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# THE GROWTH OF SWISS BUSINESS IN THE U.K.

Swiss businessmen in Great Britain are obviously undeterred by pessimistic forecasts on Britain's economy. Two readers have recently enlarged the premises of their business. Another has launched a brand new company.

## SELECTUS LTD. OPEN NEW PLANT NEAR STOKE-ON-TRENT

The textile firm of Selectus Ltd. at Biddulph, a company managed by Mr. Peter Senn, known to many Swiss of the North, opened on 22nd November a new ultra modern extension to give a boost to its highly successful *Velcro* production.

Selectus Ltd. is the only firm in Britain and Ireland to produce this outstanding Swiss invention, which we have heard a neuro-surgeon describe as "the most important single invention" in the field of occupational therapy and treatment of paraplegia. In fact, anyone who has come near to a hospital will have noticed that *Velcro* is universally used to secure the bandages of patients. It has numerous other applications: It is used, for example, in space vehicles to hold down equip-

ment which could be dangerous floating in a weightless environment; it is used furthermore in the Concorde supersonic airliner, on inflatable dinghies, ejection seats and distress signal buoys. Miss Ladbury, a TV dress-making personality, says she has all sorts of uses for it, including the confection of cuffs.

*Velcro* consists of two nylon strips, one with thousands of tiny hooks and the other with thousands of tiny loops, which grip each other when the two strips are pressed together.

Although Selectus Ltd. are continuing to produce ribbon and skirt petersham, their original production, the manufacture of "touch and close" *Velcro* fasteners has claimed an increasing share of their output since the firm first launched its production in 1960. The Extension opened on 22nd November was made necessary by the growth in leaps and bounds of *Velcro* sales. The new premises provide some 10,000 square feet of working space. The building is completely pillarless and windowless in order to offer optimal insulation and the best conditions for air conditioning. The air conditioning system is of a highly advanced design with fully automatic controls giv-

ing fresh and recirculated air that is filtered, moisturised and heated. The building is connected to the older part of the factory by a system of automatic doors that ensure that it is virtually a sealed unit. Mr. Senn said that for years the firm had not dared to have a building with hardly any windows, although it was something that American firms had been doing for a long time. Now that Selectus have done it, they find it unbelievable that they should have been so timid about the basic concept of a windowless building.

Selectus Ltd. was founded in London in 1929. It moved to its Biddulph site in 1936 and has gradually expanded to become, with 260 employees in the Biddulph factory, one of the main employers of the town. Councillor Price, of the Biddulph Urban District Council, rightly pointed out at the Opening Ceremony that the new extension was a great achievement for both Selectus Ltd. and Managing Director Mr. Peter Senn. He pointed out that the firm was expanding at a time when other factories in the area were closing down or working on short time. Biddulph has its unemployment problem and the new Extension will provide about six new jobs—a relatively small number that can be explained by the high degree of automation that has been built into the new installations.

The Senn family connection with textile trade goes back to 1725, when "Senn & Co. Ltd." (admittedly not a limited company at the start) was founded. Selectus Ltd. is a sister company of Senn & Co. Ltd. in Basle and Mr. Peter Senn is a member of the fifth generation of the Senn family to be connected with the companies. His cousin, Mr. Dieter Senn, also of the fifth generation, is Managing Director of a subsidiary company of Selectus Ltd., Marro Fabric Dyers Ltd., of Luton.

The opening ceremony on 22nd November was attended by the firm's Staff, by local councillors, by the local M.P. (Mr. David Knox), by representatives of other companies and customers, and most importantly by Miss Ann Ladbury, Television sewing expert.

It was her duty to open the new Extension. Instead of cutting the usual ribbon, she tore apart the two halves fastened together with *Velcro*, thus adding what the *Biddulph Chronicle* called "Another Chapter to the Selectus Story". It is also a Swiss success story in Great Britain.

(PMB)

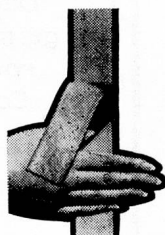
## For the practical fastening of practically anything... use *Velcro*.

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## A NEW SERVICE FOR SWISS TRADE AND INDUSTRY

With the forthcoming entry of the U.K. into the Common Market it is more likely that firms in the present EEC countries will intensify their activities in the U.K. in order to exploit to the fullest the opportunities which will be given to them by Britain joining the "club" of the Six.

