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TOURIST NEWS

Would you believe . . .

An actual price *reduction* for PETROL?

Reductions in petrol prices have been introduced. The current prices for petrol in most areas are now:

Super grade, 93–97 centimes per litre; Standard grade, 90–95 centimes per litre; Diesel, 89–98 centimes per litre.

PS – This works out an average of 65p per gallon! Lubricating oil prices vary between Fr 4 and Fr 8 per litre.

SWITZERLAND HAS NEW CUSTOMS REGULATIONS

From 15 March 1975 the duty-free quantity of alcoholic beverages over 25° proof imported into Switzerland by residents of Switzerland and other European countries was reduced to half a litre per person of 17 years of age or over.

The duty-free allowance of one litre which may be imported by residents of non-European countries will be maintained. Quantities in excess of the duty-free allowance will be taxed at SFr 4.60 for each 0.1 litre

Alcoholic beverages up to 25° proof can be imported duty-free up to 2 litres, as previously.

THE GREEN CARD FOR MOTORISTS

From 15 May 1974 all UK and Republic of Ireland motor insurance policies have been extended to provide the minimum legal cover required by the EEC countries, Austria, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland so that production of a Green Card for travel within these areas is no longer required.

However, as the cover provided by this extension is only the minimum legal cover, it is strongly recommended that, before any trip abroad, motorists obtain from their insurer a Green Card which will provide the same measure of protection as is enjoyed in this country.

SPECIAL PACKAGE ARRANGEMENTS AT VEVEY

Vevey, the well-known lakeside resort between Lausanne and Montreux, is offering, from April to October 1975, a special seven-day package consisting of six nights accommodation with demi-pension, a welcome drink, one excursion, one regional culinary speciality, Swiss chocolate, a local souvenir, and participation in a prize draw.

All-inclusive prices start at SFr 278.

Also available are two horse-riding packages for seven days, starting at SFr 475 for semi-pension.

Full details and booking from: Office du tourisme de Vevey, 5 Place de la Gare, 1800 Vevey/Switzerland.

SWISS ASSOCIATION OF MOUNTAINEERING SCHOOLS

The Swiss Association of Mountaineering Schools has published a new pamphlet containing details on special holiday arrangements in the mountains for mountain-hiking, climbing and ski-touring for 1975. Copies are available free of charge from the Swiss National Tourist Office, Swiss Centre, 1 New Coventry Street, London W1V 3HG.

“SWITZERLAND FOR BEGINNERS” – NEW EDITION OF AN OLD FAVOURITE

Switzerland for Beginners by George Mikes, the world-renowned Hungarian writer, has been popular for years, but even the most stable country changes. The author therefore decided to bring it up-to-date.

He has done this by adding four new chapters, while Swiss artist, Godi Hofmann, has re-illustrated it from beginning to end.

THE “AMOR EXPRESS” GETS UP STEAM AGAIN

The appealing “Amor Express” train with its Eb 3/5 steam locomotive and four two-axled special coaches of the Lake Constance-Toggenburg Railway (Bodensee-Toggenburg Bahn or “BT” for short) is going into action again. From April to November (except summer and autumn holidays) groups of 155 people can hire it for the one-and-a-quarter hour trips from Herisau to Nesslau and from Neu St Johann to Herisau. Provisions from the Station Restaurant at Herisau will also be supplied on board on request. Inquiries should be made to: Reisedienst BT, 9001 St Gall.

NEAR MISS ON AN AERIAL CABLEWAY

The cabin of the Saas-Fee-Felskinn aerial cableway fell from its supporting cable as it was leaving the lower station with over 100 skiers on board. The incident occurred only seconds after the packed cabin had left the platform. It fell by only two metres and caused only minor injuries and considerable confusion inside. Some of the skiers had to be given first aid before returning to their hotels. Had the incident happened in the middle of the run, the cabin would have dropped several hundred feet and there would probably have been a disaster. Traffic on the cableway was interrupted for two

days. Officials said that they had never experienced a similar accident before at Saas Fee or anywhere else.

