

Local news : Great Britain

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Local News – Great Britain



NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE

Dear Compatriots,

I wish to extend to you and your families, on behalf of my wife, the members of the Swiss Embassy and myself, very best wishes for Christmas and for 1985. The past year has seen new developments in the relations between Switzerland and the United Kingdom, such as the official visit to London in April of M. Pierre Aubert, Head of the Department of Foreign Affairs, who was received by the Prime Minister and had interesting talks with Sir Geoffrey Howe. The traditional bonds of friendship between the two countries, to which the Swiss communities make such an important contribution, were reaffirmed on that occasion. This first year in London has enabled my wife and me to meet many of you in London and in the Manchester area. We were very pleased to learn about your activities and we look forward to more contacts in the coming years.

Pictet

(François-Charles Pictet)
Ambassador



* Best wishes for Christmas *
* and a happy, prosperous *
* New Year to all our readers. *
* The Editor *

DIAMOND JUBILEE

There has been a Swiss Church in London since 1762. At first, services were in French, and Swiss residents used to go to the German Church. At the beginning of the First World War, all German Churches were closed, and the Swiss had to get permission to hold evening services in "Schwyzerdütsch".

It was not until 22nd June, 1924 that a German-speaking parish was founded, and from then onwards, regular services were held in the City Church of St. Anne & St. Agnes. When it was bombed, services were held at Swiss House, at Kingsway Hall Oak Room, at St. Mary Woolwich and St. Mary Le Bow successively. In 1969, the German-speaking community began having Sunday services at the Eglise Suisse in Endell Street, the home still today of both parishes.

Soon after the foundation of the "Schweizerkirche" in 1924, a group of ladies began to meet regularly, and the "Nähverein" was founded later the same year.

Every first Tuesday in the month, one met at the Foyer Suisse in Bedford Place. I well remember my first meeting in the mid-thirties. It was a friendly gathering, and many members were working at the sewing machines, some were cutting material to be taken home, some were knitting, and tea and cakes were served, and happy chatter prevailed throughout.

In 1940, the Foyer was bombed, and we had to look for other premises. From 1941 to 1945 we met in a very small room at the Swiss Benevolent Society's premises in Conway Street. Numbers had dwindled on account of the war, but even so, the room was almost uncomfortably crowded. But as everywhere else in those days of bombing and hardship, friendly gatherings took on an even deeper meaning, and work went on as before, making garments for the S.B.S.'s Christmas parcels.

And then, in 1945, we moved to the Swiss Church where we still meet. Even during the months of rebuilding this summer, members did not want to miss the monthly gathering, and they met for a "business lunch" at the Swiss Centre.

No organisation can thrive without devoted members willing to take on extra work and responsibilities. The Ladies' Group has been fortunate in having members willing to do the purchasing of material and wool, to keep accounts and members' lists, and to act as presidents.

The first President was Mrs. Bea Sigerist, followed by Mrs. Anna Sommer, both sadly no longer with us. Then followed Mrs. Trudy Senn and later Mrs. Trudy Gyssler. When she left for USA, Mrs. Marianne Glarner took on the job. But she, too, left for Switzerland, and in 1980, Mrs. Berti Kaluza was elected President and Mrs. Betty Laszkowsky Vice-President.

The name "Nähverein" was dropped, for the group had many other tasks, and sewn and knitted garments were no longer in such demand as previously. One of the big jobs is to organise the biennial bazaar in aid of the Swiss Church(es) in London. They also provide refreshments on special occasions and assist the ministers whenever needed.

These and their wives have generally taken an active interest in the Ladies' Group, and there was a time when they organised reading and discussions. Even now, when one of the members has an interesting tale to tell about a journey to foreign lands or some other topic, she is always assured of an attentive audience. Occasionally, joint social meetings are held with the French-speaking "Causerie" and the Mothers' Group.

