

Welfare office for Swiss girls

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With all the artists joining the *Corale* on the stage, the scene was set for the President, Mr. Fred Streit, to give his customary speech, words of welcome to the official guests, of appreciation to the hosts and thanks to all the artists, helpers and financial supporters without whom the celebration could not have been organised. Particular mention should be made to those who assisted in bringing over from Switzerland the two yodel artists, the Swiss National Tourist Office and the Anglo-Continental School of English in Bournemouth and above all Mr. A. Schmid of the Norfolk Court Hotel who offered the two sisters hospitality.

And then came the National Anthem. This is always a rather uncomfortable moment when one has to sing more than one verse of this none too easy song, not yet familiar enough to be sung without embarrassment, and, this time, accompanied on the organ with no conception of the right speed and harmony. How much "Rufst Du, mein Vaterland" is still ingrained was shown at one o'clock in the morning when a much smaller audience sang the old words to the tune of "God save the Queen" with a lot more conviction. Let us hope that "Trittst im Morgenrot daher" will remain the *temporary* Anthem, soon to be replaced by an easier permanent Swiss hymn.

Nevertheless, the celebration could be termed completely successful even before the evening was out. Dancing to Harry Vardon's energetic band began, and during the interval, the Giess Sisters once more delighted the audience with their yodelling.

Official guests, organisers, supporters and helpers were entertained in the Mayoral Suite at the Town Hall. The unanimous opinion amongst the "experts" was that Mr. Streit and his untiring assistants could be congratulated on the unqualified success of the 675th anniversary celebration, organised and, apart from a modest admission charge, financed entirely by the permanently resident Colony with no help from Switzerland.

The verdict of some Swiss visitors from home, who are much concerned with the wellbeing of their compatriots abroad, was very favourable. They considered remarkable that even such a "popular" event should be opened by a prayer and the reading of the Swiss Pact. The standard of performance they felt was quite high, but they could not help being surprised that the language mainly used was English and expressed curiosity why so many non-Swiss artists should take part. Once they realised that this was in a way a compliment to our hostess country, they were satisfied. However well integrated we may be in British community life, at heart we are still attached to our homeland, and we affirm our fidelity once again in this year dedicated to us Swiss abroad, the "Year of Fifth Switzerland".

MM

WELFARE OFFICE FOR SWISS GIRLS IN GREAT BRITAIN

(For Information, Advice or Help)

11 Belsize Grove, London N.W.3.

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RECEPTION HOURS

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

2 p.m. to 5 p.m. or by appointment.

SWISS NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION IN BOURNEMOUTH

The Anglo-Continental School of English in Bournemouth is a flourishing concern founded and run by two enterprising young Swiss, F. Schillig from Central Switzerland and G. S. Scheller from Zurich. At the moment there are some 2,500 students at the school, many of them on special holiday courses. As there are several hundred Swiss amongst them (the usual quota is about 40%), and as there is no Swiss Club in Bournemouth, it seems a natural thing to do for ACSE, as the school is known, to take matters in hand and organise the Swiss National Day Celebration. This they have done for several years, and on more than one occasion their *Bundesfeier* took place on a boat moored somewhere outside Bournemouth harbour. That was before the big school hall and restaurant was built, inaugurated in 1965. This is now a most suitable and very pleasant venue for any social gathering. It has a fair-sized stage with effective lighting installations, ample room for 500 people to sit at small tables and leaving enough room for dancing. Well-equipped kitchens and pantries are adjacent. In day time its windows forming an almost continuous glass wall give onto neatly tended gardens, and at night, yards and yards of drawn curtains help to provide a pleasant and friendly atmosphere.

Normally, ACSE celebrate the Swiss National Day on 1st August. This year, they organised it for Sunday, last day of July, which enabled the Swiss Ambassador to attend. This was much appreciated not only by management, staff and students of the school, but by many of Bournemouth's prominent citizens headed by His Worship the Mayor and the Mayoress. A number of Swiss residents from Bournemouth were invited, and an invitation was also extended to the Editor of the "Swiss Observer".

Bournemouth was in a dreary mood when the visitors arrived. Hotels and guest houses, though, were full, and the "No vacancies" sign was up everywhere as I walked through parts of the residential quarters on my way to Wimborne Road. No need to ask for the school — the large number of cars with mainly Swiss number plates was a sure indicator. Nearer numbers 29 to 35, certainty grew as a large Swiss flag boldly beckoned welcome. None too soon could we shelter in the friendly hall from the blustery wind and penetrating rain. The top-hatted ushers and the girls in *Vaudois* costumes could have been in action and evidence anywhere, so could the Swiss flags, and bunting and posters might have been put up in honour of Switzerland in any given place, but what reminded us so convincingly that we were on mainly Swiss ground was the babble of Swiss voices and the genuine Swiss *Ländlermusik* (recorded) which entertained the gathering before the guests of honour arrived. I suddenly woke with a jolt from the trance caused by a swinging polka tune, when I discovered that my own cherished cantonal flag, the red staff of Baselland had been put right at the end of all the Swiss flags tied across the stage in order (nearly) of their entry into the Confederation. We *Landschäftler* joined the Swiss Confederates as early as 1501, and thus we belong in the middle, please note, right next to our "half-brother" Baselstadt.

The programme opened with a rousing old favourite amongst marches, "Old Comrades" played well on the accordion by Mr. Max Schwarz, a modest young Swiss wearing an Alpine herdsman's jacket.