

Swiss Catholics in London

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A BIG THANK YOU

The Appeal which appeared in the "Swiss Observer" before Christmas brought, as usual, a most generous and welcome response. Gifts in kind and donations poured in from individual donors and from Swiss firms and organisations. So, early in December, the usually quiet premises at 31 Conway Street were transformed into a beehive of activity. The annual "packing operation" was on. For four days, a team of about six people was busy all day long making up the parcels of food, clothing, household linen, etc. The *Frauenverein** and the *Réunion de Couture**, our faithful helpers, had again given many hours to making beautiful garments and sorting and preparing the clothing which had been donated to our Society.

Finally, over a hundred parcels went out, benefitting some 126 people. Thanks to a number of volunteers, virtually all the parcels in the Greater London area could be delivered personally. These visits were much appreciated by the recipients, many of whom live alone and get few visitors.

The Committee would like to extend their thanks to the "Swiss Observer" and to everyone who, in one way or another, helped to give a lot of joy and happiness by supporting this action.

SBS.

* Any lady, whatever her age, creed or language, who would like to meet once a month for a happy get-together (tea and working party), is invited to join. The "Frauenverein" meet every first Tuesday of the month and the "Réunion de Couture" every second Tuesday of the month, both from 1.30 p.m. at the *Eglise Suisse*, 79 Endell Street, W.C.2 (near Tottenham Court Road Station). Mrs. R. Senn and Mrs. F. Burri, the two ladies in charge, will be very happy to welcome any newcomer.

A MIRACLE

At the end of November, a young Swiss girl, Miss Heidi Schrag (21), an *au pair* girl in Finchley, was savagely attacked and robbed and taken to Whittington Hospital, Highgate, where a brain operation for a double fracture of the skull was performed. After weeks of anxiety, the miracle happened, and the young lady not only lived but was left without impediment. She was able to return to Switzerland with her parents who had been taken care of by the Rev. and Mrs. M. Dietler of the Swiss Church.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We wish to thank the following subscribers for sending donations in addition to their subscriptions and/or for taking out or renewing gift subscriptions for friends or old-age pensioners:

Mrs. C. Kensett, Mrs. S. E. Lewis, Miss C. Rougemont, Miss E. Spengler, Mrs. H. A. Wright, Monsieur Armin Daeniker (Berne), Monsieur F. Muheim, and Messrs. L. F. Ackermann, G. R. Bernhardt, B. P. Halder, J. Mueller, R. Pfenninger (Meilen/Zurich), J. A. F. Regamey, G. A. Ronus, R. A. Strahl, C. Voegeli (Winterthur), R. Voegtli, P. J. Walker, F. W. Walther.

We are most grateful for their kind and welcome support.

COMMITTEE OF SWISS CATHOLICS IN LONDON

"The WORD was made flesh, HE lived among us, And we saw HIS glory. (John 1,14).

Christmas, the day on which we Christians recall the incarnation of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, really means that God has become thoroughly human and reveals himself to us as human being, be it as a baby, who depends entirely on his loving parents or as our brother who is in need of our help. Not heaven is the place where we meet God, but our everyday, often so crooked, rugged and still lovely world with its human community.

So our Christmas Celebrations began with a very worldly **Christmas Draw** on 13th of December, with financial accounts running up to about £290 for tickets sold and donations received, thanks to the generosity and support of all our friends. The list of all prize winners has been distributed to the various selling centres, and all prize winners have been individually informed.

The **Christmas Eve Celebration** on 24th December began in Church with a solemn High Mass, thanks to the slowly recovering choir, which at one time had been so famous at St. Ann's. Holy Communion, which was very well attended and really means community with the God-made-man and our fellowmen, was followed by a happy social meeting in the beautifully decorated Westminster Ball Room, 30 Strutton Ground, S.W.1. The Christmas tree, the Cradle, the bells of the *Hofkirche* Lucerne and St. Paul's, the hymns and the reading of the Gospel in the different Swiss languages, together with the smell of burning fir branches created a genuine Swiss *Weihnachtsstimmung*. And then the tables, heavily loaded with excellent cold meat, tangerines, tea and sweets, made the more than 150 Swiss boys and girls, for at least a time, forget that nasty feeling of being away from home on Christmas Day. They all enjoyed the evening and, I think, Christ enjoyed it too.

Our special Christmas and New Year Service was held at St. Ann's Church, Abbey Orchard Street, S.W.1, at 4 p.m. on 31st December, followed by the traditional Christmas tea party for Children at the same Westminster Ball Room. Though he usually has plenty of appointments at that time, Father Christmas did not miss the opportunity of suddenly appearing among the children nearly out of the blue, with a mountain of nicely wrapped parcels and not a single child had he forgotten (he even remembered and recognised some parents he had visited when they were children). Everywhere one saw happy children unpacking their gifts and showing their even happier parents their toys, Swiss chocolates and cakes.

Madame Olivier Long, wife of the Swiss Ambassador, honoured us with her presence, and the Cardinal and Bishop of Westminster was represented by the Very Rev. Canon Francis Bartlett.

Though the famous "flu" and some unforeseen mishap with the electric wiring system prevented the performance of the *Balletto Ticinese* and its music, the sparkling eyes of the children were music enough to delight everybody.

Paul Bossard, Chaplain.

IMPORTANT CORRECTION

Under "Forthcoming Events" in the last issue of the "Swiss Observer", the Annual Dinner of the London Swiss Philatelic Society was announced for Friday, 1st March. We have been informed that the date will have to be changed to **Friday, 15th March, 6.30 for 7 p.m.**