Although Swiss Trade and Industry generally have probably always regarded the United Kingdom as one of their main markets for their goods and services, and although many Swiss firms have already been operating successfully in this country for many years and may already have made plans for safeguarding their future position in a changing climate, their activities in the U.K. are bound to be affected by these new developments.

They will have to take the necessary steps to maintain and, if possible, even to improve their present efforts if they do not want to be left behind, i.e. if they do want to keep their present share in the U.K. market. Increased competition means increased work, more and maybe new problems, more need for information, market- and pre-investment studies, more need for planning and budgeting, financial control, etc.

In order to assist in particular those Swiss firms who are not yet established in Britain or who are already

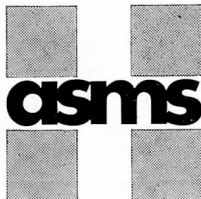
settled over here, but require support in certain key areas for one reason or another, a new company, **ANGLO-SWISS MANAGEMENT SERVICES LIMITED**, has recently been started up by Mr. W. E. Weisflog who has been concerned with the management of U.K. subsidiaries of Swiss companies for many years. Mr. Weisflog came over to England in 1955 after several years with the well-known Swiss overseas trading firm of Uebersee-Handel A.G. Zurich, whose U.K. Company, Rolba Limited, East Grinstead, specialists in Snow Clearing Equipment, Cleansing Appliances and Building and Civil Engineering Plant he set up in 1960 and whose Managing Director he was until 1969. In that year he was appointed Managing Director of the British subsidiary of the well-known and world-wide Bernese telecommunications and electronics concern of Hasler, Hasler (Great Britain) Ltd. Since then he has led this U.K. offshoot from its original small beginnings in an office in the Swiss Centre to the present-day organisation in Hasler's 21,000 sq. ft. factory in Croydon where today a staff of 70 are employed in the various departments, i.e. Computer Software, Telecommunications and Automation (including computerised traffic control, ticket machines, sorting machines), Cash Registers and Business Machines. Mr. Weisflog will shortly relinquish this position in order to be able to devote himself entirely to his new "baby".

Mr. Weisflog feels that there are still great possibilities for Swiss Industry and Trade in Britain, above all in fields where Swiss industry can offer speciality products which incorporate unique and novel features or advanced techniques, coupled with high-quality workmanship and supported by a first-class after-sales service; in other words, in fields where technical know-how rather than mass production plays an important competitive role. This providing, of course, that the market is approached and exploited in an appropriate manner, with the right strategy, organisation and planning and with up-to-date management methods; a strategy based not only on short-term considerations, but on a long-term plan, to ensure continuous growth over a period of time. If Mr. Weisflog's new company is able to assist Swiss firms, especially newcomers to the U.K. market, in achieving this aim, then he feels that he and his company can fulfill a worthwhile function in the interest of the firms concerned, as well as to the benefit of Swiss Trade and Industry generally.

At this instance he would also like to make it quite clear that the new Company does not wish to duplicate the extremely valuable services of other organisations, e.g. the commercial divisions of embassies, etc., but that the purpose of Anglo-Swiss Management Services Ltd. is rather to supplement the activities of these organisations by carrying out work which goes beyond the scope of their own objectives.

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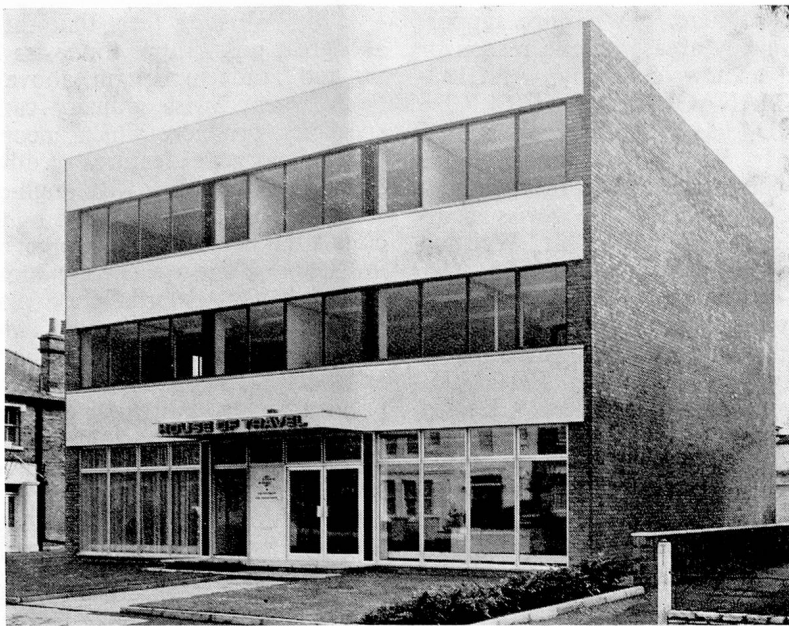
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### INAUGURATION OF THE NEW HEADQUARTERS OF ANGLO-WORLD TRAVEL LTD.

