

News from the colony

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NEWS from the COLONY

HENRY FUSELI

The Swiss Ambassador, Dr. Albert Weitnauer, gave a reception on 24th October to mark the publication of the Monograph by Gert Schiff on the Anglo-Swiss artist and author Johann Heinrich Füssli (Henry Fuseli), published by Verlag Berichthaus, Zurich and Prestel-Verlag, Munich. Dr Hans Lüthy, Director of the Swiss Institute for Art Research, which edited this *catalogue raisonné*, introduced it to the various directors of museums and art galleries, art scholars and critics and other art lovers present.

This major work of art and cultural history is the first number of the Institute's series "Oeuvrekataloge Schweizer Künstler" or catalogues raisonnés of Swiss artists. The German author, Dr Gert Schiff, now Professor of Art History in New York, worked for over 10 years on the two big volumes, which are a kind of gift to English scholarship as large parts of the text deal with cultural life in England in the 18th and early 19th centuries. The cost of preparing the two volumes and printing them in an edition of 1,400 copies amounts to about 75,000 Lire. However, the editor received financial help from various Swiss institutions. One of them, the Pro Helvetia Foundation, is also

helping to prepare a comprehensive Fuseli exhibition which will be held in 1975 in Hamburg, in London at the Tate Gallery and in Paris, 1975 being the 150th anniversary of the artist's death.

HOCHWALD AIR DISASTER FUNDS

The crash of the Vanguard air-liner at Hochwald, near Basel, in Switzerland, on 10th April, 1973, led to the establishment of two Trust Funds. One started by the Chairman of Axbridge Rural District Council, in whose area most of the 108 victims lived, is now known as The Hochwald (English) Fund and stands at about £65,000. It is for general relief purposes. The other Fund was started in Switzerland as a spontaneous gesture of sympathy for the children, so many of whom had lost their mothers. It was initiated by the Basel Police and now stands at 436,000 Swiss francs.

Arrangements were made for a visit to Axbridge of two representatives of the Basel Police, Police Inspector Dr. Fritz Meyer, their chief officer, and Police Commissioner Arthur Baenziger, one of his senior assistants on 25th and 26th October. They were met at Heathrow by representatives of the Somerset and Bath Constabulary who first took them on a

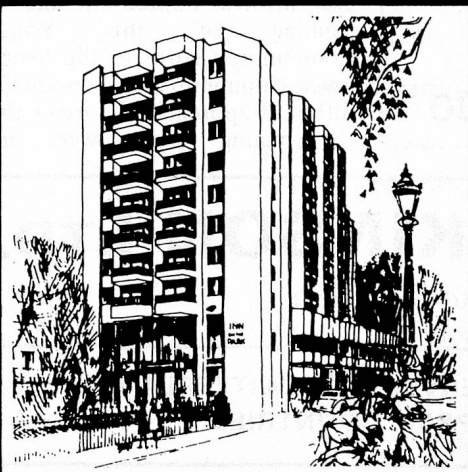
visit of Bristol, a city which was considerably affected by the disaster.

After lunching with the Lord Mayor they travelled to Axbridge, visiting some of the affected villages on their way. At Axbridge they met survivors of the accident and relatives of deceased at the Co-ordination Centre which is still operational in the Council Offices, giving assistance and information to the affected families. During the evening they were entertained at Dinner by the Chairman of the Axbridge Rural District Council and met official representatives of the affected places and others who were engaged in relief work.

The next morning, which was Friday, 26th October, they handed to the Chairman of the Council a cheque for £55,000, representing the proceeds of their collection, at a ceremony in the Board Room of St. John's Hospital, Axbridge. This sum, which will be known as the Hochwald (Swiss) Fund, will be used for the education and vocational training of children from the effected families.

The Police party was joined by Dr. J. A. Iselin, Minister Plenipotentiary at the Swiss Embassy in London, and was accompanied by Mr. Peter Wyss of the Swiss Broadcasting Organisation who was also closely involved in their appeal.

