

Local news : Great Britain

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FOSSUK.

Hearty congratulations to my friend **Jeff Long** on his election as the new President of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom (FOSSUK). He succeeds another very nice man **Dr R. Duttweiler** who, with characteristic dedication (and respect to Jeff) now becomes Vice-President.

I was present at the recent AGM in the company of Ambassador Muheim, Minister Walter Fetscherin, our own Mariann Meier and Joe Buehler (in his rôle as FOSSUK Treasurer) and many more notaries. This is despite my normally restless disdain for committees of any kind. So much hot air seems to be expended in discussing previous discussion and appointing committees to appoint committees. We Swiss love to deify tradition and cower in fear of change.

The company was a delight and the Ambassador's banquet that followed was superb. I did not, however, sit down to eat any the wiser. I note with a wry grin that a certain person's 'findings' on her survey were included in the minutes and yet my impromptu, impassioned comments were subtly omitted! Max?

For and against.

So many of you responded to our questionnaire about the Green Pages that we have no room this time to do them justice. I must say that 85% of the letters we received were favourable but DON'T STOP sending them, be they for or against. We shall publish a cross section in the next issue including a very praising letter from **Rosmarie Gershater** countersigned by **forty six** of her friends and colleagues. Meanwhile, in the interest of editorial balance (and as a special treat for the those few who wrote me nasty letters this month!) here's a couple of snaps from my recent business trip to the Marbella Money Show to cheer you up ...

Best regards, Nick Miller



Local News - Great Britain THE GREEN PAGES

Extra! Extra! Read all about it ...

Many thanks for all your responses (favourable and otherwise) to our recent survey requesting comments about our not-quite-so-new-look Green Pages. In fact we've been doing it for a whole year! So, what better way to mark the occasion than with our exclusive interview with the new Swiss Ambassador to the UK ...



Join me in the company of the knowledgeable, venerable, and highly likeable **Franz Muheim** and his charming and talented wife Radmila on Page V.

Fly FREE ... and in style!

... or perhaps you may think that our second great 'Fly Free to Switzerland' competition beats even that. This time we're delighted to be working in conjunction with none other than **Swissair**. And no ordinary prize is this! You and your friend, relative, spouse, mistress, bank manager or whoever will travel in Business Class luxury. Turn swiftly to Joe Buehler's Travel feature on Page III.

SRI wakes up.

Glad to see that Europe's best-kept secret, **Swiss Radio International**, has taken a little of my advice and produced a publicity leaflet that is both attractive and readable. It features a programme guide that might just encourage you to listen until you to turn to the back of the leaflet and realise that you can only receive SRI in Britain if you stand on top of Ben Nevis with a nuclear-powered tracking device. The tuning guide, in fact, still leaves a lot to be desired. I for one cannot, for the life of me, fathom out either *it* or the misguided marketing policy behind it.

Swiss Church Bazaar.

For some years now, London's Swiss Church Bazaar has been one of the biggest events on the Swiss Community's calendar. People come from all over the country to enjoy the company of their compatriots, to eat bratwurst and to buy some bargain gifts well in advance of Christmas madness. Dozens of helpers will again be working for a long period in advance of this year's Bazaar, to be held on Saturday 11th November (11.30am kick-off).

The Swiss Church relies heavily upon the much-needed revenue from this bi-annual event, therefore donations of gifts and cash are greatly received. For further information please contact **Ursula Talary**, President of the Bazaar Committee, on **01-778 4878** (before she boils me in oil!!).

Advice Line.

As once was promised, readers' letters are to be given much greater prominence in future issues. In addition to our 'Opening Letters' feature (which returns next issue) we are introducing **Advice Line**. It will not be so much "How can I get rid of these spots" as a reference point for legal problems, nationality complications, military service queries, tax and pension advice etc. We feed your enquiry (anonymously, if so requested) through to the appropriate channels and write you a personal reply. We then publish an abridged version of question and answer for the benefit of readers in a similar jam. All letters to our editorial address (see Page X).



Albert Mehr, the ever-popular Consul of the Swiss Embassy, is pictured here with **Phillip Karl Eichenberger** of Iver Heath, Bucks, on the occasion of his **100th birthday** (Karl's, not Albert's!!) The Swiss Review would like to extend hearty congratulations and good wishes with just one question ... why did we miss the party ?? Many happy returns, sir.



