Banqueting (!) Season as he puts it.

That being so, I will not divulge the actual spot where he is at present disporting himself, where he is drinking Nostrano, eating Spaghetti al sugo and looking across the bay at Caprimo where one enjoys Salami washed down with Asti Spumante. I fear that if I told you where he is, you might worry him with post cards and good wishes, whereas, for once, I know, he prefers to be, like the great Garbo, alone.

Also, we know that it is no joke to attend so many Banquets as our Editor has to do every winter and, what is worse, to listen to so many speeches, all of which, he could by now make himself, having heard them so often.

Therefore, please, dear Reader, be indulgent and put up with Kyburg for a few weeks, sure in the knowledge that our Editor will return fortified and with fresh vigour to resume his duties as the live wire of our London Swiss Paper.

It is probably only a coincidence that our dear friend Stauffer's visit to Switzerland takes place during the CHAMOIS HUNTING SEASON, because he is built more for comfort than speed and agility, such as is required by the intrepid hunters stalking Switzerland's Big Game. The "Morning Post" 10th inst., seems to express the view that Chamois are really quite tame, but let lose in order to keep up the Chamois Hunting tradition. Reminds me of "Tartarin sur les Alpes" and his idea that the Hoteliers' Society provided the fissures in the Glaciers and the thrills one experienced in falling into them and being rescued again.

From Precipice to Precipice:

I observe that the chamois hunting season has opened, and will continue until September 26th. To me there is something rather unbelievable about the chamois; and I cannot help asking myself why we Britons, who, so to speak, get our knives into everything on four legs and into a lot of things on two legs do not number chamois stalking among our regular pursuits. Perhaps the Swiss like to keep it to themselves; but that doesn't seem to be in keeping with the Swiss character. The curious thing is that, though nobody ever sees, let alone meets, a chamois — an hotel-keeper at Kandertegg last year made me look through a telescope at what he said were three chamois, but they looked to me suspiciously like German tourists — it is a poor Swiss pension that has not got half a dozen pairs of chamois horns disposed about the dining-room.

My own theory is that the Swiss chamois, like the Swiss cow, is only nominally feral; that in the spring it is chased up into the high mountains with instructions to keep out of everybody's way; and that, when the snow comes down in the autumn, down comes the chamois and makes himself at home in the Swiss barn. Some care has to be exercised to prevent the Swiss chamois from encountering the British winter sportsman; but there are probably Cantonal ordinances against the two being allowed to frequent the same village.

On the same day, 10th inst. the "Manchester Evening News" prints the following, concerning "Evil" White.

To white chamois the hunting season which began in Switzerland yesterday means less than to their more unfortunate brethren.

For to shoot a white one, according to superstition, spells death for the hunter within a year. Archduke Franz Ferdinand killed one in September, 1913, and eleven months later was assassinated at Serajevo.

And the next day, 11th September, the "Morning Post" still, it seems somewhat doubtful as to the reality of wild chamois, bursts into verse with the "poem"

Nimrod.

(The chamois shooting season opened yesterday.)

More agile than the antler'd stag,
The chamois leaps from crag to crag,
And always seeks
The highest peaks,
In hopes to elude the hunter's bag.

In vain! The enterprising Swiss,
To end a life that else were bliss,
Stalks him on fleet
And tireless feet;
His gun is seldom known to miss.

September finds him in pursuit,
Clad in a granite-coloured suit;
A hero's task,
Though if you ask,
He'll tell you there is nothing to't.

But where or how he finds the prey
The artful Schweitzer will not say.
Though plied with pelf,
'Twill be himself
Alone that brings the beast to bay.

And how on Roseg's topmost roofs
A creature with adhesive hoofs
Falls to his gun
I can't, for one,
Imagine, but he has the proofs.

And you can purchase, to adorn
Your alpenstock, a chamois horn
But you'll not spy,
How'er you try,
The head on which 'twas lately born.

Writing about Chamois naturally leads one to think of our glaciers and I gather the following from "The Times" 13th September.

Movements of Swiss Glaciers.

The movements of Swiss glaciers during the glacial year 1935-36 have been observed and measured under the direction of Dr P. L. Mercanton, chief of the Swiss Meteorological Office.