The nearly 50 members always include ladies from the Embassy, and once a year, the Ambassador's wife gives a luncheon

party at the Embassy. In a generally ageing community, it is gratifying that quite a number of ladies are young. But whether young or not so young, they love to come, on the first Tuesday every month to meet their friends and to reminisce over a simple luncheon (it used to be tea) prepared by two or three different members each time. Looking back over 60 years, we may be well satisfied and full of hope for the future. And with us in thought will be some of our formerly very active early members like Mrs. Wally Bruggisser, Mrs. Lily Moehr, Mrs. Elsie Stauffer and Mrs. J. Wetter who are no longer able to attend our meetings, but who wish us well.

Mariann Meier

Anyone interested should get in touch with Mrs. B. Kaluza, 01-643 5941.



Family Christmas Service in English

Sunday the 16th December 1984 at 4 p.m. at the Swiss Church, 79 Endell Street, W.C.2. Father Christmas will be visiting the children.

P.S. Each child brings a small present which will be donated to a children's Home or Hospital.



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**SOUTHERN AREA SWISS CLUB
PROGRAMME 1984/5**

- 7.12.84 Christmas Party.
4.1.85 Informal Social.
1.2.85 Annual General Meeting.

Chairman: Mrs. Anne Doy
8 James Way
Camberley, Surrey
(Tel. Camberley 64208)
Secretary: Mrs. Verena Rudkin
1 Chiltern Avenue
Farnborough, Hants.
(Tel. Farnborough 547948)
Treasurer: Mrs. Maria Fraser
6 Homefarm Close
Farnborough, Hants.
(Tel. Farnborough 513524)

Please note change of organiser of
"Schwyzerclub South-West"

Former Organiser: Ruth Cole.

New Organiser:

Mrs. Katra Haskell
"Rafters"
Trull Green
Taunton
Somerset
Tel. 0823 74237

SWISS CLUB BRISTOL

New address of:
Mrs. Myrtha Hack
3 Christchurch Road
Clifton
Bristol BS8 4EF
Tel. 0272 738539

Editor's address:
Mrs. M. E. Hall-Zeller
27 Redway Drive
Whitton TW2 7NT
Tel. 01-894 2114

Emil Krapf from Salisbury will be celebrating his 92nd birthday on the 8th December. In the picture we have Emil when he joined us last year for the Christmas celebration at Holy Trinity Church Hall in Hotwells, Bristol. He is with his friend, Mrs. Earley, whose father was Swiss and to whom our meetings have much sentiment.



When asking Emil how often he thought our Swiss Club ought to meet, the reply invariably comes "Every week!" He always spoils us with his delicious fudges.

Birthday Greetings to:

Mr. Willy Renz who is 86 on 2.1.85.
Mr. J. D. Bonjour who is 86 on 23.2.85.
Congratulations, best wishes and good health to you all.

Swiss Review

Deadlines for your contributions and illustrations:

- 1/85 March, 20.1.85
2/85 June, 27.4.85
3/85 October, 3.8.85
4/85 December, 12. 10.85

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THE YORKSHIRE SWISS CLUB

Holiday in Benidorm, 11 nights, 12th–23rd February, 1985. Peter Selby-Huber is able to arrange special rates. Would anyone interested please contact him direct at 69 Moseley Wood Gardens, Leeds LS16 7HX. Telephone 672098.

Can you help? We would be pleased to hear if you know of any vacancy in the Leeds/Bradford area, for a young man in Accountancy.

WEST OF SCOTLAND SWISS CLUB

Forthcoming events, 1985:

18th January, Friday evening. *Theatre Outing*. "Maria Stuart", at the Citizens' Theatre. Full details later.

15th February, Friday at 7.30 p.m. at 7 Hughenden Terrace. *Soviet Tour*. Talk and slides by Mr. J. Sheffield. Sandwiches and tea.

15th March, Friday at 7.30 p.m. at 7 Hughenden Terrace. *Child Psychology*. Talk by Mr. Cedric Cramer. Sausages and Weggli.
19th April, Friday. *Night Out*. Details to be announced later.