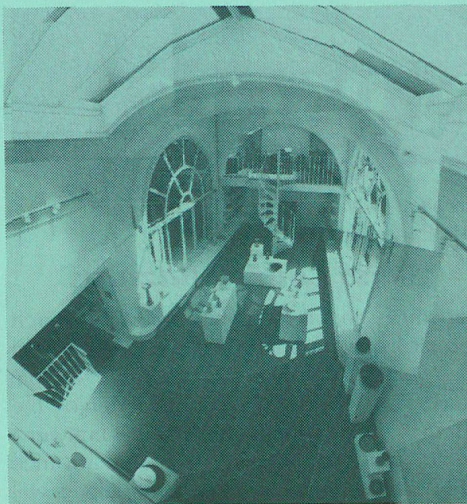
Jane Buddle ARTS

Dynamic ceramics

Galerie Besson, is a delightful gallery entirely devoted to fine art ceramics. It's founder, the enterprising **Anita Besson**, a Swiss who has lived in London since 1956, acknowledged the rising interest in ceramics and opened her gallery in April 1988. Since then there have been regular exhibitions (at least 12 so far) lasting four to six weeks.

Situated in prestigious surroundings at 15 Royal Arcade, 28 Old Bond Street, London W1, the gallery is a beautiful and serene setting for an astonishing range of works. **Lucie Rie** and **Hans Coper** and many other famous established artists are featured alongside works by a younger generation of talented, but lesser known artists. Most exhibits are for sale from as little as £12 up to £50,000!

Although the gallery appears exclusive, the welcome is not. Any questions are answered knowledgeably and enthusiastically. While



some visitors are able to appreciate the exhibits undisturbed others may be making a shrewd investment purchase or enhancing their museum, gallery or personal collections. The pots are not behind glass cases, giving the blind or partially-sighted the opportunity to touch them.

Galerie Besson is open Tues - Fri 10.30 - 5.30, Sat 10 -12.30 (Mondays by appointment). Forthcoming are exhibitions showing works by Ian Godfrey and Elizabeth Fritsch.

Full details on 01-491 1706.

Publisher, best-selling writer, and former political journalist for the daily "24 Heures" (Lausanne), **Bertil Galland** is to give a reading (planned for October or November - to be confirmed) in the Lecture Room of the Swiss Embassy. As a publisher he has promoted a renewal of literary creativity in French Switzerland by encouraging many eminent Suisse Romande writers.

At the same venue, well-known German language writer **Hanna Johansen**, is to talk about her work. Inspired by her own children, Hanna began writing children's stories in 1974. Works for adults followed from 1977. Thursday November 9th at 7pm.

Both readings are being sponsored by the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia. For more information tel: 01-723 0701 (Embassy).

A cross-section of the creative work of **Meret Oppenheim**, famed for her 1936 work 'Fur Cup' (a fur-covered cup, saucer and teaspoon) is to be shown in October at the **ICA** in London's Mall. Information: 01-930 6393.

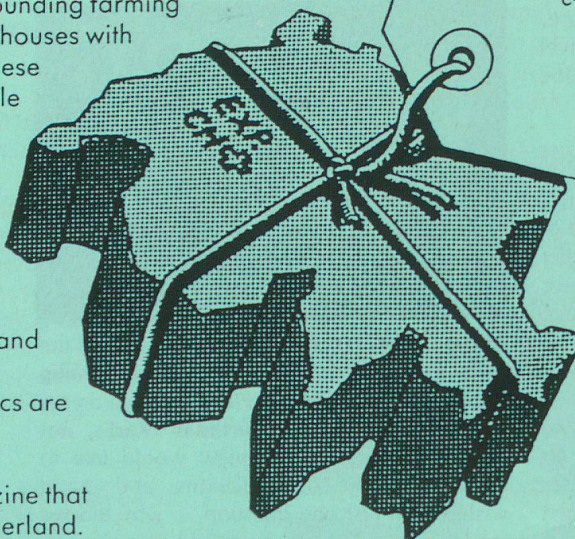
Julian Paltenghi's paintings will be featured in a one man-show, exhibiting all facets of the artist's work. This will take place from September 26th and October 18th at **Gallery 10**, Grosvenor Street, London W1.

Switzerland by post

Regularly, every month. So many memories and discoveries. Things familiar and things new. 60 pages of carefully researched articles in English, French, German and Italian, with an impressive range of photographic illustrations.

This month, for example, we discover Appenzell. Where peasant traditions and heathen customs are still fascinatingly interwoven. Where, every New Year, local mummer groups enact ancient traditional entertainments for the surrounding farming community. Where behind the rows of houses with neat façades and spotless windows, these highly individual townfolk live a lifestyle unchanged by the passage of time.

In future months, we'll visit Delémont, Switzerland's newest cantonal capital. The streets of old Bern with their many arcades and picturesque fountains ... and the Lötschberg, featuring the well-known railway line and the not-so-well known mountain pass. These and many other fascinating topics are all discussed in forthcoming issues of **SCHWEIZ SUISSE SVIZZERA SVIZRA SWITZERLAND**. An illuminating magazine that captures the many splendours of Switzerland.



