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Odds and Ends

The new motel-restaurant "Autobahn Luzern-Sued" at Kriens will be opened on 1st June 1961. It is only half a mile from Lucern and can be reached by the new motor road Lucerne - Bruenig - Interlaken. The situation is quiet and an excellent panoramic view can be enjoyed from its terrace. The motel will have 100 beds and 80 per cent of the rooms will have private bath or shower and telephone.

* * *

The go-ahead resort of Zweisimmen in the Bernese Oberland will add a new and modern motel to its list of hotels. In July 1961 the Sport Motel Zweisimmen will be inaugurated. It has 84 beds, rooms with WC, shower, telephone and wireless, a restaurant and tea-room.

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A new boat, the "Venezia", will be seen on the Locarno-Stresa run when the summer timetable 1961 is introduced. It has a carrying capacity of 1,100 passengers and catering facilities for 700/800 meals are available.

* * *

The nine-year-old son of a London psychiatrist gave his little sister a push which sent her sprawling across the room.

Before his parents could take any action, he turned to his father and said:

"Why did I do that, Daddy?"

* * *

The advance programme for this year's Luzern festival comprises twenty-one events, including eight symphony concerts, two concerts with choir and orchestra, three concerts of chamber music and three evenings for piano, viola and songs. The following will participate: Conductors: Fricsay, Schuricht, Sacher, Mackerras, Caridis, Krips, Sawallisch, Karajan, Kubelik and Keilberth; Soloists: Menuhin, Fournier, Richter, Casadesu, Giebel, Van Cliburn, Nicolet, Jones, Stader, Conrad, Wunderlich, Berry, Rubinstein, Meinardi, Schneiderhan, Häfliger, Bonneau, Richter-Haaser, Bachem, Milstein and Anda.

* * *

Difficult though it is to believe, it is a fact that Montreux, a tourist byword all over the world for over a century, has only just become a commune, and with its 17,500 inhabitants and area of 12½ square miles has only in the last few days been added to the official list of about 3,000 Swiss towns and villages. Up to that time it was certainly — with Clarens and Territet, two other residential areas on the sunny shores of Lake Geneva — a world-famous resort, but was not an administrative local government district. On the contrary, three former fishing and winegrowing villages, Le Châtelard, Les Planches and Veytaux were rivals for this title. The first two of these recently amalgamated under the official name of Montreux as the result of a local poll and, after Lausanne, now form the largest town in Canton Vaud. Veytaux, on the other hand, preferred to stay "independent". The new town of Montreux has two attractions within its boundaries that have helped to make it a Mecca for tourists — Chillon Castle and the Rochers-de-Naye, a mountain over 6,500 feet high which affords a wonderful view from its summit.

The "Neue Zürcher Zeitung", one of Switzerland's leading daily newspapers, recalls an April Fool joke played by one of its staff on 1st April 1886 under the elusive pseudonym of "S. Ch. Windler". This joke was in the form of an apparently fantastic article about plans to build a railway on the Jungfrau. The joke caused a great deal of amusement — but it made Swiss industrialist Adolf Guyer-Zeller think. Year after year from then on he visited the Jungfrau region, studying the feasibility of the project and ten years later work actually began on the Kleine Scheidegg. Slowly the railway crept upwards until in 1912, after seemingly endless tunnel-boring work in the rocky interior of the Eiger, the Jungfrauoch terminal station (11,340 feet above sea level) was reached. It is still the highest point in Europe accessible by rail.

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Acrobat: "Where's the trapeze?"

Saint Peter: "You missed it, Son, you missed it."

* * *

Clerk in a London magistrates' court: "Do you plead guilty or not guilty?"

Prisoner in the dock: "Dunno.—Ain't 'eard the evidence yet!"

* * *

The old Hotel de la Plage in Vevey has ceased to exist as a tourist establishment. It will shortly reopen as a boarding school for girls.

Vevey's loss of hotel beds through this change will, however, be made good by extensions carried out to the Hotel Rive-Reine and the Hotel du Soleil.

* * *

Just before excavation work started in Hyde Park for the underground tunnel, a policeman noticed a man searching for something in the gutter.

"Lost anything?" he asked.