HOBBY HOLIDAYS GALORE IN SWITZERLAND

More and more holiday resorts are offering their visitors hobby courses this summer. The choice is wide; in handicrafts it ranges from rustic painting, hand weaving, hand spinning, modelling, pottery making, painting and sketching to wood-carving, batik and book design. At Mürren emphasis is being placed, among other things, on filming and photography. Extremely popular are the special July hobby holidays for children in Lenk with instruction in music and singing, experimental theatre, rhythmic and movement, miming and – a new feature – a film and television course. For adults, also at Lenk, there is the fifth Swiss Forum for Music and Movement (9–15 June). Holidaymakers wanting to do something for their health can enrol for courses in yoga, ice dancing, folk dancing, ballet, gymnastics or – going the whole hog – for keep-fit weeks. At Carona, near Lugano, the knowledge-hungry can be initiated into the mysteries of astronomy. Engelberg offers two novelties: from June to September courses on Swiss cooking are being held there and an expert will be giving instruction in the technique of enamelling. As well as alphorn blowing, Brunnen now also offers flag-swinging and the dream of spending a holiday on a farm can come true at Payerne. Walking holiday enthusiasts are catered for by around 50 Swiss resorts which provide guided walking weeks as well as day tours linked with game-watching, guided botanical and bird-watching walks, visits to see cheese being made and visits to art metalwork studios and local museums, etc. Horse lovers are also well looked after: about 30 resorts are arranging riding holidays. In Canton Valais the ups and downs of the countryside can be negotiated on the back of a mule and the Jura region can be explored in gypsy caravans. Further details – and also about tennis, golf, ski-ing in summer, sailing, canoeing, swimming and cycling – are given in the hobby brochure being published by the Swiss National Tourist Office (SNTO) at the beginning of May. It is obtainable free from the SNTO at Talacker 42, 8023 Zürich.

1975: MOTELS IN SWITZERLAND

The 1975 Motel Guide for Switzerland has just been published by the Swiss National Tourist Office. It is divided up into ten tourist regions and lists about 100 places where holidaymakers travelling by car can find accommodation.

SWISS MULE SAFARI

An unforgettable adventure on alpine trails from Haute-Nendaz to Grimentz (Valais) or vice-versa. Meeting point is Sion (the programme starts on Sunday and ends on Saturday). All-inclusive rate per person for accommodation in tourist class hotels for six nights/seven days, all meals as per programme, wine, coffee and liqueur on the last day, hire of mule (one mule for two persons), services of a qualified guide muleteer and a hostess throughout, insurance: SFr 735.

Dates: every week from 4 May to 5 July and from 31 August to 25 October.

For information and enrolment contact Welcome Swiss Tours, 7 Avenue Benjamin-Constant, 1003 Lausanne/Switzerland.

MODEL CHEESE DAIRY AT GRUYERES

The Gruyeres Model Cheese Dairy is open to visitors daily from 06.00 to 18.00 hours, offering an audio-visual slide show and, during the summer, a hostess service.

Cheese is made daily except Sundays between 07.00 and 11.00 hours.

An explanatory leaflet in English is available from Fromagerie de demonstration, 1663 Gruyeres/Switzerland.

REOPENING OF ALPINE PASSES IN THE GRISONS

As a result of a plebiscite held in Canton Grisons in October last year, the cantonal budget for snow-clearing will be reduced by 10 per cent, thus achieving a saving of some three-quarter of a million francs.

The following alpine passes will remain closed longer this spring than in previous years, if delayed snow-clearing will result in a substantial saving: Albula, Lukmanier, Oberalp, San Bernardino, Splügen, Umbrail. The Flüela Pass (Davos - Susch), which is usually kept open the whole year, may be closed for short periods.

All cantonal main roads which are kept open in winter will only in exceptional cases be serviced between 22.00 and 06.00 hours.

ART ON WALKING TOURS IN THE TICINO

To mark the European Architectural Heritage Year 1975, the Ticino Tourist Association is organising walking tours to places of cultural interest.

The 15 tours, ranging from half an hour to two hours' walking, cover all areas of Switzerland's southernmost canton: from the towns of Ascona,

Bellinzona, Biasca, Locarno and Lugano to side-valleys such as the Valle Maggia, Val Bavona, Blenio, Leventina, Verzasca, Malcantone, Gambarogno, Mendrisiotto and Ceresio.

