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Val Müstair

Waterways reborn

While the Valais has its celebrated "bisses", the Val Müstair has its "auals": irrigation channels dating back to the Middle Ages. The valley is one of Switzerland's driest regions, and the farmers who created the network used great ingenuity in devising ways of bringing water to their fields.

By the mid-20th century, however, the waterways had largely been forgotten, superseded by more modern methods of irrigation. With the creation of the biosphere reserve of Val Müstair / Swiss National Park, the channels were recognised as an organic feature of the landscape; an inventory was made and interest in them grew again.

Now, as part of the region's historical heritage, they are being partially restored. The first stage is a 700m stretch of the Aual Foppumvasch near Guad and a short section of the Aual da Schaibias near Pütschai Josom. These two sights are located above the main valley bottom between St. Maria and Müstair.

*Contributed by Renate Meyer-Knecht
source: www.ubs.ch/explore (extract from brochure Top 150 water experiences)*

Some fun tips

Hiking Tip No. 1:

The "CLUB Stelvio-Umbrail 14/18" endeavours to secure the traces of World War I in the region of the highest Alpine passes, to document and make these accessible to the general public.

Such traces can be found at the intersection of the three language regions Müstair Valley (Switzerland) - Vinschgau (until 1918 Austria-Hungary) - Valtellina (Italy), comprising the impressive relics of this relentless, military conflict which stopped at nothing, not even the highest mountains.

If you want to follow those traces or know more about them, check it out on <http://www.stelvio-umbrail.ch>

Hiking Tip No. 2

Visit the Swiss National Park

The Swiss National Park encompasses a particularly impressive piece of Alpine landscape, with a wealth of flora and fauna.

Within its boundaries, nature is left to develop freely; humans remain in the background and are merely witnesses to the evolution that contributes so greatly to the incomparable character of this habitat.

The National Park is well known for its extraordinary variety of alpine animals, such as chamois, deer and marmots. A host of alpine plants provide a colourful sight as visitors make their way through the Park. There is a wide choice of paths on offer, with differing degrees of difficulty.

www.nationalpark.ch

Culture Tip:

Do you know where the smallest whiskey bar and museum on earth is? Believe it or not, but it is in Santa Maria in Val Müstair!!!

www.smallestwhiskybaronearth.com/

For more information such as skiing, accommodation etc. visit www.valmuestair.com. This website provides information in English and German.

By Alexandra Jung



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*The Helvetia would not go to the right places without the professional and timely service of **Mail Distribution Services and Wayne Longley**, who seems to cope with our complex mailing requirements admirably.*

We wish you all a very enjoyable festive season and Happy New Year, and look forward to working with you in the New Year.

Season's Greetings,

Swiss Society Committee and Helvetia Team