

# News from the colony

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## DEPARTURE AT THE EMBASSY

Several officials are about to leave the Swiss Embassy in London to take up new assignments abroad or to retire.

*Mr. Charles Bruggman*, Commercial Counsellor at the Embassy, is leaving for Paris, where he will be Deputy Head of the Swiss Delegation to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Mr. Bruggman came to London five years ago from Geneva, where he had been working at the European Free Trade Association Headquarters. He took over the job of Social Counsellor from Mr. Felix Ansermoz and assumed the duties of Commercial Counsellor, thereby being in charge of one of the most busy divisions of the Embassy. Mr. Bruggman, who is married and has three children, looks forward to his new activities in Paris. Mr. Bruggman regrets leaving London (who wouldn't) but agrees that it is nice to change one's assignments. He is succeeded by *Mr. Benedict Von Tscharnen*, a Bernese who is already at his post in London. The Social part of Mr. Bruggman's former duties will be farmed out to the Consular Services of the Embassy. This is partly due to the retirement of *Miss Rose Hodel*, Mr. Bruggman's social assistant, and by a long way the longest serving member of the Swiss Embassy. On Monday, 30th July, Miss Hodel was honoured by a staff reception as she said farewell to the Embassy after working since 1939 (with a few years' interruption during which she was active in Spain). Miss Hodel has therefore known the war-time Legation and lived through the tumultuous war-years under the guidance of Ministers Paravicini and Thurnheer who were among top Swiss diplomats of their time. As Social Assistant, Miss Hodel had to look after countless Swiss girls and young men who had fallen into trouble in the Capital city. Working in close co-operation with the Swiss Benevolent Society and the Swiss Hostel for girls, she embodies the Embassy's, or rather Berne's helping hand to compatriots in a tight spot. After 35 years of service to the Confederation, she plans to retire in Berne and is presently looking for a flat. Not surprisingly, she is appalled by the cost of rents. We hope that this problem will be sorted out and wish her a prosperous retirement.

Also leaving the Embassy shortly is *Mr. Carlo Jagmetti*, who has been Press Attaché for the past four years. Mr. Jagmetti, a former lawyer and a Major on the Swiss Army, will be Deputy Head of the Swiss Delegation to the European Free Trade Association in Geneva (EFTA). The work of this organisation is presently linked with that of GATT (General Agreement of Tariff and Trade) and UNCTAD (UN Conference on Trade and Development). Mr. Jagmetti will thus

be deeply involved in multilateral and "Economic diplomacy", doubtless the privileged sphere of diplomacy today. Mr. Jagmetti is married and has two children. We wish them all a happy stay in Geneva. The functions of Press Attaché will be assumed henceforth by *Mr. Anton Greber*, presently Legal Counsellor at the Embassy.

Finally, *Mr. Ernst Baenziger*,

assistant at the Commercial Section for several years, has been posted to Freetown, Sierra Leone, where he will be one of two Embassy officials and surely enjoy being virtually at the top after working at the "factory" at Montagu Place with its 70-strong staff. We wish him all the best for his new African experiences.

P.M.B.

## NEW TENANTS FOR "FORUM OF SWITZERLAND" AREA

Those who have the story of the "Forum of Switzerland" still fresh in their minds will be happy to learn that Swiss Centre Ltd. has found a very profitable way to make use of the empty shell that was intentionally left inside the Swiss Centre at Leicester Square for use as a Colony Room and an Exhibition Room.

Swiss Centre Ltd. have let these premises to a cinema company which has accommodated four small cinemas, called "scenes", in the area originally intended for the "Forum of Switzerland". This new multiple cinema, called the "Swiss Centre", was opened on 14th June and is doubtless the most recent in the West End.