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LIFE OF THE SWISS CATHOLIC CHURCH IN LONDON IN 1972

Extracts from the Annual Report presented by the Chaplain, Father Paul Bossard, at the last Annual General Meeting of the Committee of Swiss Catholic in London.

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.

The pastoral work was carried out as usual. But after 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 ensuing social activities enjoyed, as usual, great support. It was, however, felt that attendance at Sunday-Mass was smaller 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 not much friendly atmosphere, needed a lot of idealism to be accepted as a place of

worship. Though the number of participants was considerably reduced, 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 new possibility of sitting together after service and having a drink certainly helped.

The Youth-Club with its different social activities flourished as usual. Excursions, holidaycamp in Ireland, discussions, filmshows and dances attracted a greater number of young people. One group of them, catholics and protestants met regularly on Sundays at 4 p.m. for prayer and bible-studies. The photoclub was not yet able to resume its activities, since the laboratory is not finished yet. It will reopen again in 1973.

New accommodation and office for the Chaplain was sufficiently advanced by the middle of December that he could move from his temporary accommodation. This was followed by a hard struggle, since the builder who had been employed and had promised to finish by the end of March proved utterly

unreliable and incompetent. After one of his workmen had started a fire in the roof area causing considerable damage (13th May), he lost interest – which brought the work to a practical standstill. He was eventually dismissed. Mr John Stauton, Clerk of works at the Westminster Cathedral, offered his help. From 15th November until well into 1973 he worked with the Chaplain and some helpers, often until late into the night, undid the sloppy work of the previous builder and made good what had been neglected. Some outside and inside work, a full redecoration and a new system of central heating lies still ahead, but thanks to him and all the helpers, the financial loss has been kept at a minimum. The building Account has not yet been closed but it is hoped that it will not be more than about 15 to 20% above the estimated cost – if no unforeseen problem is encountered.

The ecumenical cooperation with the protestant communities proved a real blessing, all the social activities are now run on a ecumenical basis, the mothers group on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, the youth club activities, and in conducting the divine service there is mutual help and assistance.

The news-magazines "Die Stimme" and "Messenger" have been greatly improved. Through the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad in Berne an amount of Fr. 5000 was received from the Swiss First of August Collection towards the cost of a printing machine. This enables us to prepare all our necessary printed matter ourselves and have it duplicated by off-set printing, this reducing costs by nearly 50%. It does mean more work, but it offers more scope. Since the information service is one of the most important tasks in our field of work, this is well worth the trouble.

All in all, one can say that the move from St. Ann's Church to the John Southworth Centre in 48 Great Peter Street has been successfully completed. It remains to find out, how far the chaplain can involve himself in the successful running of this Youth and Community-Centre to the benefit of the Swiss Community in London. There is a different approach to former times when the young Swiss were more for

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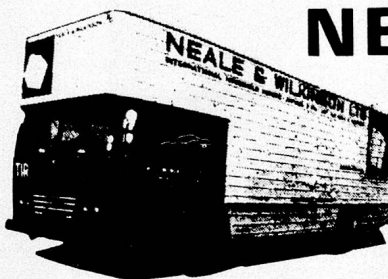
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themselves and the chaplain had his own church to look after.

Our thanks go to His Eminence Cardinal Heenan, the Diocesan Finance Offices and the Parish of Westminster for the cooperation and help in this difficult year and for the welcome we have received at 48 Great Peter Street.

We were also very grateful to the "Schweizerische Fastenopfer" who has considerably raised its yearly contribution and has always shown a great interest in the work of the Swiss Catholic Mission in London.

We thank His Excellency the Swiss Ambassador, Mr. A. Weitnauer, and the staff of the Swiss Embassy for the interest, help and cooperation received and also the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad in Berne for the substantial support.