The conclusion he has formed is that the general backward movement of Alpine glaciers is continuing, although at a slower pace than during previous years. Snowfalls were less frequent than usual during the winter months, but owing to bad weather the melting of the snows was less during the summer, which explains why the quantity of snow accumulated on the higher Alps increased during that period.

It was possible to measure only 69 glaciers during the year, and it was found that the Roseg Glacier (Engadine) retreated by 45ft., the Rossboden Glacier (Simplon) by 48ft., the Oberaar Glacier by 55ft., the Trient and Hüfi Glaciers by 60ft., the Allalin and Fee Glaciers by about 63ft., and the Turtmann Glacier by 96ft. The Rhone Glacier retreated by 30ft., and exposed a surface of 4,050 square feet, while the Unteraar Glacier retreated by 54ft., exposing a surface of 7,490 square feet. Most of this surface was occupied by the Grimsel artificial lake, at the end of which the glacier front forms a wall with a maximum height of 150ft., and a minimum height of 90ft. On the other hand, the Lower Grindelwald Glacier advanced by 6ft., and the Schwarz Glacier by 9ft.

In the year 1935-36 out of 69 glaciers observed 58 were retreating, five were at a standstill, and six moved forward.

The following is a comparison on a percentage basis, the figure for the previous year being given in parentheses: — Retreating glaciers, 84 (84); at a standstill, 7 (4); advancing, 9 (12).

From the above it would appear that we need not go panicky yet for fear of losing our glaciers and that, seriously speaking, it rather points to the fact that, contrary to our views formed during recent mild winters, we may be approaching a glacial period rather than a tropical one. However, none of my readers need make provisions against such glacial times yet!

Meanwhile

A Good Summer Season in Switzerland

has been enjoyed. "The Times" 8th September states:

During the last week-end 13 special trains arrived at Basle from England and Holland transporting 4,500 tourists, who were conveyed to the various Swiss resorts in 60 special trains.

Since the beginning of the summer season 94,000 foreign tourists, mostly British and Dutch, arrived at Basle by 250 special trains. The summer season in Switzerland has been the best on record for at least six years, and during the months of June, July, and August the number of visitors in the Swiss hotels was an increase of about 35 per cent. on the 1936 figures, while the number of foreign visitors was by nearly 50 per cent. higher than last year. On certain days in August there was not one bed available in some resorts such as Zermatt and Pontresina — the first time this has been the case since 1930.

Fine and warm weather is prevailing and the autumn season is promising. Over 10,000 American visitors, mostly ex-soldiers who are visiting the French battlefields, are expected towards the end of September in Switzerland, where they will remain several days.

At a recent meeting the Society of Swiss Hotelkeepers decided to maintain pension

prices for the coming winter season at the same level as in summer, although the cost of living has slightly increased during the past months.

To a fairly large extent this increase in the number of visitors is undoubtedly due to the devaluation of the Swiss Franc, although it must not be forgotten that British people have more money to spend than in recent years and this also is true with regard to the Dutch tourists.

During the last week or so NYON that lovely little town on Lac Léman has been very much in the limelight and as some of our older readers may have forgotten almost as much of our Swiss History as I have, the following from the "Nottingham Journal and Express" 10th inst. may be of interest:

Château de Prangins.

It is now just over eleven years ago since I paid my first visit to the Château de Prangins, Nyon, where a momentous conference will be opened to-day to discuss the submarine menace in the Mediterranean. I was the guest of Mrs. Stanley McCormick, a keen and prominent member of the American Institute of International Relations, who at that time was "in residence."

A more lovely spot could not possibly be found on the earth's surface. Situated on a high eminence which rises steeply from the lake-side, the château commands a magnificent view for it is here, in Byron's words, that

The Rhone has spread herself a couch,
The Alps have raised a throne.

From the terrace the whole of the Mont Blanc range is visible over the broad blue waters of the lake, the vine-clad slopes of the foothills on the opposite side, the violet peaks of the intermediate mountains topped by the white monarchs of the Eternal snows.

Historic Spot.

From the terrace the spot was pointed out to us where the first traces of human habitations are to be found — the piles of the Lake dwellings which represent the dawn of history.

In the château itself we saw the rooms occupied for two years by Voltaire (1745-55), from whence he directed the building of the near-by "model" village of Ferney complete with a watch-making industry, a theatre and a church which, significantly enough, he dedicated to "God."