The Swiss Centre Cinema reminds one of the "Cinecenta", a stone's throw away, which also has four small cinemas with programmes starting late at night. The difference is one of class: The "Swiss Centre" charges an extra 30p on the cost of a seat. The four viewing rooms of about 140 seats each, are separated into three "lounges" for which the price of a ticket is respectively £1.10, £1.35 and £1.65. As in all new cinemas, the screen is a considerable distance from the front row, so there is no inconvenience in buying a seat in the cheaper lounge. Moreover, the screen is exquisitely small, its rectangle being about 10 ft. wide.

The Swiss Centre Cinema at No. 10 Wardour Street shares the same entrance with the 11 storeys of office blocks which house in particular Swissair and the Swiss National Tourist Office. Patrons use the same lifts (which must run many more times than before the existence of the cinemas) as the employees of the Swiss Centre. The cinemas are on the third floor. This arrangement has doubtless caused security problems as they are open during and after office hours. Some visitors might be tempted to peep in the scores of offices in the tower-block.

Ushers are dressed in a bright red livery. There are at least two of them posted permanently under the entrance's

coloured porch. A girl of sparkling demeanour is at the glass-panelled lobby and refreshment counter upstairs. The corridors are lined with red velvet and thick carpets with space-age designs. The "scenes" are plush and quiet and one has the impression of entering a select room for cineasts or reviewers.

But the "Swiss Centre" Cinema is very much for the public and doesn't spurn publicity for Martini, and a cartoon before the main programme. I'm sure that Swiss Centre Ltd. have made sure that not *any* kind of film is screened on their premises. Judging by the style of the new Cinema, reminiscent of the "Cinecenta" they will aim for quality films oriented towards a cinematically cultured public. The films showing at the end of June were *The Canterbury Tales* by Pasolini (projected in two "scenes"), *That'll be the Day*, and *Avanti!*

It will be recalled that when the Swiss Centre project got under way nearly ten years ago with the purpose of "projecting Switzerland", the "Swiss Forum" was considered its most salient feature and a very important element. It was intended as a meeting-place fostering the life of the Colony, as well as a platform of Swiss culture and industry. Both aspects of the scheme fell through as the driving energy behind them became daunted by soaring costs proving completely prohibitive for London's dwindling Swiss Colony. As for the "Forum" aspect of the scheme, it received a bad blow two years ago when the Institute of Swiss Trade Promotion, devised as a Swiss Chamber of Commerce, folded up. Incidentally, a similar fate befell the Federation of Swiss Watch Manufacturers, whose London Offices were also located in the Swiss Centre.

The Forum project had been initially budgeted at £300,000. The Swiss Government was authorised by Parliament to supply £200,000, if the remaining £100,000 could be supplied by the Colony and private sources. By dint of a personal appeal by Ambassador René Keller to every Swiss in Great Britain and innumerable meetings between the