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Joseph Buehler
TRAVEL

Fly FREE to Switzerland with **swissair**

Swissair news round-up

Hello again, and welcome to a bumper page of travel and tourist information coupled with our very special Swissair-sponsored 'Fly Free to Switzerland' competition. More of that later. First some news ...

A truly novel way to enjoy a 'green' holiday and experience the quantum difference between city and country dwelling is to take a swiss farm holiday. Ten or more travel agents on the SNT0 books now organise these trips, highly recommended as a fascinating insight into rural life.

On similar lines, for the rather less committed, is the new tourist attraction at Seewen in the canton of Schwyz. A new show dairy, called 'Schweizerland', opened there on 1st August. Visitors can experience traditional and modern methods of cheese making and even have a go at making some themselves (with expert guidance, of course).



Say cheese ! Lord Mayor of London, Cllr **Elizabeth Flach** (Lord Mayor ?) is pictured above with myself (second left) and my predecessor **Albert Kunz** (left) in the VIP lounge at Heathrow. She and fellow Westminster Councillors were on a tour of Lucerne, Lausanne and Lugano, meeting local Mayors and dignitaries and enjoying the breathtaking scenery. During the week-long tour they sampled no less than six different forms of transport: plane, rail, lake steamer, coach, car and cable car.

Towns and villages on the shores of Lake Brienz this year celebrate 150 years of the pleasure steamer. The stunning perspectives of mountains in the Bernese Oberland have always made these boat trips an experience to cherish. One paddle-steamer, the Löttschberg, has been in service for 75 years !

... and fans of steam RAIL travel will be delighted to note that the latest fact-packed edition of 'Steam Switzerland' is now available from the SNT0. Ring for details !

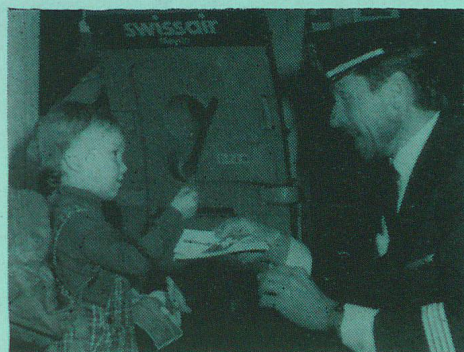
Who said **Swissair** holidays were expensive ? They now offer 4-day breaks in Zurich, Geneva, Lucerne or Davos for as little as £305 with a car thrown in ! Prices start from just £165 for 3 days with flights available from London, Birmingham or Manchester.

Swissair and **Japan Airlines** have introduced a new 12 hour non-stop service from Switzerland to Japan via Siberia. This once-weekly service will increase to twice-weekly in Winter 89/90 and will cut current journey times significantly.

Teaming up with FLIP (Free Liberty Phone Company of Geneva) Swissair are now able to offer travellers, using major credit cards, hire of a portable cellular telephone for their stay in Switzerland. At a rental of just SFr40 per day (less for longer visits) the FLIP phones can be picked up at any Swissair travel office where staff will be happy to demonstrate the phone and supply local call rates.

Finally, travellers' comfort takes on a new meaning as one young chap should know. Swift refusal of champagne makes way for his preferred vintage ... a glass of cool milk. And whilst he relaxes he can reflect on the past 60 flights he's taken with his parents by Swissair (equivalent to journeying 24 times around the world !) and justifiably say 'not bad for a 2 year old !' In young James Buckhalter's view there are airports and airports and his own preference is Zurich. Was this because of the comfortable passenger lounges, excellent eating facilities or short transit times perhaps ? No, James deems the range of toys in the children's nursery to be the best this globe can offer and argument would seem fruitless. After all, we're talking to an expert!

Bill Buddle



Capt. Siegfried Giessmann welcomes two-year-old James Buckhalter aboard his MD-81.

The widely travelled tot has notched up more than 200 hours in the air !!

... in Business Class luxury.

We've gone one better this time ! Following on the heels of our first, hugely successful 'Fly Free' competition is this second chance to win two free return tickets to Switzerland.

*The winner will receive two tickets valid for use on any of the routes listed in the **Swissair** advertisement overleaf. They may be used at any time on or by 31st March 1990. Once again, courtesy of **The Swiss National Tourist Office Fly-Rail Baggage service**, your luggage will travel without you, direct from your departure airport to the main rail station at your destination. No need to waste valuable time at the baggage reclaim !*

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Simply answer the following three, quite simple multiple-choice questions and have a guess at our 'Tie-Breaker'. Then tell us your name, address and daytime telephone number and post it to the following address by 10th October 1989:

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... you will be pleased to note that there is a valuable consolation prize for EVERY entry so make sure that all your Swiss friends and relatives in the U.K. have sent in an entry (a photocopy of this page IS acceptable) ...

1. How many seats do Swissair offer every day on their 11 flights to Switzerland from London, Manchester and Birmingham ?

A - Over 1500. B - Over 2000. C - Over 2500.

