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SWISS SKIING CHAMPIONS IN BOURNEMOUTH

Winter 1967. Thousands of skiing enthusiasts all over Europe listen to the wireless or watch on television the international downhill races and slalom competitions. Grindelwald and Wengen in Switzerland, Val d'Isère in France, Kitzbühel in Austria and many other famous winter sport resorts: One major skiing competition follows another and the same names appear in the headlines time and time again. Jean-Claude Killy, famous world champion and France's top skier, Marielle Goitschel of France, Olympic winner, Karl Schranz and Karl Vogler, Austria's and Germany's number ones, Annie Famose of France, Christl Haas of Austria, Fernande Bochatay and Kurt Huggler of Switzerland, Nancy Greene of Canada who won three major events last winter.

Prominent amongst the names are: Fernande Bochatay and Kurt Huggler, both of the Swiss National Skiing Team, as well as Harry Schmid and Brigitte Friedl of the Swiss B team. We met all four of them in Bournemouth where they were attending a language course at the Anglo-Continental School of English. Although their names had appeared in international sport papers on various occasions, they did not act as stars, but behaved as the average student at the School would have done.

Looking at slim Fernande Bochatay, French-speaking student of Les Marécottes in the Western part of Switzerland, it was hard to imagine that this girl could travel down an Alpine slope on skis at speeds exceeding some 50 m.p.h.! Yet her strength lies in the slalom competitions where subtleness and skill through the labyrinth of poles are more important than daredevil racing. Her acrobatic abilities have helped her to triumph more than once over the international elite.

To 22-year old Kurt Huggler success came not readily. He joined the national team less than two years ago and had to fight his way forward by continuous and relentless training. Today, however, the son of an hotel proprietor at Mürren must first be beaten before anyone can say he has won a race. He too does not look a strong athlete, but he certainly knows how to make the best of a downhill race.

Harry Schmid and Brigitte Friedl are not yet internationally known, but their skiing abilities are undoubtedly well above average. Usually, the candidates of the B team catapult themselves into the National Team by a surprising exploit sooner or later, and we feel sure that both ACSE students will be in the sport headlines in the years to come.

All four were enjoying themselves in Bournemouth and eager to learn the language thoroughly. School to them represents a welcome rest from the strenuous training they have to undergo most of the year. It means recovery from an endless season of racing and from travelling from one event to another. In order to keep fit, they have not stopped their training entirely, and on most afternoons can be seen doing light physical training in one of Bournemouth's many parks. Being true enthusiasts of the sport, they do their training without supervision.

We asked them how long they intended to stay in Bournemouth. Mr. Schmid left at the end of June to join the Army in July. The others returned to Switzerland at the end of July to report back to their Coach in August when full scale physical training commenced for the coming winter season. Winter 1968 is particularly important in view of the Olympic Games taking place at Grenoble. Fernande Bochatay and Kurt Huggler will do their best to qualify for this major sporting event and they hope, of course, that even a medal is not out of their reach.

When we enquired their reason for learning English, we found that skiing is not their main occupation. Fernande is studying in a commercial college and will need a good command of English for her future occupation. Kurt Huggler said he must be able to speak to the many English and American guests at his father's hotel, and being a part-time skiing instructor, a knowledge of English is essential. Needless to say, English will be an advantage, should they be invited to take part in skiing races in overseas countries. Some years ago, four members of the Swiss National Team were studying English at the Anglo-Continental School of English before they left for Australia and New Zealand to compete in ski races there.

H.M.

LONDON — SWITZERLAND THROUGH SLEEPER

During the Winter Season 1967/8 winter sports enthusiasts will, for the first time ever, be able to board a train in London and travel right through to Switzerland, without changing at the Channel Ports.

The sleeping car will leave Victoria Station at 21.00 in the existing "Night Ferry" train and cross the Channel on board the Dover-Dunkirk train ferry together with the through sleeping cars for Paris and Brussels. At Lille, next morning, the London-Basel sleeping car will be attached to a buffet-car express train to Switzerland, arriving at Basel soon after lunch. Swiss Railways will organise the transfer of luggage to the connecting trains for Lucerne and the Engadine (without charge) with arrival at the Winter Sports resorts in time for dinner.

For timetable and fares apply to Swiss National Tourist Office, Swiss Centre, 1 Coventry Street, W.1.

SWITZERLAND AS A FILMLAND

Geneva, Lausanne, Lucerne, Basle, Zurich and the Gotthard region are the principal locations for the latest colour film in the "Inspector Clouseau" series. Previously portrayed by Peter Sellers, the French police inspector (who often displays more emotion than cleverness) is now being acted by the young American comedian Alain Arkin, who has already co-starred with Shirley MacLaine. Working with a technical staff of 100 specialists, Producer Lewis J. Rachmil and Director Bud Yorkin of Mirisch Films Ltd. recently began shooting in a chocolate factory along the shores of Zurich Lake.

[S.N.T.O.]

THE OPENING OF THE NEW TREMOLA HIGHWAY

The new Tremola Highway on the Gotthard Pass now circumvents a stretch of mountain road which, with its narrow bottlenecks and its endless lines of cars during the summer months, has cost many a motorist lost time and frayed nerves. Instead of the old road with its 24 hairpin curves (the sharpest of which has a radius of only 3 metres), the new concrete road covers the same stretch with only three curves, and its fascinating series of tunnels and galleries runs far into the Bedretto Valley. It is to be hoped that this new masterpiece of highway construction will not only make for a faster trip over the Gotthard Pass but will also contribute to heightened road safety.

[S.N.T.O.]

ON THE DIABLERETS GLACIER

A new hotel has been opened on the Diablerets Glacier at an altitude of precisely 9,900 ft. It features a self-service restaurant, a restaurant in traditional style (with 110 and 150 seats respectively), and an 80-seat terrace, all providing splendid views of the surrounding mountains with their eternal snow.

[S.N.T.O.]