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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

WELFARE OFFICE FOR SWISS GIRLS IN GREAT BRITAIN

The Annual Report for the year 1973

1973 was marked by the retirement in May of Mrs. Grob, who had been President of the Welfare Office for the past three years and Mrs. Knoll who had been Hon. Secretary for 15 years, to both of whom the Welfare Office is greatly indebted for their many years of devoted service. They were replaced by Mrs. Gyssler as President and Mrs. Lyster as Hon. Secretary and Mrs. Ficker was elected Hon. Treasurer in place of Mrs. Gyssler.

In July Mrs. Hill gave notice that she would be leaving the Welfare Office at the end of 1973. Miss Rose-Marie Zumofen, a qualified Swiss social worker, accepted the advertised job and took up her new appointment in December. As in previous years Mrs. Lyster replaced the social worker during holiday times.

Mr. Zimmermann, the Vice-President and Representative of the Swiss Benevolent Society, gave notice in September of his wish to retire after the next Annual General Meeting. His place as representative of the Swiss Benevolent Society is to be taken by Mrs. Kaluza.

The Committee has greatly appreciated Mr. Zimmermann's long and loyal service to the Welfare Office and offers its best wishes to him in his retirement.

As in previous years, the Welfare Office depended entirely on the Federal subsidy from Berne, and annual contributions from the Amies de la Jeune Fille and Pro Filia in Switzerland and the Swiss Benevolent Society. Valuable donations were again received from the various sections of the Schweiz. Verband Evangelischer Frauenhilfe and occasional gifts from other sources were also welcomed. Helped partly by the favourable rate of exchange it has continued to be possible to balance the Accounts.

During the year the Welfare Office saw 165 new people of whom 37 required special attention.

Mrs. Hill gave help to two girls with their pregnancies and also information and advice to three girls seeking abortions. In this connection Mrs. Hill drew the Committee's attention at the

July quarterly meeting to the great responsibility placed on the Welfare Officer in these cases to avoid the danger of the Welfare Office acquiring the reputation of acting as an Abortion Agency. As a result of this, it was agreed that the Welfare Officer's main function must be to help Swiss girls already in England and girls seeking abortions should be advised to consult the specialised advisory service.

It continues to be felt that many more people would avail themselves of the Welfare Office if its existence was more widely known and active steps are being planned to achieve this in the coming year.

After many discussions with the German Advice Centre in Bournemouth, it was found that there were fewer Swiss people in need of help there than had originally been thought. Mrs. Hill made several visits to Bournemouth and also Mr. Theo Itten, the trainee social worker with the Swiss Church, but these visits were discontinued when the situation seemed satisfactory. It was, however, agreed with the German Advice Centre in Bournemouth that any Swiss welfare cases would be notified immediately to Mr. Schillig, the Hon. Consul in Bournemouth, to the Swiss Embassy or to us and for any expenses to be approved by the Welfare Office. We are prepared to handle such cases.

The Committee is most grateful for the co-operation and assistance given to the Welfare Office by the Swiss Embassy, in particular by Consul-General Adams, Consul Robert and Dr. Bruggmann, by the Ministers and assistants of the Swiss Churches, the Warden of the Swiss Hostel and the Swiss Benevolent Society for not only its financial assistance but especially for the invaluable support of its Secretary, Mrs. Sharp, whose time, help and advice are greatly appreciated by both the Welfare Officer and the Committee. Our thanks are also due to the Hon. Auditors, to the Editor of the *Swiss Observer* and to numerous English organisations, including the National Council for One Parent Families, the Crusade of Rescue, the Aliens Registration Office, the Home Office, the Police and to many social workers and others who have helped us during the year.

London, May 1974

DEATH OF SIR ARNOLD LUNN

Sir Arnold Lunn, the leading English authority on skiing and inventor of the slalom, died on Sunday, 2nd June, at the age of 86. A prolific writer on skiing and mountaineering, a long-time president of the Ski Club of Great Britain, the deceased had been knighted in 1952 for "services to skiing and Anglo-Swiss relations".

The British addiction to winter sports in the Alps owes much to his enthusiasm and knowledge and his many achievements in the world of skiing made

him internationally famous. He caused Muerren to become a national and international centre for the new sport of ski racing. He invented and set the first modern slalom on Muerren's practice slopes in 1922 and in 1924 founded the Kandahar Ski Club, the world's senior ski-racing club. In 1952 he introduced the Anglo-Swiss University Race and, with Hannes Schneider, founded the internationally famous Arlberg-Kandahar competition in 1928. He was responsible for drafting the Downhill and Slalom Rules and got these accepted by the International Ski Federation in 1930 at Oslo. He organised the first World Championship in Downhill and Slalom racing in 1931 at Muerren and introduced these races into the Olympic Games in 1936 at Garmisch Partenkirchen.

