

6.2. The Great Outdoors - 150 years of mountain sports and tourism in the Alps. Part I

Panel organiser: Barton, Susan, International Centre for Sports History and Culture, De Montfort University, Leicester, UK

The year 2013 will be the 150th anniversary of popular tourism by the British in Switzerland. In 1863 the English tourism entrepreneur Thomas Cook organised his first tour of Switzerland, vividly documented by Jemima Morrell in her journal published a century later. Tourists visited remote locations in the rural Alps which entailed physical exertion in order to be rewarded by the joy of experiencing spectacular and wondrous mountain scenery. Less than two years later the first winter guests began to arrive, in St Moritz and Davos. Although already popular with grand tourists, the 1860s marked the beginning of tourism in the Alps. In celebration of this century and a half, this panel will examine the role played by tourism and outdoor activities, such as the search for health in spas and sanatoria, mountaineering, hiking and winter sports in the rural alpine environment. Mountain landscapes provide locations for leisure, sport and tourism. The rural environment is itself a commodity to be consumed and enjoyed by visitors who contribute to local economies. Tourism provided new opportunities for employment in the hospitality, construction, travel and leisure industries as well as cultural exchanges and technological transfer. Tourism has both changed and helped conserve the landscape. As early as the 1890s, concerns were being raised about the impact of railway building on the landscape and the increase of visitor numbers they would bring. Mountain railways, ski lifts and other tourism infrastructure, the erosion of footpaths, the collection of minerals and flora and disturbance of habitats by increasing numbers of visitors all had an impact on visual amenity and sensitive ecosystems, not to mention the effect on traditional cultures. Papers in this panel will discuss the history of leisure, sport and tourism in the mountains, with a particular focus on Switzerland.

Chair: Roche, Clare, Birkbeck, University of London, UK

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6.2.1. Löwenplatz in Lucerne – a factory for tourist photographs

Bürgi, Andreas, Department of History, University of Lucerne, Switzerland

Industrial quarters came into existence in many Swiss cities in the 19th century. Their equivalent in Lucerne is the Tourismusmeile, literally the 'Tourism Mile' with its Lion Monument (1821), Glacier Gardens (1873), Bourbaki Panorama (1899), Alpineum Museum (1901, previously Meyer's Diorama from 1856 onwards), and Stauffer's Museum of stuffed Swiss animals (1859-1888); in 1902 the 'Internationales Kriegs- und Friedensmuseum' (International Museum of War and Peace) opened. This district provides Lucerne with a unique urban feature. No other towns or cities in Switzerland or in the Alpine region have a specific district like this, with such densely packed selection of specially created tourist attractions. Construction and expansion of the Tourism Mile was only possible with modern financing models, the latest technology, established tourism infrastructures and media processes and content that appealed to the tastes of a broad public. The paper represents the institutions of the Lucerne Tourismusmeile and shows the broad techniques and strategies of exhibiting (and thus selling) Switzerland: Geological and glacial formations and structures of Switzerland, Ice Age, prehistory and the then newly discovered romanticism of lake dwellings, alpine fauna and flora, breathtaking sceneries in the Alps in dioramas and panoramas, engineering and railway construction under most difficult conditions (St Gotthard Tunnel), Swiss virtues, such as bravery, reliability and loyalty, humanitarianism and the engagement for the soldiers on the battlefields (Switzerland as depository for the Geneva Convention).

6.2.2. The symbiotic relationship between tourism and winter sports

Barton, Susan, International Centre for Sports History and Culture, De Montfort University, Leicester, UK

Tourists in Switzerland, influenced by the culture of English public schools played a major role in the formation of Swiss alpine resorts from the 1860s onwards. By creating Outdoor Amusement Committees based in major hotels and resort-wide clubs for tobogganing, ice-skating, curling and later bobsleighbing and skiing, these tourists played a key role in the transition of alpine communities from mountaineering and health centres into winter sports resorts, open all year round. Technology transfer and infrastructural development, particularly in transport and the hospitality industries facilitated the growth of these resorts and also of sporting competition within and between them. In the early 20th century, competition organised by the Olympic movement beginning with ice-skating at the 1908 London Games followed by the introduction of ice-hockey in Antwerp in 1920 and then a separate Winter Olympics from 1924 created a two-fold legacy: an increased awareness of and participation in winter sports and a growth in tourism in mountain resorts as participation extended beyond privileged elites.