2. What is Swissair's television advertising slogan ?

A - 'How very civilised'.

B - 'How very organised'.

C - 'We make all the right connections'.

3. How many worldwide destinations does Swissair serve ?

A - 98. B - 108. C - 141.

Tiebreak ...

Estimate how many passengers will fly aboard Swissair flight SR805 London to Zurich, departing at 1350 hours on October 10th 1989.

Remember ... there is a prize for EVERY entry !!



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Birmingham International Airport
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Glasgow SWISSAIR, Room 224
Glasgow Airport
Tel: 0345-581333





The Nick Miller **INTERVIEW**



On a beautifully hot day in June of this year I had the privilege of visiting the home of the newly appointed Swiss Ambassador to Great Britain and his charming wife, M. and Mme. Franz Muheim. I extended a warm welcome to this country on behalf of myself and our readers and there followed a fascinating discussion offering a candid insight into diplomatic life in London. I was keen to ascertain his immediate priorities in his first weeks in office ...

(Note: NM - Nick Miller. FM - Ambassador Muheim. MM - Mme Muheim)

FM: *It is traditional that an Ambassador coming to a new post meets his colleagues but there are so many ambassadors in London that you cannot see them all immediately. Our main contacts are with the British authorities and, in fact, as soon as I arrived here the Foreign Office arranged calls for me with Sir Geoffrey Howe (then Foreign Secretary) and Sir Patrick Wright (Under Secretary) and with the heads of the main departments dealing with Switzerland.*

I met the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps who is presently the High Commissioner of Cyprus. Then I visited my colleagues from the European neutral countries, the Common Market countries, the EFTA countries and those from the third world on a selected basis. Plus, of course, the two 'Super Powers'.

NM: I gather there are over 40 Embassies in London.

FM: *There are many more, about 130 in fact, if you include High Commissions. Representatives from the Commonwealth countries are called High Commissioners and the others are Ambassadors.*

NM: Perhaps your most interesting meeting last week (early June) was the one that took place at Buckingham Palace when you were introduced to Her Majesty The Queen, although I gather that this was more a case of renewing an old acquaintance?

FM: *Well that is a rather familiar way of expressing it, but I have, indeed, had the privilege of being introduced to The Queen once before, in 1968 when I was first posted here. Of course, this time was under totally different circumstances. On this occasion we had beautiful weather. It was a beautiful day and although it was a very solemn ceremony it was also a very friendly and relaxed one. I must say that we were very impressed by the way the Court handles this ceremony.*

NM: Britain does seem to do that sort of thing rather well ...

FM: *Yes, as you know I had been taken to the Palace in a horse-drawn Royal carriage. It took me from here at our residence, through Hyde Park and on to Buckingham Palace.*

NM: ... and you mentioned that you were greeted by crowds cheering outside as you arrived?

FM: *(Laughing) Well, my visit coincided with the Changing of the Guard and there were many tourists watching. As we passed through the crowds, they saw the Swiss flag on the car in which my wife was following so they could identify the Swiss Ambassador going to the Palace.*



NM: It must be very exciting to travel in a Royal carriage.

FM: Yes, it is exciting and is, actually, quite fast. It took us only 20 minutes to travel from here to Buckingham Palace!

NM: Perhaps that could be a new form of transport the next time there is a tube or train strike! Tell me, did you meet Ronald Reagan at the Palace when he was invested as an Honorary Knight of the Garter?

FM: He was having lunch with the Queen immediately after I presented my credentials. We did not meet but I heard his speech in the Guildhall on the previous day.

NM: You seem to have many friends in Great Britain, presumably dating back to your first appointment as Second Secretary and then First Secretary in the late 1960s. Was this an influence in your decision to accept this role or does your duty to your country always take precedence?

FM: As an ambassador I think it proves extremely useful if you have been posted here before. To know the city and to know the country, and its own habits and rules, helps a lot in starting this new job. We certainly very much appreciate seeing again the many friends that we made during our first visit.

Many other ambassadors, have been posted here before. London is considered to be one of the major posts along with Paris, Washington, Bonn and Rome. Particularly prior to 1992 and given the developments we have in Eastern Europe and the rôle that Britain plays in these contexts.

NM: How do you think your approach to this office will differ to that of your predecessor, M. Pictet?

FM: He has done a wonderful job, and he played a very important role during his five years in London. Of course, each ambassador has his own style. What I would like to do in the field of bilateral relations is to put the emphasis on cultural relations. The 1991 celebration of the 700th anniversary of the Swiss Confederation will be an occasion to give emphasis to cultural activities in Switzerland. We will bring Swiss artists to Britain and will have concerts. We have brought paintings from well known and from modern Swiss painters for the Embassy. This is one of the aspects that I would like to put emphasis on during my stay.