Voltaire's rooms were on the ground floor of the round tower at the eastern extremity.

It was on this terrace that Joseph Bonaparte, whom Napoleon had made King of Spain (!) awaited the arrival of his brother after the escape from Elba and it was here, too, that the ex-Emperor Charles of Austria sought solace in 1918 for the loss of his throne.

To-day yet another page will be written in the history of this ancient citadel. It is eight miles from Geneva and may be reached either by train or paddle steamer.

Reaching middle age, most of us — ask any Doctor — begin to feel the need of curbing the further expansion of the waist-band. Such expansion comes naturally to most of us, either via good beer, good cheer, or sedentary habits, lazy liver, etc. The one great remedy is walking and that is why Kyburg plays at Golf — you will notice he plays "at" Golf, which is somewhat different from playing Golf. Golf, however, gives the excuse of the incentive, as the case may be for walking. And now I see in "The Spectator" September 10th, an article by E. K. Woodward, entitled MARGINAL COMMENTS which preaches the idea of Walking:

Marginal Comments.

Dante, who crowded almost too much incident into the earlier parts of the Divine Comedy, was reduced to a good deal of descriptive allegory when he came to Paradise, where nothing unexpected happens, and the inhabitants, unlike those of Hell, have no desire to change the daily round for something better. After eight and a half hours walking in sunshine from four to eight thousand feet above sea-level, I find it easy to understand that one may not want change or incident. Let the sun shine to-morrow exactly as it has shone to-day.

I know that walking among Swiss mountain is out of fashion. The English no longer come to Switzerland in the summer merely to walk. A certain number come to climb; those who do not climb play golf or tennis or enjoy themselves in swimming-pools. The walkers are dwindling away to a handful; middle-aged fogies with an odd liking for high forest and flowery pastures.

It is possible that since Victorian days the Alps themselves have been a little blown upon. The hills are not everlasting; a glacial moraine is too much like a slag-heap. Ruskin and his school were too free with the pathetic fallacy, too confident that the Mountains spoke to them of the Secrets of the Almighty. We know now that if you go up high enough the blue sky becomes black; I would rather have it blue.

Therefore I put in a plea for walking — still the best and the happiest exercise — up through the lower and middle pastures and the pine-belt to the limits of plant life, to these curious boundaries where small, intensely-coloured flowers maintain themselves on the very edge of barrenness and negation. It is curious that the touring organisations do not encourage people to find their way to these high places. These organisations have done excellent service in opening foreign travel to people who must know in advance exactly how much their holidays will cost, but they seem — even those which are not merely profit-making — to have lost initiative.

Last week I stayed for a night at Montreux; the place was full of English people — most of them young — who spent their days in motor charabancs, and their evenings wandering between Territet and a jazz band dimly glowing inside a large hotel. Few of these people could afford to climb; even fewer realise that they would spend less money, and get more pleasure, if they went to a village some 3,000-4,000 feet in height, and from this starting point walked to the *cols* and grass passes within reach, instead of paying to be trundled up the St. Bernard motor-road and back again, or carried in a train to see the Rhone glacier — one of the dreariest sights in Europe.

It is even possible that in these sunlit walks they might find "incidents." Some time ago I met a fireman in full uniform at the upper limit of a forest path. He held a large brush in his hand, and by his side there was a bucket, full, so it seemed, of dirty milk. He told me, politely but firmly, to put my foot in the bucket. The fireman's uniform, the bucket, the polite firmness, seemed a little odd, and I asked the reason. The fireman said: *à cause de la fièvre aphteuse*. Of course, the thing was obvious. If you have an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in a Swiss valley, you cannot isolate all the cattle wandering about immense mountain pastures, but you can make sure that no one, coming from an infected area, carries the infection on his shoes.

Hence the bucketful of disinfectant and the brush, though I still wonder what would have happened, with the firemen scattered over a thousand hills, if there had been a fire in the valley below. Yet, had I known neither Greek nor French, my walk might not have been without "incident."