"Yes," said the man. "Half-a-crown."

So the policeman helped him to look. But in vain.

"Well, don't worry," he said eventually. "I'll be on this beat again in the morning and I may find it. Come back tomorrow night and I might be able to let you have it."

When the man got home, he found the coin in the lining of his pocket. So he didn't bother to keep his appointment with the policeman the following night.

A couple of weeks later, however, he was passing the same way. A great change had taken place in the scene and the ditch for the tunnel was very deep.

Catching sight of the policeman, he walked over and said:

"You haven't found my half-crown, then?"

"No," replied the officer.

"Well, I appreciate all your trouble," said the man.

"But please don't bother to dig any deeper."

* * *

Geneva, largest French-speaking city in Switzerland, started its brilliant career as the world's most cosmopolitan meeting place no less than 2,018 years ago. This is shown in a booklet written by M. Albert Picot, a former member of the Geneva Cantonal Government. It was then that Geneva had its first historically important visitor "from abroad" — Julius Caesar. He came with his soldiers to stop the Helvetii advancing southwards. Geneva is the European headquarters of the United

Nations, which, with its affiliated institutions, to-day gives employment to a staff of nearly 4,000, such as the International Labour Office, set up in the city in 1920; fifty-one member States and three non-member States maintain permanent delegations in Geneva. In addition the city is the headquarters of four world-famous organisations which were founded by international conventions, the best-known of these being the International Red Cross Committee. Besides these, about seventy private international organisations have made Geneva their permanent home. Among them are the World Federation of Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, the European Cultural Centre and the Carnegie Foundation.

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A ski run covered with artificial material resembling snow and a man-made mountain with wild, rugged crags are two of the sporting features of the HYSPIA — the exhibition being staged in Berne, the Swiss capital, from 18th May to 17th July. It covers care of health, gymnastics and sport in the 20th century. Bounding the 32-acre exhibition site at the north-east, these two ingenious structures dominate a range of other sports facilities, including a swimming pool and a grass arena for track and field athletics. Any visitor who feels like doing some summer ski-ing can hire boots and skis on the spot and be initiated into the mysteries of "wedeln" by qualified Swiss ski instructors. Well-known mountain guides display their skill on the rock walls of the concrete mountain.

* * *

Scrap metal merchants existed even 2,000 years ago. This has been proved by excavations in the village of August, a few miles east of Basel, on the site of the former Roman township of Augusta Raurica, from which the village's name is derived. They may not have traded in worn-out cars but they certainly did business in fragments of bronze statues. Discovered in the foundations of a Roman villa were pieces of mostly larger-than-life size statues, such as ears, bits of foreheads, curls, fringes and pieces of old material, weighing several hundredweights in all. The total number of pieces found was 1,924. They may well have been collected by some smart scrap merchant after the town's destruction in war.

* * *

Fifty years ago, on 31st March 1911, workmen boring the Lötschberg tunnel from both ends met. This breakthrough gave the Bernese Oberland and the Valais, two of the most beautiful Alpine regions, a rail connection since used by hundreds of thousands of visitors, and provided the international Simplon line with a direct passage from Berne, the Swiss Federal capital. The year 1906, in which the Simplon Tunnel was opened, also saw the founding of the Bern-Lötschberg-Simplon Railway Company, now known as BLS for short.

Holiday courses in German language and literature are being organised for the first time from 17th July to 12th August by the Zurich Official Tourist Office. Tuition will be given every morning, the afternoons being given over to excursions, factory visits and trips to places of artistic interest.

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The Automobile Club of Switzerland (ACS) has issued a new motoring map under the slogan of "Relief Roads" to enhance Switzerland's reputation as the "land of good secondary routes". It offers the motorist wishing to get off the crowded main roads innumerable opportunities for discovering new territory for car tours.

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A panoramic view of 27 glaciers awaits the sightseer from the Chenalette mountain station (9,200 feet above sea level), the highest chairlift in the world, which was recently opened to traffic from the world-famous Great St. Bernard Pass to the Swiss Valais Alps. The most imposing feature the Alpine panorama is Mont Blanc, towering to a height of 15,750 feet across from Chenalette.

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