“The art of diplomacy is communication ... International relations have become so complex, technical and scientific”

NM: That is clear already. Mme Muheim, your husband speaks glowingly to me of your qualities as a hostess and of your knowledge of the arts. I share with you a love of ancient and modern painting and sculpture. Your choice of furnishings and arts seems to be truly eclectic.

MM: Yes, I have always been a lover of art and I have worked in this field myself, although I haven't painted for some years. Recently I became involved in two big projects. One was dealing with the wives of diplomatic and consular staff. We founded an organisation dealing with all the

different problems that we face when abroad. Health, education, problems of residence and the problems our diplomats face when they return to Bern. Some are away for up to 20 years and go home to many changes and face difficulties in settling down. I also worked with a friend of ours who is a writer/journalist, investigating Swiss history and mythology including William Tell. I found this very enriching.

I am very interested in the many projects planned for 1991. In fact another friend, Mr Solari, is in charge of selecting the best things to be shown over the whole of Switzerland. During our stay here we want to bring well-known and some less known artists here to stay with us and perhaps to work.

In July, Jean Tinguely, a world-renowned sculptor, comes to London to receive a Doctorate from the Royal College of Art. The Swiss Minister of the Interior, Mr Cotti, has agreed to allow Mr Tinguely to do a very special piece of art in our residence. This will happen later in the year, once he has seen the space and conceived his project.

NM: I appreciate all of the works of art that I have seen here, but do you have any particularly cherished possession? Perhaps the Witschi sculpture on the staircase?

MM: I have a different approach to each piece of art here. With each, a very emotional relationship. Most are by friends. Let's say the deepest attachment is with a project that I worked on for seven years in New York, in Kenya and in Europe with a Bulgarian artist named Mikail. His project deals with elephants and this is my deepest contact with any work other than my own. I love each piece that we chose for different reasons. It gives me tremendous pleasure to be able to see them every day.

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NM: You are lucky to have so much space for your pictures ! When we first met I commented that I liked one in particular. I was not entirely surprised to hear that the rather beautiful model for the picture was yourself. It was, I gather, painted by Georgi Daskaloff. One of your compatriots ?

MM: No, he is Bulgarian. We met in 1971 during our first visit to New York. Both he and his wife wanted to do a portrait of me but it was agreed that Georgi would do it. He has since made a portrait of my husband in a very different style.

I really enjoyed it but it can be very painful as a painter who wants to bring out something of your inner life delves very deeply in yourself and you have to trust that person. I have never succeeded in doing a self-portrait but maybe later on I will try again.

NM: You both seem to enjoy meeting people and appeared quite at home with 30-plus guests on Friday of last week. Is it merely a statesman-like gesture on your part or are you truly gregarious ? It may seem like an obvious prerequisite that embassy officials at any level should like meeting people, but is it ever a strain to entertain a constant procession of guests ?

FM: *The art of diplomacy is, first and foremost, communication and if you don't like communication then you had better get another job. You have to communicate in different ways and with quite different kinds of people. Especially in today's world where international relations have become so complex. They have become very technical and scientific. You have to be able to be a valid interlocuter for very different kinds of people, not only politicians. You have to be able to talk to businessmen, artists, scientists and, of course, to members of the Swiss*

colony. Understanding their concerns, their wishes, their views.

NM: Presumably this is greatly assisted by your gift for languages ?

FM: *The diplomat must know, apart from his mother tongue, two other languages as a basic requirement. In the course of your career you are given the possibility to train in other languages as well. I started to learn Chinese because I was supposed to go to China. It didn't happen but I am very happy to have had this opportunity to get some knowledge of the Chinese language.*

NM: How accessible are you or, rather, how accessible does one have to be in your rôle ? If I were a Swiss citizen newly arrived in this country, down on my luck, perhaps even in some disaccord with the authorities here, and I came to the Embassy demanding an audience with you, would I get to see you or would I get short shrift ?

FM: *There are many thousands of Swiss residing in the U.K. and there are many more coming every year so, obviously, I cannot see everyone. It all depends on what kind of subject you want to discuss. If a businessman is in some kind of difficulty, for whatever reason, I am very open to receive him. Every day the Embassy receives many enquiries in all fields. Legal. Economic. Cultural. We do our utmost to reply and to assist visitors.*

NM: You have to be a statesman-like figurehead to Swiss citizens in this country. Are you, therefore, under constant guard or, if ever you get the urge to go on a shopping spree together at the local supermarket, can you just pop out?

FM: *Obviously, being an ambassador in a*

large city like London implies many official tasks and puts restrictions on your private life but I think that it is very important that you keep in touch with real life. As you say, to go shopping, to go out to galleries, or to concerts, without being identified. This is very important for your psychic balance, for your well-being. Otherwise you tend to be caught in a framework which is not real life and this, of course, we have to avoid.