NEW CONSUL-GENERAL IN MANCHESTER

The Federal Political Department announces the appointment of Mr. Horace Jacques as Consul-General of Switzerland in Manchester. He succeeds Mr. Rolf Born, who was recently appointed Consul-General in Chicago.

Mr. Jacques was born in 1923, his place of origin being Sainte-Croix, Vaud. He entered the Federal Political Department in 1945 and was posted to Brussels, Luxembourg, Ankara, Melbourne and Saigon successively. Returning to Berne in 1964, he was for 8 years inspector of Swiss diplomatic and consular representations abroad. Since May 1972 Mr. Jacques has been Head of the Personnel Section of the Technical Co-operation Service.

A MIRACLE OF FELLOWSHIP

Looking at the Annual Reports of the Swiss Churches in London, one can but marvel. At a time when many Swiss societies regret the ageing and decline in membership and deplore the lack of interest of their members, the Swiss Churches have this great co-operation and a thriving community. Not that all the services are well attended; in fact the two Sunday morning services of the German- and French-speaking parishes (9.45 and 11.15 a.m. respectively) at the Eglise

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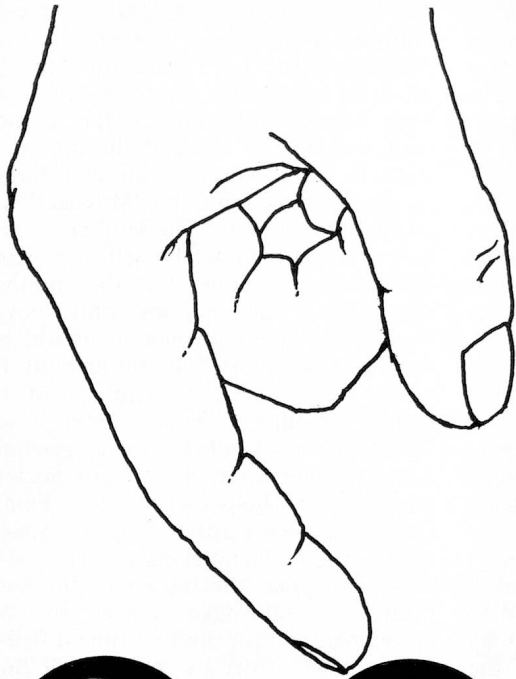
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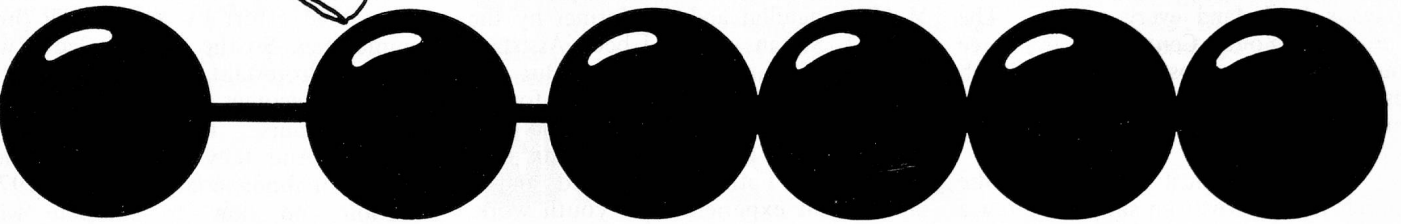
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Suisse are sometimes very depleted in spite of the excellent standard of preaching, fine musicians as organists and now a warm carpet and inviting chairs (a gift from the London Group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique).

But not so the evening services, an ecumenical one on Saturday evening (6.30) at the Eglise Suisse and the Sunday evening one (same time) at the John Southworth Centre near Victoria. These are remarkably well attended mostly by young people.

And this brings me straight to two very important facets of the Churches' work: ecumenical co-operation and youth work. In all three reports (Eglise Suisse, Schweizerkirche and Swiss Catholic Mission) the activities for the benefit of the young are stressed as one of the vital tasks of the Church. This includes extensive counselling in practical as well as spiritual matters, entertainment and social gathering, excursions — specially the successful camps with horse-drawn caravans in Ireland every summer. The ecumenical Youth Centre and the three young people's groups "Kontakt", "Club des Jeunes" and the Swiss YMCA all perform excellent work in a sound spirit of companionship.