17th May, Friday at 7.30 p.m. at 7 Hughenden Terrace. *Annual General Meeting* followed by cheese and wine.

June Barbecue at Chryston, the home of Mr. and Mrs. G. Hogarth. Details later.

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A DELEGATE LOOKS BACK OVER 22 YEARS

It was in 1962 that I was elected deputy delegate to Mr. Alfred Renou who represented the Swiss in Great Britain South on the Commission of the Swiss Abroad. The same summer I had to take his place at the meeting in Sion, and due to his sudden death, I was elected as his successor almost immediately. I joined the body, known as the "Little Parliament" of the Swiss Abroad, as the only woman amongst, at that time, some 60 men, and for a good dozen years I remained alone, and though one or two women joined gradually, I was still the only full woman delegate until a few short years ago. But I have no complaints. I am well satisfied.

This institution is a wisely constructed body, for we who come from abroad don't debate in a vacuum: by having influential compatriots from Swiss political, economic and cultural life, our concerns are carried back to the powers that be, and often help is found for our problems. All Swiss abroad have been affected by the results.

Here are some of the successes: The abolition of permits for Swiss abroad to buy houses and land in Switzerland, to differentiate between us and foreigners. Next we fought for the dropping of the military exemption tax for Swiss who have lived abroad for more than three years, i.e. the second generation, and for the elimination of the unjust tax on assets to be expected one day from one's parents, the "anwartschaftliche Vermögen".

UNIONE TICINESE

Births

A daughter – Stephanie Alexia – was born on 13th May to Chantal (nee Tomasina) and her husband Richard Floyd. Congratulations to the proud parents and best wishes to the baby.

Marriages

On Saturday, 15th September in Arbedo/TI, Anna Scarabel, formerly on the staff of the Swiss Embassy in London and a member of our Committee, was married to Gregory Fernandes from Malaysia, where they will live.

On Thursday, 26th July in Wembley, the marriage took place between Karen Lyons and Philip Diviani, son of Committee Members Joe and Annetta.

We wish both couples every happiness.

Deaths

We announce with regret the death of loyal members.

Tomasin Polti, on 3rd March at the age of 90.

Charles De Maria, on 19th March at the age of 76.

Mrs. Nina della Bosca, suddenly at the age of 70, while staying in Dongio/TI. Her brother, Cesare Ferrari, was President of the Society from 1943 to 1946.

May we extend our condolences to their families.

The Commission fought for political rights for Swiss abroad, although the Swiss in Britain are not altogether in favour. One of the successes is the *Review* which is published in conjunction with the Confederation and sent to all compatriots living outside Switzerland.

We were involved in social welfare of the Swiss abroad and the Confederation. We fought for easier access for young Swiss from abroad to Swiss universities and other educational establishments. We achieved an agreement with Swiss sickness insurances to accept Swiss returning from abroad after the age of 65, and canvassed for preferential treatment in Swiss hospitals. We fought hard for the nationality rights, so that Swiss women married to foreigners abroad could pass on their citizenship to their children. And we greatly protested against the injustice when wives of compulsorily insured Swiss under the AHV were suddenly deprived of their insurance protection.

These are, you will agree, impressive successes. I have been lucky, for I was able to attend all 44 meetings in the 22 years that I have represented you in the southern part of Britain. All the time, I have, together with my colleagues, worked for a better presence of Switzerland abroad and improved information in Switzerland about us Swiss outside the homeland. In the course of time, the ASK was recognised by the Government and received consultative status in all matters concerning Swiss abroad.

It is an institution which deserves support.



Karen Lyons and Philip Diviani

Other Society News

On Sunday, 7th October a small group of willing Committee Members spent several hours cleaning the Society's tombs in Islington & St. Pancras Cemetery – a much-needed job which had not been done so thoroughly for over a dozen years.