NM: Presumably you have the advantage that your profile is likely only to be high amongst Swiss citizens and when you are on official business.

FM: *When I go to a bookshop, I like to stay there as long as I can. We often go to concerts with friends, and so on. There are many occasions where we don't have to appear 'officially' but, of course, you have limits.*

MM: *We are very pleased to be able, from time to time, to hide away even if it is for half an hour. When we were here 20 years ago we were fortunate to be living to the south of Hyde Park and Franz could walk through the park in the morning and on his way back in the evening.*

FM: *Twice a week I go jogging in Hyde Park.*

NM: So we could see you out there with your track suit on ?

FM: *No problem. (Laughs)*

NM: I will have to try and catch up with you one morning! So, if you decide to visit friends socially, is it a complicated exercise ? Can you just 'hop in a cab' and go ?

FM: *If we go privately, as we did last night to visit some friends, we just take our car and leave, but, of course, if it is like tonight (Sir Geoffrey Howe's banquet for the Diplomatic Corps) then we go in the official car.*

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NM: Now, if I was to say to you ... "You must come to my house in Greenwich and have some dinner, or perhaps Sunday lunch". Would you be able to?

MM & FM: Thank you very much.

NM: Good ! But what would we cook you ? Do you like any particular type of food ?

MM: *Cooking is a hobby. Wherever we travel I am very interested in the vegetation and in the cooking because it is one aspect of the culture of a country. We love all kinds of different foods and spices. You can cook anything ! If it is good I will be glad to have it !*

FM: *We put much emphasis on biological food and natural ingredients because often cooking means hiding the lack of taste of things. A lot of cream on food can not hide the fact that some vegetables have no taste. The raw material is the basis of cooking.*

MM: *Properly blended spices bring out the flavour of some materials. Cooking which is a real science. One should not just mix everything with everything. It is an alchemy. We pay a lot of attention to what we eat. We have been macrobiotic for some time. The hygiene of food brings you the hygiene of body. Everything is related one to the other.*

The only way to avoid catastrophe on this planet is to have a greater respect of the nature of our food, of animals, of plants, of the air, of water and everything surrounding us. In Switzerland even children of ten years old are aware of what is going on.

NM: Awareness of ecology and disarmament issues is prevalent currently. I noticed that you have sat on quite a few disarmament committees. Is this very much a 'tub-thumping' issue for you ?

FM: *It has become a very topical issue. Particularly East-West relations. In the early '80s I prepared Europe's first disarmament conference in Stockholm. Also we had to prepare the Swiss position on confidence-building measures and since then much has happened. We are very actively developing, enhancing, and increasing the Swiss contribution to peace-keeping all over the world. Much in the tradition of Swiss foreign policy.*

In 1986, we voted against membership of the United Nations but the Federal Council has since increased our contributions to the peace-keeping operations of the U.N. on a voluntary basis. We have increased financial contributions. We have also provided equipment, like aircraft and so on.

We are now recruiting and training military observers which, from next year on, will be at the disposal of the U.N. peace-keeping operations in Namibia, UNTAG. We have about 150 Swiss in Namibia. They take care of medical services for U.N. troops and part of the civilian population. This is a very

significant part of Swiss foreign policy and I am glad to see that Swiss public opinion and our Parliament has endorsed this action. Maybe one day we will have our own peace-keeping forces at the disposal of the U.N.

NM: Does that mean that Switzerland's role, perpetually, will be outside of the U.N., outside of NATO, outside of the EC ?

FM: *We certainly are not presently considering joining NATO, and our referendum settled the U.N. problem after a long period of doubt. The Federal Council does not wish to apply for membership of the E.C. now but the longer term decision remains open.*

NM: In the approaching years your posting here takes you through a very significant period of Anglo-Swiss relations. As we approach 1992 and the open economic and employment market operating between the 12 member states of the E.C., do you think that there is still a relevance to Swiss independence culturally and politically ?

FM: *We are already involved very deeply with the Community. We have over 130 bilateral agreements with Europe. Our commercial, human and cultural exchanges are mainly with Europe. Our main problem with the E.C. is an institutional one. The problems of neutrality, of federalism, of direct democracy, are basic institutions of Swiss political life which we want to preserve. We don't want to lose what we call the 'treaty making power'.*

NM: So you feel that neutrality is still relevant despite the fact that we've had such a long period of peace-time. Aren't we moving towards a 'one-nation' world, with the Super Powers working together ?