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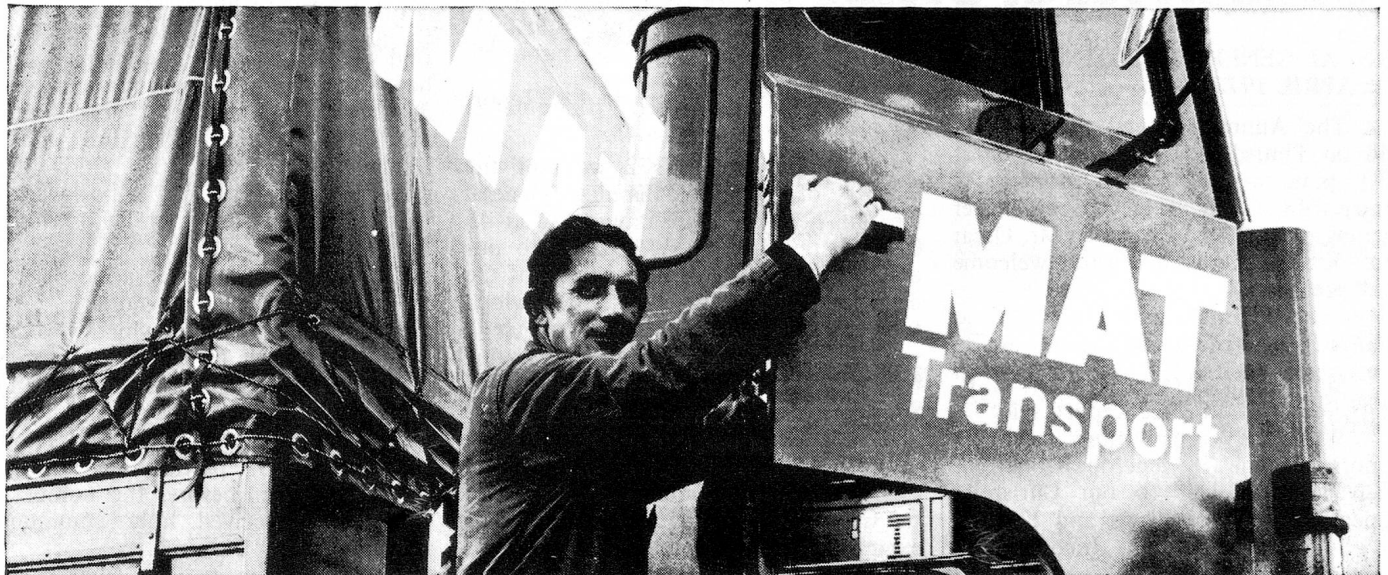
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promoters of the project and Swiss firms, the required money was raised or promised. The Swiss societies of London also pledged to pour all their liquid assets into the Forum. Unfortunately, the cost of fitting up the Forum (which was just an empty concrete space) had by then soared to £400,000 and the monies available were no longer sufficient.

With all these setbacks piling up, the promoters of the Forum project gave it up and the Embassy refunded money to thousands of donors. Swiss Centre Ltd., a company owned by Swissair, the SNTO and the Swiss Bank Corporation managing the Swiss Centre assets, waited for well over a year before it found an adequate tenant. The Leeds-based company which runs the "Swiss Centre" Cinema will probably cause less worry and prove more profitable financially than the defunct Forum, in expectation of which Swiss Centre Ltd. had lost thousands of pounds of revenue by leaving vast premises vacant.

A cinema is certainly a more secure venture even if it is infinitely more mundane than a Forum planned as a show-case for Switzerland and intended to house distinguished gatherings and business seminars. Instead you can see, non-committally, the most bouncy jog of naked behinds in the very area dreamed by the Forum promoters as the venue of

cultural exhibitions. However, that depends on how long the *Canterbury Tales* will be on view.

Another vacant space found a tenant and added to the Swiss Centre's profitability. About eight months ago, an excellent Steak House opened on Wardour Street to the left of the Cinema. Where there were just empty windows, there is now a bar for the appetiser and two recesses with tables and chairs. An attractive hostess greets you and leads you upstairs to the Restaurant, which is pleasantly illuminated and decorated with white lattices.

Service is truly excellent, somewhat better than at the Swiss Centre Restaurants in the basement) and the waiter or *maitre d'hotel* at least three times during one's meal come to ask if everything is up to par. All the staff seem Spanish and to avoid the language obstacle it is advisable to point out one's choice on the Menu rather than spell them out.

Prices are cheap by West End standards. For cream of tomato soup, roll and butter, lamb chop, jacket potatoes and spinach, a Lager and two cups of coffee served from a *Cona* we only paid an all-inclusive £1.95.

The new Cinema and London Steak House have certainly enhanced the prestige of the Swiss Centre. *P.M.B.*

of a draw conducted through the postal service did not warrant the outlay and the enormous amount of time involved in running a Christmas draw. Thanks to the great generosity of some of the Swiss firms and friends giving us cash donations instead of gifts in kind and the kind response to Father Paul Bossard's Christmas appeal to our regular supporters of the previous Christmas draw, we are very happy to say that we have more than made up the income we derived last year from the Christmas draw.