A beautifully proportioned steel and glass building on Oxford Road, Bournemouth, was inaugurated by Sir John Eden, Minister for Industry and M.P. for Bournemouth West, on 26th November. The "House of Travel", as the building is called, houses the new Headquarters of Anglo-World Travel Ltd., a rising travel agent founded by Mr. Gustav Scheller, a compatriot who is its Chairman and Managing Director. The firm is the daughter company of Anglo-Continental Reise AG in Zurich, a company closely connected with another well-known Swiss organisation in Britain, the Anglo-Continental School of English in Bournemouth, of which Mr. Scheller is a co-founder.

The opening ceremony took place in the presence of Sir John Eden and the Lord and Lady Mayoress of Bournemouth. In his inaugural address, Sir John Eden underlined the importance of Britain's entry into the Common Market to the growth of tourism in Britain and the holiday journeys by





*The shiny Headquarters of Anglo-World Travel Ltd.*

British people in Europe. He referred to the significance to centres like Bournemouth of the development of conferences and conventions. The Common Market, he said, will bring 300 million people into a single community of nations. "We will all want to discover more about each other, our respective people and places . . . this will bring a new dimension to our lives and it is to serve its needs in both directions that Anglo-World Travel has been established". He concluded: "In serving the interests of the people of Europe and the world we wish it great success and prosperity".

Sir John was offered the key of the new premises by Mr. Scheller and entered ceremoniously through the double-glazed glass entrance into the space-age Reception Hall. The House of Travel was officially open.

Mr. Scheller thanked his distinguished guest for his presence. He outlined the developments that had led to the opening of the new headquarters of his company. Anglo-World Travel, he said, after having dealt exclusively with incoming traffic, were opening their first outgoing retail department. They were on the threshold of greater things to come. Mr. Scheller underlined the immense scope for the expansion of tourism in Britain, which had only received 6,750,000 visitors in 1970, as against more than 6,000,000 for Switzerland (with a population of 6,000,000) and 7,000,000 German tourists alone for Italy.

"We still have a long way to go. We have a tremendous challenge to face", said Mr. Scheller. He forecast that in a few years' time, tourists from Australia and South America would be visiting Great Britain en masse, just as British tourists today were streaming to Majorca. Proudly promoting the charms of his elected town, Mr. Schel-

ler was of the opinion that Bournemouth should not only be sold to the home market, but also to the overseas market as a seaside resort, a delightful town just 100 minutes by train from London, a town with fine hotels, sandy beaches and a superb hinterland.

The opening ceremony was followed by a surprise party organised by the staff of Anglo World Travel in which Mr. Scheller was presented with a cake replica of the House of Travel together with an embossed album giving a pictorial history of his company.

From catering mainly for the students of the Anglo-Continental School of English, the company has grown into a prominent business with offices in Bournemouth, London, Dublin, Edinburgh and Torquay, a permanent

staff of 40, a widely diversified business. The main fields of its activities are: Organisation of Educational group visits; transport and catering of football supporters and other mass special journeys; extensive coach tours in various parts of the British Isles. Besides this, the new office offers the full range of travel services including package holidays and cruises, and provides tickets for all air, sea and land journeys.

The "Social Group Department" handled the journey of Greek and Swiss supporters to Wembley for the Nations Cup matches against Britain. This is a fast growing field of activity. The Department is under contract to arrange the travel programme of over 3,000 Canadian students wishing to visit Great Britain in an educational programme.

The "Educational Department", among other activities, brought 2,000 visitors to Bournemouth last year and required new offices in Edinburgh and Dublin within the past two years. All in all, Anglo-World Travel handled 25,000 visitors in 1971.

As it is now branching into overseas business, its affairs will continue to expand and there is little doubt that the House of Travel's original extensible design will come in useful before long.

We hope that Mr. Scheller's forecasts prove correct and that Anglo-World Travel will ride the crest of a continuing boom in world tourism.

*(PMB)*

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