FM: *Neutrality is still relevant although its context is changing. Historically it was mainly a requirement of internal politics. The only way to keep Switzerland united was to remain neutral, vis-à-vis foreign powers. Now our neutrality enables us to provide what we call 'good offices' to the international community. Very often people ask Switzerland to do something BECAUSE we are neutral. BECAUSE we don't take part in conflicts. We don't take positions, and this remains very important today when, even as the world has become more and more united and interdependent you still have severe conflicts and wars. This also allows us to act as an intermediary. For the Americans in Cuba or in Iran. Like we have tried in the conflict between the U.K. and Argentina.*

The Swiss are deeply attached to neutrality. There is no doubt about it. The main argument against membership of the U.N. was neutrality. The young generations coming up may feel discriminated against in Europe so we must establish a relationship with the E.C. in the reciprocal interest of both parts.

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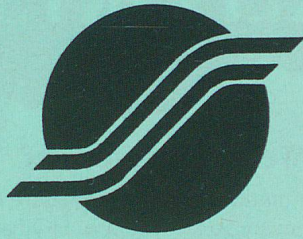
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Embassy NEWS

All change at the Swiss Embassy

Here's some news about various changes at the Embassy. Minister **Milan Lusser** has retired to Switzerland. Mr **Franz von Daeniken**, the temporary Head of the Economic Section, has been transferred to Berne and replaced by **Mr. Josef Bucher** who has come from Geneva (from Swiss Mission to EFTA and GATT). The Legal and Press Attaché, **Mr. Philippe Welti**, has also been transferred to Berne and has been replaced by **Miss Marianne Engler**, who has come from Berne (CSCE Affairs).

Mr. Robert Helfenstein, our most helpful friend in charge of the Commercial Section, has left London for Athens and been replaced by **Mr. Max Kuenzle** who was formerly in Luxembourg. Last but not least, **Mr. Pius Bucher**, the Vice-Consul (Chancery) has also been transferred to Berne. His successor is **Mr. Roland Fischer**, who has arrived from Abu Dhabi.

John Chapman REPORTS

'We have time for you'

That's the motto of the **Swiss Welfare Office**, whose Conway Street (London) HQ has tried, over the years, to provide a vital service for young Swiss in the U.K. Often youngsters who have just arrived in Britain are unsure about certain technicalities in English law relating to employment. In some cases, they might be penniless and in need of some assistance with a homeward flight to Switzerland. Whatever social problems they may encounter the SWO has all the necessary facilities for help.

Margrit Lyster tells us how varied a typical week's activity at the office can be. Most of the people who visit SWO's offices are young girls coming to the U.K. to work as au-pairs, although as Margrit points out, the numbers have dwindled in recent years. "This is perhaps due to the tougher bureaucratic hurdles regarding work permits that non-EC citizens have to overcome" she comments.

"We frequently have to turn down requests from young girls wishing to find work in the U.K. One of the main problems seems to be placement of au-pairs with a suitable family in the U.K. We act as something of a liaising body between the various parties. The Au-pairs. Au-pair agencies. The families. The Home Office (regarding the issue of au-pairs' permits). Plus, of course, the Swiss Embassy. Other enquiries include various queries in respect of medical insurance as treatment on the NHS is not possible for Swiss citizens".

Administrative encouragement is one thing, but the Office cannot live by kind wishes alone. The funding for the SWO comes, in the main, from the Swiss Federal Authority. Additional funds are raised via appeals in Switzerland and the U.K., covenants and various personal donations. With this solid financial support, the Office is run efficiently and with seemingly endless dedication by a committee of some 15 members representing all areas of Swiss life in the U.K.

The SWO performs a vital function but just what does its future hold in a climate which seems to be increasingly hostile to young non-EC visitors seeking employment?

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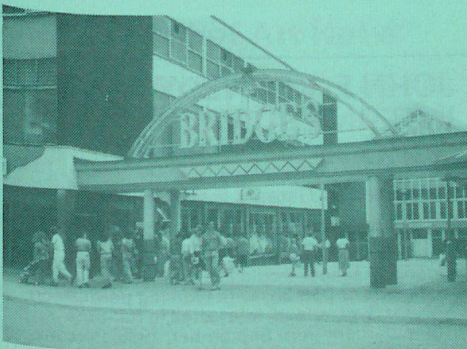
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Nick Miller's TOUR DE SUISSE

August 5th - Tyne and Wear

As geographic mobility improves, so the individual characteristics of towns like Sunderland begin to diminish. The town centre, with its array of familiar multiple hi-fi and clothing retailers, is distinguishable only by the welcoming, colourful, if abrasive, Geordie accent. The Lowry image of the North of England is, on this evidence, long dead. The flat cap, the racing pigeon and the rickety bicycle have given way to high fashion, the rottweiler and the XR3. American-style trendy café bars abound and the night life is, I am told, second-to-none.