We thank the Editor of *The Swiss Observer* Mr. Pierre Michel Béguin and the publishers for accepting our appeals and reports on our social activities during the year.

O. Grob, Chairman

## CHAPLAIN'S REPORT

Our Chaplain, the Rev. Fr. Paul Bossard reported as follows:

The year 1972 marked the 30th anniversary of the Swiss Catholic Mission in London. There was, however, not much time for festivities as the problems of the new accommodation had to be dealt with, and that took a lot of time and work out of the chaplain and those who tried to help him. An article, summing up the history of the first 30 years was published in the Swiss Bank Corporation Newsletter, the *Swiss Observer* and the *Schweizerische Kirchenzeitung*, the information paper for the clergy in Switzerland.

The pastoral work was carried out as usual. But after the 17th February, when St. Ann's Church had to be cleared, it was not always easy for the people to find the residence of the chaplain, who had found temporary accommodation at 3 Abbey Orchard Street. The Sunday Service at 48 Great Peter Street and the following social activities enjoyed, as usual, great support. It was, however, felt that the number of people who attended Sunday Mass was less than before. This had to be expected as the atmosphere of St. Ann's Church had done a lot to attract people. A hall, which was used during the week for different purposes (even for football) with little friendly atmosphere, needed great idealism to be accepted as a place of worship. Though the number of participants was very much less than before, the number of those who received holy communion remained nearly the same.

There were two baptisms but no marriage and it will take some time still until the usual church functions are reorganised. The Unione Ticinese celebrated their annual memorial Mass and realised with surprise that it was homelier and more intimate than before. The possibility to sit together after the service and have a drink certainly helped.

The Youth Club with its different social activities flourished as usual. Excursions, holiday camp in Ireland, discussions, film shows and dances attracted a great number of young people. One group of them, catholics and

# COMMITTEE OF SWISS CATHOLICS

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF 12th APRIL 1973

The Annual General Meeting was held on Thursday, 12th April, 1973 at 6.30 p.m. at the John Southworth Centre, 48 Great Peter Street. After opening prayers, the Chairman Mr. Oscar Grob K.S.G. extended a warm welcome to all present.

## FINANCE

Our Hon. Treasurer, Mr. I. R. Daetwiler, in his Finance Report, said:

With the contributions from 59 Donors and the 48 generous Donations received, in answer to our Christmas Appeal, from Swiss Firms and Friends, the Sunday collections, Income Tax recovered under covenants, the two most generous donations received i.e. £140 from the City Swiss Club and £158.65 Share of contributions of the Swiss Embassy Personnel re Bazaar of Eglise Suisse de Londres, Westminster Central Hall on 4th November, 1972 and the proceeds of sale remaining goods and the accrued bank interest, we had a total income of £1,190.27 against our Expenditure of £1,112.32 resulting in a surplus of £77.95 for the year.

The accounts were duly passed by the Meeting with thanks to the Hon. Treasurer.

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman said in his Report the following:

On 1st June, 1972 we sent the Report of our last annual General Meeting held on 11th May, 1972 at 48 Great Peter Street, SW1P 2HA to our donors and friends giving a record of the developments and our activities which took place in 1971.

I am pleased to state that having registered in 1971 and as a Benevolent Society under the Friendly Societies Act 1896 (Register No. 100 BEN) and having been entered in the Central Register of Charities (Charity number 262722) under the Charities Act 1960 we are entitled to exemption from tax under Section 360 (1) Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1970.

On the 5th October, 1972 we received confirmation from the Registry of Friendly Societies, Central Office, that the change on the situation of our registered office to 48 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 2HA had been registered as an amendment of rules under the Friendly Societies Act 1896.

On account of the increased cost both of postage and printing of the draw tickets and the decreases in the sale of these, the Committee of Management came to the conclusion that the net profit