The ecumenical life within the Church has grown from simple tolerance to real acceptance to such an extent that there are not only bilingual and bidenominational services (including Holy Communion), but a regular exchange of preachers. Whatever is done by any of the Swiss Churches in London is supported by all. Regular pastoral meetings take

place at which Priests, Ministers and their lay-assistants discuss mutual problems and plan ahead. This co-operation in the truest sense of the word between two denominations is one of the great gifts God has bestowed on the Swiss Church in London during the 212 years of its existence. The German-speaking community celebrates its Golden Jubilee this year on 16th June and 15th September. The Swiss Catholic Mission is 32 years old. The Swiss Church Constitution is only a few years old. But since its acceptance and the creation of Parish Councils, the ties between the two language groups have been considerably strengthened.

The meetings of the German-speaking Parish Council have become most stimulating and beneficial discussion evenings.

At the beginning of 1973, things looked bleak. First, the Rev. M. Dietler and later the Rev. A. Nicod, returned to Switzerland. The latter was replaced by M. M. Languillat and the former by the Rev. U. Stefan who had been Assistant Minister for several years. But no Assistant Minister could be found for the German-speaking parish, and so Mr. Stefan has to do the work on his own assisted by Father P. Bossard and a lay-assistant experienced in youth work. Not easy for any of the Ministers, for there have been frequent changes in the French-speaking Assistant Ministers, and Father Bossard has had a lot of structural work to contend with at the Youth Centre. But they all do their jobs uncomplainingly, an example in true

fellowship.

Yet, it is just that lack of a second Minister which has brought its own blessings; many have come forward with offers of help which would otherwise not have been forthcoming. Offers to help with visiting the old and the lonely, to assist in the production and distribution of the "Stimme" and the "Messenger" and in many other ways. The Mothers' Group has become completely self-supporting; the work is done by the mothers themselves, and it not only covers Wednesday meetings once a month, but visiting and counselling throughout the year. They, like the members of the ladies' groups "Frauenverein" and "Reunion de Couture" who generally work for the Swiss Benevolent Society, give active help with the Family Christmas celebrations, other special events and the biennial bazaar.

This year, the Bazaar of the Swiss Churches will take place on 2nd November, and for the first time it will be a combined effort by and for all three communities. So the Catholic ladies will join their Protestant compatriots and the fellowship becomes stronger still.

Of course, the Church has its problems. And they are very real ones, shortage of funds, a large deficit in 1973, inflation and how to compete with Churches in Switzerland in attracting Ministers willing to spend a few years in this country when there is such a shortage of clergy at home. The deficit last year was a heavy one, and the members of the Consistoire and the Committee of Swiss Catholics have reason to worry about the

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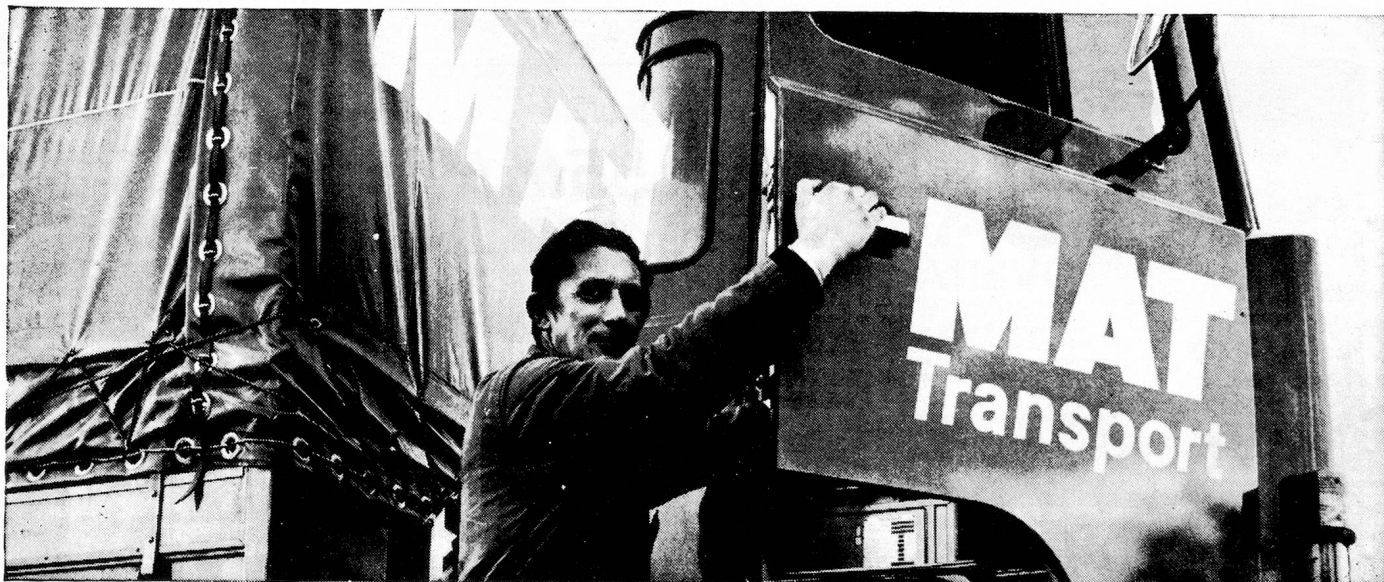
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future.