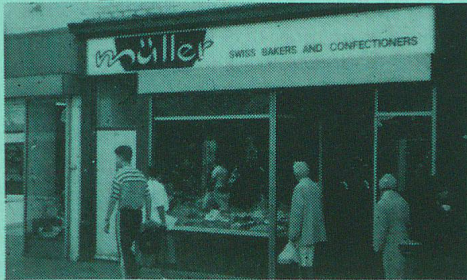
The UK Government's Inner City redevelopment programme seems, by and large, to have borne some fruit. Newcastle and Durham, both impressive Cathedral Cities, have grown in industrial stature and self-esteem on the back of 'The Nissan Factor' and the like. Property on Tyneside has followed a familiar path. Estate agents are tearing their hair out here too! Bargains in the centre of the conurbation are few and far between but a 3-bed terrace in one of the outlying colliery districts can still be found for little over £10,000.



Left to right: Ernst, Hanny, Marion, Nelly, Urs Degenmann & Max. Seated: Gianna & Elisabeth.



Who could blame the Tyne and Wear Swiss Club for holding their regular meetings above the business premises of the charismatic Max Müller and his wife Gianna. Max's chain of bakery stores is renowned in the locality. The bread is so fresh and the cakes so tasty they shouldn't be allowed ...



Finally meeting Nelly Scott-Niederberger was a delight. The club's jovial, kindly President gave me a warm welcome and stuffed me with the Müllers' rolls and cakes despite my feeble protestations. Her sterling efforts last year to establish the club were rewarded in June when the TWSC was officially affiliated to FOSSUK. The young Nelly decided she was here for good the minute she clapped eyes on her handsome sailor in Barnstable in 1954.

On the subject of true-life romance, Ernst Rohrer fell for his wife Betty during his stay in England in 1961, whilst Marion Martin met her husband during her period as Governess to the children of the mighty Whitbread family. Hanny Armitage-Schleiggner only moved here in 1983 to marry an oil rig surveyor, but is already making plans to escape! Senior members Elisabeth McGregor and Betli Schneider have lived in the area for decades and are clearly at home with the North-Eastern way of life.

So, for my day out at least, was I. With my feet up in the train I thumbed the Evening Chronicle ... man throws acid at pretty secretary ... Gateshead woman fights off TWO attacks by rapist ... is nowhere sacred? Thank heavens the British athletes at Gateshead were giving the locals something to smile about.

Next stops ... Birmingham and Manchester.



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Other useful numbers ...

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Local News - Great Britain

THE GREEN PAGES

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Mariann MEIER

Swiss Art and charity at the Guildhall

In 1815, when Beethoven was still alive, a Music Society was founded in Berne. In 1877 it created the **Berne Symphony Orchestra** which is still today part of the Berne Music Society, although the funding comes mainly from the City of Berne and the Canton. The Pro Helvetia Foundation contributes financially towards tours abroad.

In April of this year, the orchestra undertook its first tour of the U.K. under its principal conductor **Peter Maag**. The tour was supported by Pro Helvetia and Kuoni Travel. The first concert was at the Barbican, sponsored by Bally, as was the next one at the Bletchley Leisure Centre in Milton Keynes and at Portsmouth's Guildhall. The one at Fairfield Halls in Croydon was sponsored by Nestlé.

It was the beautiful old Guildhall in London where the final and special concert was given on 13th April. An artistic event of great distinction. **HRH The Princess Alexandra** graced the occasion with her presence. In her capacity as Vice-President of the British Red Cross she was delighted to hear that £40 out of every £50 ticket sold was donated to this worthy cause. This was made possible via the sponsorship of concert by the Swiss Volksbank.

The 600 strong audience included many prominent personalities. Among them the



(From left) HRH Princess Alexandra meets Minister Faessler, Mme Faessler, Dr and Mrs Rainer Weibel.

Countess of Limerick (Chair of the Red Cross) and her husband, the Earl, who is President of the Anglo-Swiss Society. The Swiss Embassy party, prior to the arrival in Britain of new Ambassador Muheim, was headed by Chargé d'Affaires Minister **Christian Faessler** and his wife. The concert included Mozart's Haffner Symphony; the Oboe Concerto by Strauss (**Maurice Bourgue** replacing the indisposed **Heinz Holliger** as soloist); Sandor Veress's 'Threnos' in memory of Bela Barfok; and ended with the Scottish Symphony by Mendelsohn.

The Swiss Embassy gave a reception in the Crypt during the interval, and afterwards the Swiss Volksbank generously offered a buffet supper to a large number of invited guests in the Old Library. The Chairman of Swiss Volksbank, **Dr. Rainer Weibel**, Berne, addressed the gathering and Lady Limerick expressed her appreciation of the generous Swiss contribution to the valuable work of the Red Cross. The Concert Tour of the Berne Symphony Orchestra was a great success, and for many Swiss compatriots in the U.K. a welcome opportunity of taking part in such events, hopefully to be repeated in the future.

Mariann Meier is a former Editor of Swiss Observer and author of 'The Young Traveller in Switzerland' published by Phoenix House

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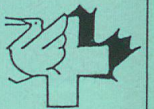
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