The Federation AGM elects the two delegates and two deputy delegates for the U.K. Originally, one paid one's own expenses, fares and all, with possibly a small contribution from the NSH and later other societies. Expenses could only be covered adequately if the Federation's income were increased. Most delegates don't claim all expenses – I never did – and some don't claim any at all. It is the societies who pay annual donations to the Federation, and you can help by joining Swiss groups and therefore improve their financial state, enabling them in turn to increase their support to the Federation. It is money well spent. So now, after 22 years, I can sit back and let my successors take over. I am sure they will make a good job of their mandate. My task is complete. I confess, it was not easy to take leave of my colleagues at the last meeting in Basle in May. I have enjoyed and loved my work and have tried to help in improving the image of the Swiss in Great Britain on the Commission in particular and in the "Auslandschweizer" movement in general.

I have made many friends, and I should like to thank my colleagues past and present for their help and co-operation. I owe a lot to Dr. H. W. Egli, my predecessor on the Commission, who made such an impact on our behalf, and also to the President and Officers of the Federation.

I am grateful for all the trust and confidence the members of the Federation have given me all those years and I wish them good luck and God's speed in their future endeavours.

Mariann Meier



THE CENTENARY OF THE CRESTA RUN 1885-1985

The Cresta Run celebrates its Centenary in February 1985.

Apart from a Centenary Ball in London on 22nd November, 1984 the Club's Centenary Celebrations are to be concentrated in an action-packed week from 2nd-10th February, 1985. The highlight will be the unveiling of David Wynne's bronze of a Cresta Rider, a gift from the Club to the people of St. Moritz.

As well as six Races, including the Centenary Grand National, the blue riband of the Cresta, other features include:—

- (1) The première of the film "The Cresta Run 1885-1985".
- (2) A firework display over the Lake given by a vice-president of the Club, Gunter Sachs.
- (3) A motor event for the "Sotheby Cup" on the St. Moritz Lake.
- (4) A Grand Centenary Ball at the Palace Hotel.

The Shuttlecock Club, membership of which is conferred automatically on any Cresta Rider who falls out of the run at the notorious Shuttlecock corner, will be holding its annual dinner during Centenary Week.

LA FRATERNITE DES SOMMETS

This headline in *Le Matin Dimanche* symbolised the spirit of the Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club's 75th anniversary celebrations in Saas-Fee in August. Over 100 British mountaineers foregathered there to embark on a unique programme organised with the magnificent collaboration of the Swiss National Tourist Office and the Saas-Fee Tourist Office.

The main ceremonies in Saas-Fee were based on the Britannia Hut, for which British members subscribed the total cost within three years of their foundation and presented it to the Swiss Alpine Club at the official opening on 17th August, 1912. Our member Noel Odell was at the opening in 1912 and now aged 94 was happily present on this occasion.



Posing in front of the Britannia Hut

Photo by courtesy of Daily Mail

As an "hors d'oeuvre" there was a ceremonial visit to Zermatt with its special historical associations for the British. About half the party crossed the Allalin Pass in perfect conditions to join the remainder for a commemorative service in the English church there by the Bishop of Dunwich. This was followed by an official reception by the mayor and a dinner at the Hotel Mont Cervin.

There was an overnight snowfall, but with the hut full to bursting point a convivial candlelight dinner was held with the exact 1912 menu – perfectly palatable. Long before dawn, ropes of climbers set forth for the Allalinhorn, attired à la 1912 with the ladies in long skirts and broad hats and guided by candle lit lanterns. There was

much soft snow and so time did not permit all to reach the summit in time to return for the midday ceremonies at the hut. Undeterred by cold and cloud, a great gathering of 1912 style mountaineers and journalists witnessed an address by Hans Wyer, President of the Canton du Valais, a religious service conducted by the Bishop of St. Albans and the Vicar General of Sion with the accompaniment of a yodelling choir, the sealing of symbolic British and Swiss gifts in a cairn, the unveiling of a plaque by Hermann Milz, Central President Swiss Alpine Club and Walter Leu, Director General Swiss National Tourist Office, and a presentation of a painting of the English Lake District by Peter Ledebuer, President of the Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club to the hut. A stirring occasion, completed that evening by a procession through the streets of Saas-Fee and an excellent entertainment in the Gemeindesaal, in which the whole town took us to their hearts.