But the Swiss Churches in London are alive. Let nobody form his opinion after just attending a Sunday morning service at the Eglise. The handful of people are only a symbol. Dozens meet in local services, at the homes of compatriots living away from the centre of London, in fact right in the Home Counties. There are studies, prayer meetings and other gatherings — a miracle that the life of the Swiss Churches in London goes on in such a rich and rewarding way.

Many are still outside, "orphans on the doorstep of the world". There is warmth and help and companionship waiting for them. They must not hesitate to let the Church know. If the Ministers and the active helpers are ignorant of the need of individual compatriots, they can't do anything about it. Maybe, some loneliness or boredom could be allayed by offering help to others. Many have found companionhip where they least expected it.

Something William Morris said in *The Dream of John Bull* comes to my mind:

"Fellowship is heaven, and lack of fellowship is hell; fellowship is life, and lack of fellowship is death; and the deeds that ye do upon the earth, it is for fellowship's sake that ye do them."

These deeds done in so many different quarters and in such a variety of ways form the miracle that adds up to the Swiss Churches in London.

M.M.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SWISS CLUB MANCHESTER: Thursday, 1st August, 1974, National Day celebration at the Cottons Hotel, near Knutsford. Friday, 27th September, Disco Dance at the Clayton Aniline premises, Clayton, Manchester.

NOUVELLE SOCIETE HELVETIQUE; Wednesday, 3rd July, at the Swiss Church, 79 Endell Street, at 7.45 p.m. Harpischord Recital by the well-known Swiss artist Gloria Vanoli organised by the International Liszt Centre for 19th century Music. Works by Handel, Back, Bartok, Scarlatti, Soler, Couperin and Rameau.

SWISS CHURCH; Sunday, 15th September, at 79 Endell Street. Golden Jubilee of the German-speaking Parish.

LONDON NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION: Merton Town Hall, Wimbledon on 1st August (see advert).

CHURCHES BAZAAR: Saturday, 2nd November, at Central Hall. Opening at 12 a.m.

ASSEMBLY OF THE SWISS ABROAD: 23rd–25th August at Neuchatel. Applications to be made to the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad.

SWISS CLUB EDINBURGH: Swiss National Day Celebration on 1st August. Details obtainable from Mr. Hansjoerg Wirz. Tel: 031-664 3665.

SWISS RIFLE ASSOCIATION: Shoots at Bisley Camp on Sundays, June 30th, September 1st and September

8th. Information regarding shooting range obtainable through Surrey Club House.

SCHWEIZERBUND, Friday, 6th September. Dinner at the Old Palace, Hatfield Park at 7.00 p.m. for 7.30 p.m.

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

The following readers are celebrating birthdays and anniversaries in the next few weeks:

Prof. J. Inebnit will be 84 on 5th July, and Consul-General Mr. Enrico Tosio (Poschiavo) will be 61 on 10th of the month. The same day Mr. C. A. Aeschmann (Guernsey C.I.) will be 82. Mr. J. Zimmermann will celebrate his 84th birthday on 21st July and Monsieur Beat de Fischer (Berne) his 73rd on 22nd July. The same day Mr. A. Boog will be 92. Mr. J. Vogel will be 93 on 28th July.

Mr. & Mrs. P. B. Haberstick will have been married for 52 years on 7th July and Mr. & Mrs. W. Pellet for 56 years on 16th of the month. On 18th July, Mr. & Mrs. W. Schedler will celebrate their 39th wedding anniversary, and on 21st July Mr. & Mrs. R. Chappuis will have been married for 51 years. Finally, Mr. & Mrs. F. Delaloye will have their 62nd wedding anniversary on 27th July.

Congratulations and best wishes all round!

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