SIR MALCOLM CAMPBELL

Sir Malcolm Campbell, who holds the speed record on land and water, is anxious to express to his Swiss friends his appreciation of the encouraging assistance extended to him on the occasion of his successful speed trials at Locarno. We have seen a letter addressed to Mrs. Linda Meschini, which we have pleasure in reproducing herewith:—

I am writing to thank you and your sons most sincerely, for your very kind telegrams which I received after the successes which the Blue Bird achieved at Locarno. A great deal of the credit goes to Mr. Meschini himself, for the reason that it was really entirely through him that we eventually decided to choose Locarno as the venue for these speed trials. I am indeed grateful to him for having so kindly fixed up all the arrangements with the City of Locarno on my behalf.

Sir Malcolm has intimated his intention of being present at one of the meetings of the City Swiss Club. Unfortunately, he has been ordered a much-needed rest and will therefore be out of town for some weeks. In his letter to the President of the City Swiss Club he says: "I would be so delighted to be present at one of these gatherings at some future time to have the opportunity of expressing my most sincere appreciation of the very kindly treatment I received when I was staying in your hospitable country."

SWISS SPORTS.

A delegates' meeting was held at the Union Helvetia Club on Thursday, the 16th; the president, Mr. R. De Cintra was in the chair.

The dwindling interest shown by the Colony in this, in former years, popular event formed the subject of an instructive discussion. Several recommendations in the form of resolutions were unanimously agreed to. Next year's meeting will be held on totally different lines and will take the character of a "garden party;" the classic side of athletics will be considerably curtailed and new items with a wider appeal will be introduced. A ground easily accessible from all parts of London — probably in the Chelsea district — is under consideration and the date generally favoured is the last Saturday in July.

Drink delicious "Ovaltine"
at every meal—for Health!

LETTER FROM SWITZERLAND.

Marked improvement in the economic situation.

Practically all branches of Switzerland's economy are showing definite signs of business revival. The influx of visitors is greater than for many years past. It is not yet possible to estimate the results of the summer season, but it can already be stated with certainty that the results will be favourable for all the tourist centres. As an example, the amount of night-accommodation taken by visitors from abroad in June, 1937, was 55% higher than in June 1936.

In July exports reached the highest point since October, 1931. During the first 7 months of 1937 they rose from 463 to 690 millions — an increase of 227 millions. During the same period imports rose from 637 to 1,071 millions — an increase of 434 millions.

Generally speaking, all branches of Swiss industry are feeling the benefit of the improved economic situation. In the machine industry and the metallurgical industry mention must be made of the amicable long-term regulations which have been made in the matter of conditions of work and salaries. Activity in the watch and clock industry is particularly encouraging. The improvement in the textile industry is rather less, particularly with regard to wool- and spinning-weaving. In the boot and shoe industry and also in the hat-straw industry, the prospects are very favourable. Exports of chocolate and of condensed milk have risen considerably. In the building industry, however, the improvement so far noted has remained modest. Nevertheless, increased activity in that industry is also imminent. While the number of dwelling houses completed has risen by only an insignificant amount during the first half of 1937, the number of dwelling houses the construction of which has been authorised has almost doubled, rising from 1,552 for the first 6 months of 1936 to 2,945 for the corresponding period of 1937.

As a result of improved conditions in almost all branches of Swiss industry, unemployment has dropped considerably during the summer. At the end of July there were 49,000 persons in search of work, as against 79,000 at the end of July 1936, representing a reduction of 38%.

The financial situation of Switzerland has also improved. For the current year the Federal Council anticipates 53,000,000 francs more revenue than was anticipated in February. For the first 7 months of the year customs duty receipts have risen by 11.3 millions; stamp duty receipts by 9.7 millions. With regard to expenditure, several economies are possible, for example, in the purchase of home-grown corn by the Confederation and in the fight against unemployment. The military budget, it is true, has had to be considerably augmented. In short, it is anticipated that there will be a surplus of income over expenditure of about 45 millions, if amortisation is not taken into account; if, however, this is taken into account, a deficit of 9 million francs is expected. The Federal Railway surplus amounts to 67 million francs for the first 7 months of 1937 (36 million francs for the corresponding period of 1936). The revenue surplus of the P.T.T. is 11.2 millions as against 9.7 millions.