SWISS COTTAGE

I have often wondered whether the pub that bears the name of *Swiss Cottage* and has lent its name to a tube station and a whole area of north London had anything Swiss apart from its name. The "Swiss Cottage" is indeed an imitation of a large modern chalet; it is decorated on the outside with Swiss shields; it has a "Chalet Bar" and many of its patrons are Swiss or central European. In fact, at least one girl behind one of its seven bars is Swiss and speaks *schwytzerdütsch* with her teenaged customers. I surprised the girl attending the "Alpine Bar" on the



first floor with my investigation. But she told me that the "Swiss Cottage" had nothing to do with Switzerland. "It belongs to Chef and Brewer's and is managed by Jews" she told me. Whereupon one of the managers appeared in the bar. The girl called him. He was a genial young man with glasses and a goatee. He confirmed that there was nothing Swiss whatever with the Swiss Cottage Inn. It had picked up the name because the tavern that was built there in the early 19th Century next to a tollhouse on the foot of Hampstead Hill had been constructed as a chalet.

A leaflet on Swiss Cottage explained this in more detail:

Centuries ago it became a practice among coachmen to avoid the steep climb up to Hampstead by taking a rough road on the western side of the hill. In 1803 a

proper highway was built to take this traffic and a toll-gate was erected at the foot of the hill to defray the cost.

A few years later a tavern was built next to the tollkeeper's cottage. Being constructed in the form of a chalet, it was called for a time the Swiss Tavern, but its name was later changed to the SWISS COTTAGE.

In those days the inn was surrounded by meadowland and local farmers used to meet here for badger-baiting and dog-fighting contests.

The first landlord was an ex-boxer known as "Dapper Little Frank Red" who ran the tavern from 1803 to 1814. During that time he gained a national reputation as a breeder of bulldogs, and experts from all over the country used to visit his famous kennels.

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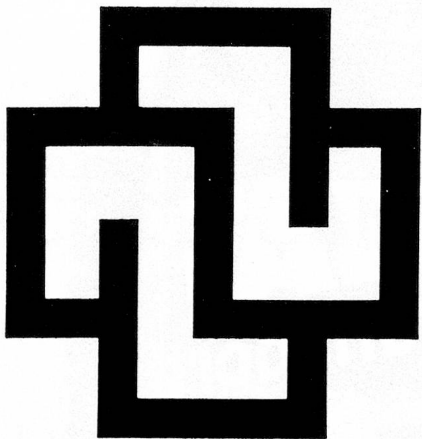
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COMMENT

Several important roads converge on the Swiss Cottage, and at one time a horse-bus service used to run from there to the City. When the Metropolitan Railway Company extended their line from Baker Street to the outskirts of Hampstead, they named the station after the tavern, and "Swiss Cottage" later became a place-name for the immediate neighbourhood.

The present premises date from 1965 when the Swiss Cottage was completely re-constructed and converted into one of Chef and Brewer's most stylish and luxurious houses. An average of 5000 people visit the tavern every week. It has seven bars and two restaurants, each with its own special background and atmosphere.

The success of the "Swiss Cottage" is not only due to its pleasant atmosphere. It is greatly helped by the many young people who live in the area and especially by the fact that there are practically no pubs within a radius of a mile. A rare feature is that one can see well dressed middle-aged and elderly ladies take a drink by themselves between 5 and 6 p.m.

When the original Swiss Tavern was built 170 years ago, it was surrounded by meadowland. This was still the case a century later. We were told that a milk farm was attached to the inn until 1903. It supplied a dairy located at the beginning of Finchley Road.