6.2.3. Alpine Communities as Entrepreneurs: The Cultural Capital of „Backwardness“ and the Coercion of Urban Alpinists, 1890-1914

Anderson, Ben, Keele University, UK

Of the vast network of huts and paths in Eastern Alps, the vast majority were planned and built in the decades around 1900. This paper challenges assumptions that we should equate the funding, planning and narrative of these developments among urban Alpine associations with control over this radical Alpine intervention. Instead, it suggests that local Alpine communities were able to mobilise narratives of cultural, economic and national 'development', in order to compel further investment in the Alpine terrain by urban Alpinists. Huts and paths were not, as sometimes assumed, an investment with a sound financial return. However, by the late 19th century, they did fulfil numerous important cultural roles. Huts and paths were portrayed as expanding Deutschtum into the Southern Alps and as promoting national identity through 'joint work' between Alpine communities and their 'Flachland' counterparts. Constructions were portrayed as philanthropic urban interventions in the economic development of the 'backward' German-speaking Alps. Likewise, the network was described as a tool of liberal democratisation, to the chagrin of elite Alpinists who voiced concerns about the destruction of Alpine 'wasteland', prefiguring a later rhetoric of Heimatschutz. As urban Alpinists became increasingly reluctant to invest in the Alpine terrain after 1900, Alpine communities drew upon these interwoven cultural tropes to demand further construction from already heavily-indebted urban Alpine associations. In doing so, the paper challenges assumptions of urban aggression and rural passivity in developing spaces beyond the city.



Participants

Anderson, Ben

Ben Anderson is a Lecturer in Twentieth-Century European History at the University of Keele. He is interested in the changing fabric of urban leisure cultures during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In particular, he examines what happened when urban cultures emerged in rural spaces, how and why conflicts emerged amongst those involved, and what this can tell us about both urban and rural societies. He has recently published in journals of *Urban History* (2011), *Cultural Geography* (2012), and is currently preparing a monograph entitled *Urban Natures: Mountain Leisure and City Lives in England and Germany, 1885-1914*.

Barton, Susan

Dr Susan Barton is an honorary research fellow in the International Centre for Sports History and Culture at De Montfort University in Leicester. She has a wide range of interests in social history and her publications include work on knitted textile industry, working-class tourism, the British seaside, package holidays in Spain, sport and learning disability, tourism development in Switzerland and winter sports. Her current project is an investigation into the Winter Olympics up to 1948 and their sporting and touristic legacies. Her books include *Healthy Living in the Alps – the origins of winter tourism in Switzerland, 1860-1914*.

Bürgi, Andreas

Dr Andreas Bürgi studied German, Philosophy and History of Art in Zurich and Berlin. He completed his doctorate with a thesis on German-language travel reportage in the 18th century and subsequently worked on several SNRF research projects: co-editor of the complete works of Ulrich Bräker; project leader and editor of the project "Franz Ludwig Pfyffer's 'Relief der Urschweiz' (Relief of Central Switzerland)"; final editing of and edition of Julie Bondeli's letters. Main research interests: Switzerland in the 18th century; the history of spatial perception; the history of surveying; the history of travel and 18th century travel literature.

Roche, Clare

A first class history degree from Birkbeck in 2007 developed into a fascination with the long nineteenth century and a particular interest in the history of women, medicine and science. A Masters at Cambridge University in History and Philosophy of Science & Medicine consolidated this and led to the discovery of female mountaineers who appeared to transgress the prevailing medical, scientific and social view of middle-class women. I am currently a doctoral student at Birkbeck researching this group of women. For over thirty years I have been, and continue to work as a physiotherapist.