

Afternoon at Bryanston Square

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AFTERNOON AT BRYANSTON SQUARE

Many Swiss people in London availed themselves of the opportunity that was offered to them, at the time of the official opening of the new Swiss Embassy, to visit the premises. For many it was a very interesting experience. In the following article Mrs. Ruth Godwin tells us her impressions.

This was an opportunity not to be missed. Open day at the Embassy and a chance to see behind the scenes in a place one normally only visits to renew one's passport. Driving down from Highgate into an unfamiliar neighbourhood of one-way streets I was delighted to find a space without much trouble right in front of the new residence in Bryanston Square. Walking up the steps a porter opened the door, welcoming me in, and, asking for my passport, glanced into my handbag. But in any case I had left my non-Swiss husband and son at home. A tall Swiss girl asked me what language I spoke and thrust a piece of paper in my hand. Before I could read it I was handed over to a very friendly member of the Embassy staff who introduced himself to me and two other Swiss compatriots as our guide. He told us briefly of the background and of the planning requirements which the new building had to conform with. Although the elevation facing Bryanston Square as a tradi-

tional exterior the inside is altogether modern and in some parts almost bare.

To the left of the hall is a small salon with a built-in showcase with four most attractive Delft plates. To relieve the rather plain walls a beautiful 17th Century clock, made for a French king by a Swiss clockmaker, provided a touch of colour although a piece of pink string (?) hanging most incongruously from it seemed to disturb the harmony of the scheme. I asked whether there was more porcelain about the house as I knew that the Ambassador was greatly interested in this subject. "Do you know the Ambassador?" I was asked. "No", I said. "Ah, then you must meet him, he's right over here". It all happened so quickly and there I was being shown over the rooms by His Excellency, Mr. A. Weitnauer, himself.

It was quite charmingly informal. The dining room has a large table with lots of leather chairs and an impressive 18th Century sideboard carrying old pewter plates. A large tapestry adorns one of the walls. I was then taken to a small salon where the only jarring note was struck by the display case which projected from the wall rather like an afterthought although its exquisite contents of fine antique porcelain, witness to the Ambassador's impeccable taste, made up for it. Now I was left to continue my visit on my own and next on the itinerary was the kitchen. The kitchen is not what you might think with lots of lovely copper pans and lots of lovely Swiss gadgets;

maybe there are some but one certainly did not see any. It is the most clinical kitchen I have ever seen. In a linking hallway there were rows of cupboards said to be full of glasses. Now there was more to see, higher up, but leaving out the private apartment of the Ambassador.

Office after office, all streamlined to perfection. You could freely amble about. Here is the first secretary's office with a colour photograph of his daughter to give a personal touch. There is the office of Mr. Iselin—a good "Basler" name with a Basle Leckerlin drum and a "Waggis" as decoration. For anybody unfortunate enough not to know what a "Waggis" is the explanation is too long to appear here. At last the Ambassador's own office, but only a look across the roped off entrance door. A green carpeted room with curtains to match and a vast super-tidy double size desk with a big red leather chair behind it which surely must be very awe-inspiring with the occupant in it.

The canteen is like any other pleasant and nice facility of this type in a modern office block. Here a little refreshment was offered to the visitors—a choice of coffee, tea, beer or apple juice. I had the latter and chatted with one of the other "viewers" who had come all the way from Watford. I asked whether he had any idea of the cost of the building but that is something the ordinary Swiss is not concerned with! Down by lift to the ground floor and the passport section

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Now my visit is nearly over, but what's this? A long queue near the exit? Perhaps we are given a little memento, but no—your name is required in a big book (for statistics, I guess). Someone exclaims "... I have to catch a train ..." but "oh, well" say the friendly porter "... a little bit of English patience and it won't take long ..." So we sign before leaving and give the visitors' book a good start.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Bezirksgericht Kulm Ediktalladung