A guide (in German language) describing the places of historical interest, routes, parking places, etc, is available free of charge from Ente ticinese per il turismo (ETT), Piazza Nosetto, 6501 Bellinzona/Switzerland.

ZURICH, A FASHION CENTRE

The first International Buyers' Fair for Women's Clothes and Accessories, Modexpo, will take place in Zurich in the spring of 1976. This event, which will be held twice a year - in the spring and autumn - open to both Swiss and foreign manufacturers and agents, will make Zurich an international rendezvous for both sellers and buyers of women's ready-to-wear clothes.

The fair, which will be organised by the Swiss Fashion Weeks' Association and placed under the patronage of the Swiss Clothing Industry Association, will complete and extend the traditional Swiss Fashion Weeks.

At Modexpo, buyers from all continents will be able to see for themselves the importance and achievements of the Swiss clothing industry, which is coming up against increasingly strong foreign competition. Even before the abolition of tariffs in Western Europe, foreign trade was extremely keen in the clothing sector; and it is particularly important for Swiss industry, enabling it not only to diversify its markets abroad but above all to manufacture sufficient quantities for rational production.

For a total clothing consumption estimated at 3.6 billion francs, more than 40% is covered by imports; on the whole, Switzerland exports about one-sixth of her output, estimated at 2.4 billion francs; for fashion reasons, trade is even more active in the women's ready-to-wear clothing sector.

OPENING OF LUGANO'S NEW CONGRESS CENTRE

Lugano's new Congress Centre was opened in April. Not the least of its special features is the way the modern building has been blended with the Villa Ciani, a classical-style patrician house which is linked to it for smaller events. The new building with an area of 4,500 square metres, can accommodate 1,300 congress participants. The main congress hall, shaped like an amphitheatre with an orchestra pit that can be lowered, seats 1,250 people. Restaurants and bars are located on the ground floor. The lower ground floor contains another conference hall, artists' rooms and press room while the upper storey houses the banqueting hall (900 places), two conference rooms and a spacious lounge.

OBITUARIES

EMIL RITZMANN

It is with deep regret that we have to inform our readers of the death of Mr Ritzmann on Sunday 27 April. He was 74 years of age and spent his working life with the Swiss Bank Corporation, joining them in Basle in 1917. He moved to the bank's London office in June 1924 and was Chief Executive of the Accountancy Section, he was promoted in June 1947 to the rank of Attorney. Returning to Basle in 1951 he was promoted successfully to Inspector in August 1951 and Sub-Manager in 1957.

Whilst in the United Kingdom Mr Ritzmann was very involved with and took a lively interest in the Swiss Colony being a familiar figure at the various Swiss Clubs and functions organised by them. He was also a moving figure in the 1st August Celebrations and did a tremendous amount of work to make these a success. In addition he was a great sportsman in his heyday, an excellent tennis player and a creditable exponent of hockey. He represented the Swiss Bank in both these fields. Among his other attributes was a fine voice and he sang for many years with the Swiss Male Choir, now unhappily defunct.

Mr Ritzmann was a long time reader of the *Swiss Observer* and we are grateful to Mrs Ritzmann who has already informed us that she wishes the subscription to be carried on in her name.

Latterly Mr Ritzmann and his wife lived at Arlesheim, Bodenweg 28, 4144 Switzerland.

We extend our sincere sympathy to Mrs Ritzmann in her sad loss.

MR ALOIS BÜRGISSER

It is with great regret that we have to announce the death of Mr Bürgisser on 16 April 1975. He died after a short illness at his home in Dunfermline at the age of 68.

Mr Bürgisser, a native of Bürg, Neuhaus, Kt St Gallen, went to Scotland in 1932 and joined the Winterthur Silk Factory. In 1935 he became a co-founder of Fife Silk Mills where he held the post of Managing Director. In 1936 he assisted in bringing the Dunfermline Swiss Club into existence and was at one time Chairman; he has been an honorary member for several years. Mr Bürgisser always took a very keen interest in the Club's affairs and in addition acted as Auditor to the Swiss Benevolent Fund in Scotland.

Mr Bürgisser is survived by his wife, son and daughter, to whom deepest sympathy is extended.