We were honoured to have some very distinguished guests, including the Swiss Ambassador in London and the British Ambassador in Berne with their wives, the Central President of the SAC and the Presidents of several SAC Sections, Lord Hunt of Everest fame and many others. The celebrations were a happy reminder of the continuing cordial relations between Britain and Switzerland, symbolised particularly in mountaineering. As I said at our banquet, the words of our first President at the time of the opening of the Britannia Hut in 1912 are true today:

"The hut appears to be well and truly built and to stand on a solid foundation. And so, I hope, does the good feeling between the English speaking and all other members of the SAC."

Peter Ledebuer
President, ABMSAC

P.S. The History of the Cresta Run will appear in the next issue, March 1985.

For further information please contact:

Malcolm Innes 01-584 0575
John Shipton 01-283 7243
James Sunley 01-499 1001

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WHAT IS OUR TRUE HERITAGE?

With our fairly recent National-celebration message from Switzerland, an almost priestly message from the Federal President, reflections from the Church on the 500th Birthday of Zwingli, recent appraisals in the *Observer* on Jung, etc. together with present-day news on the Media, what do we make of all this?

The question which surely arises is, what is true Patriotism today? What is needed today as much as ever before is vision.

Surely man's biggest enemy is fear: fear of oppression, fear of rejection, prejudice and the capital I.

Yet as a nation we have known peace.

Any wanderer, however enthusiastic, exploring new territory, finds that either the weather can change after brilliant sunshine, or the path becomes divided or obscure.

There is a need for direction or guidance and any keen mountaineer knows that. This is where experience often has to be called upon for obvious reasons.

A path may seem easy to start with, another more challenging. It's the peaks which offer the magnitude and the sense of achievement, because we can look down on the valleys and say: "Isn't it great - I never knew before".

Any form of government needs direction, leadership and motivation of the kind which enables growth, harmony and peace.

Having become a student in Theology, later involved in Clinical Theology in an Ecumenical situation I was to take a closer look at God's encounter with the kind of world we

live in, setting it alongside the findings of Jung, Barth and Brunner as well as Zwingli and many others during the Reformation when many from England went to Switzerland to hear what these men had to say.

I came to realise that the Gospel is the only rational thing.

I vividly remember with affection and gratitude a teacher in my Primary-school in Switzerland, because of his ability to expose Swiss History in a manner which was both exciting and enlightening. He described how our forefathers wrestled on their knees in prayer at the mountainside, dealing with giants in a manner which seems mindboggling this day and age. I presume it arose out of his own commitment to both his country as well as his pupils.

Now as a mature student in a foreign land, I have come to realise something that I perhaps either took for granted or never knew before, and with perhaps even more excitement, just how some of our compatriots have wrestled with God, the mountains, the question of life and death for centuries, and have conquered that which for the world seemed otherwise. It is here where I was drawn perhaps most closely to my homeland, and it is here where the frontiers merge, it is here where it dawned on me just how much I owe to my Heritage.

Besides the Reformers, recent men like Karl Barth and Emil Brunner, whose deep theological insights and writings have and are turning the Church upside down, in grappling with and grasping the essence of

our Humanity. It has a profound impact in and around the world in terms of Theology and subsequent Sociology and Psychology which is indeed yet to come.

When I became familiar with a little paperback, once costing a mere 2s.6d. called *The Faith of the Church* by Karl Barth, now described as gigantic, as well as Brunner's rather larger volume called the *Mediator* (a book described as majestic) I realised that I was in possession of some priceless gems. Let us ever be mindful and thankful of our Heritage.

What has become clear and is very evident to me, is that effective government and representation is not that of shouting with the loudest voice, but that of love, truth, dignity, harmony and peace.

"But for a few loyal members of a Nation - I will spare the land - but for a few." It was true in 1291 - let this be true today.

M. B. Hack

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