Die nachstehend genannte verschwundene oder abwesende Person sowie jedermann, des Nachrichten über dieselbe geben kann wird hiermit öffentlich aufgefordert, sich innert der unten erwähnten Frist zu melden, ansonst die verschwundene oder abwesende Person für verschollen erklärt wird. (Art. 35 bis 38 ZGB)

Keller-Wabel Anna Maria, geb. 25. September 1853, Witwe des Siegfried Fürchtegott Keller, von Reinach, unbekanntem Aufenthalts, verbeiständet, Beistand: Rechtsanwalt Dr. Josef Scherrer, Seefeldstr. 7, 8008 Zürich. Die genannte hat sich in England aufgehalten und ist seit 1874 nachrichtenlos abwesend.

Personen, welche Auskunft über die Vermisste geben können, werden aufgefordert, sich spätestens bis zum 11. März 1973 beim Bezirksgericht Kulm in 5726 Unterkulm zu melden, ansonst die Verschollenerklärung ausgesprochen würde.
Bezirksgericht Kulm/Schweiz
Kulm, 7.3.72.

TO YODEL OR NOT TO YODEL —A LESSON IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

The following incident shows how people in Switzerland often remember their compatriots abroad at the last moment only:—

Recently the President of a Swiss Club in the North of England received a letter from the Director of the Office du tourisme de Genève notifying him of the arrival of a Geneva-Yodler-Club on 8th March, which was to give a few performances in the town.

The Director expressed a desire to have a delegation of Swiss Club members who could spare some of their time for the Swiss guests. This proposal would certainly have been welcomed, if the letter concerned had not reached its destination only the day before the arrival of the group. Moreover, it did not contain details such as the exact time of arrival and the arrangements which had been made concerning accommodation. Therefore, it was not possible to organise a delegation of the Swiss Club within less than twenty-four hours. It was also too late to arrange a pleasant evening together with the guests, which would have been very much appreciated by many of the Swiss Club members.

It is always a pleasure to support visits of a cultural nature and to assist the visitors in every possible way. Early and adequate information should be regarded as essential.

E.R.

POST-WAR CREDITS

Holder of post-war credit, who can produce at least one certificate, will be able to start submitting claims for repayment on an alphabetical basis from 6th April, 1972.

Those with the surname beginning A to C should submit claims during April; D to G during May; H to L in June; M to O in July; P to S in August and T to Z in September. Those who possess certificates should claim during the appropriate month, but if someone happens to slip past the end of the

month, the claim will not necessarily go to the end of the queue.

For those who have lost their certificates, there must be a more laborious tracing process before repayment can be made. They will be covered "in due course" by separate Government regulations.

Repayment of Post-War Credit forms DC251 can be obtained at Post Offices.

ANGLO-SWISS SOCIETY

The most recent Anglo-Swiss Society Dinner took place at the Dorchester on 14th March. Members were to hear Sir John Pope-Hennessy, Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, speak on the theme: "Does the modern world need museums".

But first the Society's President, Lord Selkirk, introduced the speaker and the distinguished guests of the evening, which included Lady Lee, former Minister of Arts. Having congratulated our ambassador for playing host to the first-ever Head of Political Department to visit London, Lord Selkirk made flattering references to Marie-Therese Nadig, the 17-year-old girl who had reaped two gold medals at the last Winter Olympics for Switzerland, and finally briefly described the important contribution of the Speaker to the study of art.

Although Sir John spoke for barely more than fifteen minutes and left his audience uncertain as to whether museums were actually desirable in this day and age, his talk was extremely dense and showed a deep understanding of the subject.

Sir John began by recalling that museums became a properly established institution of western culture in the 1850's, as a conscious product of industrial society. In those years, said Sir John, museums were at the heart of a heated controversy. Leading thinkers believed that museums were there to yield social dividends, Ruskin said that they should offer "an example of perfect order to the disorderly and rude populace". Corbet criticised

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