The Swiss money market continues to show a very high degree of liquidity. Notes in circulation amounted to 1,412 million francs at the end of July, and the gold holding of the Swiss National Bank amounted to 2,594 millions. Notes in circulation and other sight-commitments were covered by gold to the extent of 95.7%. On the capital market, the disponibilities are very large, and this situation is reflected in the strength of bonds and several very successful Government loans. Since the devaluation, 365 millions of francs have been converted, and 241 millions of new loans have been subscribed (no account being taken of the national defence loan).

Although Switzerland is now in a period of economic progress after many years of depression, the Federal Council has decided to prolong for another two years the application of "crisis measures" which were to have finished at the end of this year. The general world situation is, indeed, still too uncertain to justify the abandonment of measures which have been of such great assistance to industry and agriculture during difficult times. (P.388).

MISCELLANEOUS ADVERTISEMENTS

EARLS COURT, Privat Pension. Zimmer von 18/- bis 26/-. Frühstück extra. 59, West Cromwell Road, S.W.5. (Tel. Frobisher 3118.)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Wednesday, October 6th at 8 p.m. — Swiss Mercantile Society — First meeting of the Philatelic section, at Swiss House, 34/35, Fitzroy Square, W.

Saturday, October 16th — Annual Banquet — Swiss Mercantile Society — at the Trocadero Restaurant, Piccadilly, W.

Tuesday, October 5th — City Swiss Club Monthly Meeting at Pagani's Restaurant, Great Portland Street, W.1.

SWISS BANK CORPORATION,

(A Company limited by Shares incorporated in Switzerland)

99, GRESHAM STREET, E.C.2.

and 11c, REGENT STREET, S.W. 1.

Capital Paid up £6,400,000

Reserves - - £1,560,000

Deposits - - £39,000,000

All Descriptions of Banking and Foreign Exchange Business Transacted

: : Correspondents in all : :
: : parts of the World. : :

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY LTD.

ANNUAL BANQUET and BALL

on
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16th, 1937

at the
Trocadero Restaurant

Piccadilly Circus, W.1

In the chair : M. C. R. PARAVICINI, Swiss Minister.

RECEPTION	DINNER	DANCING
at 6.15 p.m.	at 6.45 p.m.	9.30 p.m. till midnight

TICKETS at 14/- can be obtained at Swiss House, 34-35, Fitzroy Square, W.1. (Tel. Museum 6663). City Office, 24, Queen Victoria Street, E.C.4. (Tel. City 3310), and Swiss Observer, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2. (Tel. Clerkenwell 9595-9596).

Divine Services.

EGLISE SUISSE (1762).

(Langue Française).

79, Endell Street, Shaftesbury Avenue, W.C.2.

(Near New Oxford Street).

Dimanche 26 septembre :

11h. Culte : Mr. le Pasteur Pradervand.

6h.30. Culte : Mr. le Pasteur Lageard.

BAPTEME :

Ronald Edward Hobson, fils de Albert Edward et de Suzanne Mathilde née Bobillier de Londres, né le 3.8.1937.

Le Pasteur Emery reçoit le Mercredi de 11 heures à midi 30, à l'Eglise, 79, Endell Street, W.C.2. S'adresser à lui pour tous les actes pastoraux. (téléphone : Museum 3100, domicile : Foyer Suisse, 12, Upper Bedford Place, W.C.1.)

Profondément touchés par la sympathie que vous avez bien voulu leur témoigner dans leur grand deuil, la famille de feu Monsieur le pasteur René Hoffmann-de Visme, Mademoiselle Matthey et le Consistoire de l'Eglise Suisse à Londres tiennent à vous en exprimer leur vive reconnaissance.

SCHWEIZERKIRCHE

(Deutschsprachige Gemeinde).

St. Anne's Church, 9, Gresham Street, E.C.2 (near General Post Office.)

Sonntag, den 26. September 1937.

11 Uhr morgens, Gottesdienst.

7 Uhr abends, Gottesdienst.

8 Uhr, Chorprobe.

Anfragen wegen Religions-bezw. Confirmandenstunden und Amtshandlungen sind erbeten an den Pfarrer der Gemeinde: C. Th. Hahn, 43, Priory Road, Bedford Park, W.4 (Telephon : Chiswick 4156). Sprechstunden : Dienstag 12-2 Uhr in der Kirche.

Printed for the Proprietors, by THE FREDERICK PRINTING CO., LTD., at 23, Leonard Street, London, E.C.2.