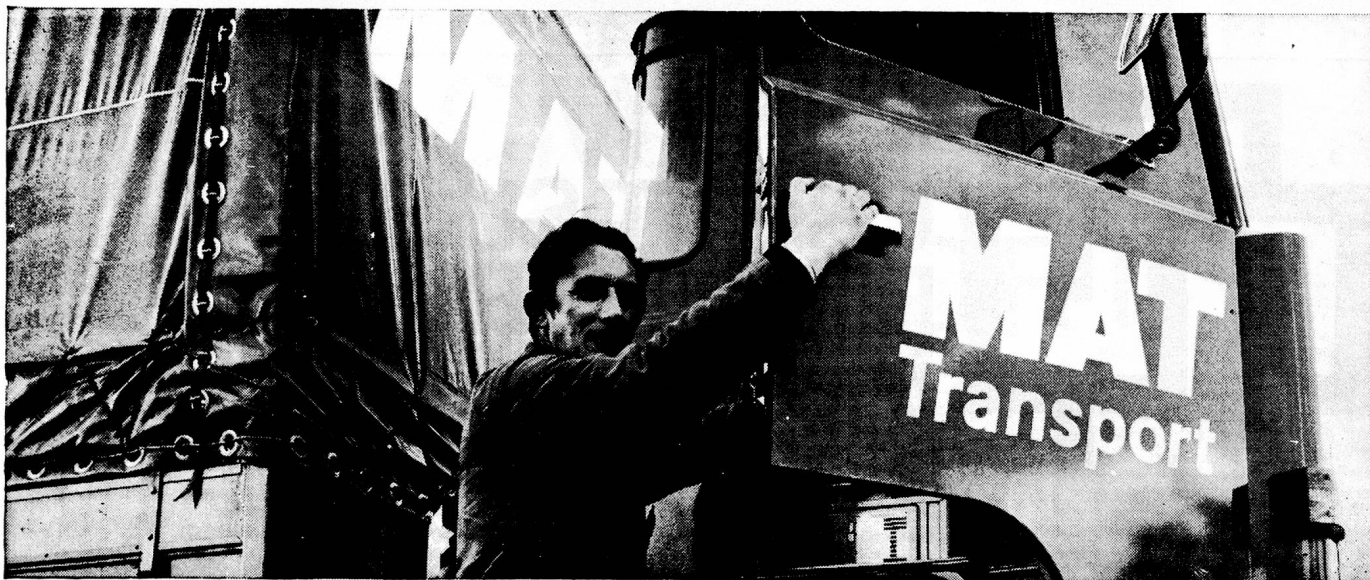
We're back in your letter-box! This fourth Special Issue follows hard on the heels of the previous ones as Berne was most anxious to give all the Swiss of this country a last opportunity to subscribe to the Voluntary Old Age Insurance scheme, the dominant theme of our Special Issues so far. The last date of admission falls on December 31st and since there is still over a month to go, the Swiss authorities will not be blamed for not having given everyone ample warning!

The scheme appears to have obtained an encouraging response so far. Examples given on page 8 show the hard advantages that can be gained from joining it. Admittedly, certain sacrifices, amounting to about 7 per cent of earnings, have to be accepted. But pensions, increased last year with the implementation of the 8th Revision of Old Age Insurance, are very high by British standards. A lone person having paid his contributions regularly during his working life now earns between 400 and 800 francs a month (£50 to £100) depending on his previous income. Married contributors are entitled to pensions varying from 600 to 1,200 francs (£75 to £150) a month. Needless to say, this compares rather favourably with what is offered to British Old Age pensioners, although contributions are higher. It is almost certain that these benefits will be raised on 1st January 1975 to 500-1,000 francs and

750-1,500 francs to take account of the rising cost of living. These advantages will naturally apply to AHV contributors abroad.

Old Age Pension is a major topic in Switzerland. It is given far more prominence on political platforms and in the news media than in Britain. This is probably due to the fact that Switzerland has fewer social problems and can devote more attention to old age. This attention is manifest on the many "initiatives" that have been launched to further improve the present system. Left-wing parties have gone so far as to demand complete state guarantees for the welfare of the old. The ideal they champion is to give people the opportunity to enjoy life without having to worry about their sustenance in old age. They believe that our Society should look after the old as do more dictatorial or less individualistic societies. But the general consensus in Switzerland is that individuals should be partly responsible for their future. They should be free to hoard gold, take on an endowment policy or spend the money thus tied down for their immediate enjoyment. Private companies should also make their contribution to old age by promoting their pension funds. What the State is at present prepared to give will not give contributors the same standard of living after retirement, but will enable them to lead dignified existences. The system also has positive social implications since it

continued on page 22, col. 3



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