

Published: Apr 21, 2004

Four parties for the ferry anniversary

2004 is a special anniversary for the four ferries: the first ferry crossed Basel's river exactly 150 years ago. At the same time the association sponsoring the ferries celebrates its 30-year anniversary. The jubilee will be commemorated with four anniversary celebrations, a ferry magazine called «Fähri-Zytig», a book and a special beer.

On the Rhine for 150 years. This year Basel's ferries are at the center of various anniversary activities. Photo Leemann It used to cross the Rhine where the Wettstein Bridge spans the river these days: 1854 – i.e. exactly 150 years ago – the Harzgraben ferry was launched in Basel, the first of its kind. 1974 saw the foundation of the club sponsoring the Basel Ferries, and it has been maintaining the ferries to this day. This association currently has 3776 members. The association contributes an annual 70,000 to 80,000 Swiss francs to the maintenance of the four ferries. These watercraft that the Basel citizens treasure very much are not getting any state subsidies. In addition to the funds coming from the association, Manor and UBS keep donating considerable amounts of money for special expenses concerning the ferries. 150 years of ferries, 30 years of the sponsoring association: reason to celebrate. There are four ferries in Basel, and there will be four small, but nice anniversary celebrations this year. One in each season. The organizing committee for the events consists of members of the Ferry Club board and friends of the ferries. The president of the organizing committee is Stefan Moser. The first party will be in spring. The Klingental ferry «Vogel Gryff» (the responsible ferry captain is Urs Zimmerli) will begin.

May 8th: Heavy partying on Basel's Rhine promenade

On Saturday, May 8th, the Vogel-Gryff ferry will celebrate together with the Literature Festival Basel and the sports club BCA Alemannia. Stefan Moser: «Not only do we want to make the individual parties go with the seasons, we also want to cooperate with Basel's culturally active.» There will be heavy partying on Basel's Rhine promenade between 10 a.m. and 12 a.m. on May 8th. There will be fish specialties, a bar with especially brewed ferry jubilee beer from Basel's nice brewery Fischerstube, which has already given us the Tut-Ankh-Ueli beer, and prominent authors will read from their works onboard the ferry. The new book «Basel's Rhine Ferries» will be published on May 11th. The author is Basel's ferry historian Niggi Schoellkopf. He will be reading from his work during the Vogel-Gryff ferry festival, in the sense of a pre-opening.

Ferry festival on July 17th

The summer ferry festival will be on July 17th. This will celebrate the «Ueli» ferry (the responsible ferry captain is Albi Frei) by Dreirosen Bridge – with a through and traditional summer party «à la mode d' Albi». October 23rd, the first year of the 2004 Fall Fair, is the day of the St.-Alban ferry «Wild Maa» (the responsible ferry captain is Martin Reidiger). Fall cuisine, ferry souvenirs and all kinds of seasonal specialties are on the program. The winter celebration will be for the Munster ferry «Leu» (the responsible ferry captain is Jacques Thurneyssen). Christmas cookies will be baked then, a nativity played will be acted out and there will be a wintertime swim in the Rhine.

The Special Ueli Ferry beer and the new ferry souvenirs will be available at all four ferry celebrations. A very special novelty is the ferry magazine «Fähri-Zytig», whose first edition has just been published. The attractive magazine offers many interesting bits of information about the Rhine River and the ferries. The magazine will be published twice per year and will be available at the ferries.

By Christian Platz, translated by Esty H. Saenger
Basler Zeitung of April 21, 2004