

Welfare office for Swiss Girls

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ZERMATT CARVING PRESENTED TO SUSSEX MOUNTAINEERING CENTRE

On Sunday, 10th July, a carved statue of the Madonna will be presented on behalf of the people of Zermatt to the Bowles Mountaineering Centre near Eridge, Sussex. The Rev. Father J. Scherer will celebrate Mass at 10 a.m. at Bowles Chapel, followed by an Anglican Service. Details obtainable from Mr. J. Walters, Crowborough 3974.

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

We send our best wishes to Monsieur l'Ambassadeur B. de Fischer who will be celebrating his birthday on 22nd.

The 27th of July will be the 54th Wedding Anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. F. Delaloye.

Mr. J. Zimmermann will be celebrating his 76th birthday on 21st July.

Many happy returns of the day also to any other readers of whose birthdays in July we are unaware.

PERSONAL

We wish to congratulate Mr. and Mrs. H. K. Boller of 7 Buckingham Road, Penn, Wolverhampton, Staffs., on the arrival of a son Jeremy Conrad on 18th May. This is their second child and also the third grandchild of Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Boller of "Aberdare", Cross Road, Tadworth, Surrey. Their second granddaughter, born to Mr. and Mrs. P. Boller in Bogotá last November, will be christened at the Swiss Church of St. Mary Woolnoth in London on Sunday, 10th July. Our best wishes go to the children, parents and grandparents.

GOLDEN WEDDING

We have just heard that Mr. and Mrs. A. Schmid of "Westfield", School Lane, Hatfield, Herts., celebrated their Golden Wedding on 16th June. The happy couple are well known in the Swiss community in this country from the days when they owned the Glendower Hotel in South Kensington, now in the hands of the younger Schmid generation. Both Mr. and Mrs. Schmid were very active at one time, especially in the Swiss Church and the Swiss Benevolent Society. Mr. Schmid is a member of a number of Swiss societies, especially the Swiss Rifle Association.

We send them both our best wishes for many years of happiness.

OUR NEXT ISSUE

The "Swiss Observer" is published every second and fourth Friday of the month. Our next issue will appear on 22nd July. We shall be glad to receive articles and reports not later than Wednesday, 13th July. Short news items only can be accepted after that date.

WELFARE OFFICE FOR SWISS GIRLS IN GREAT BRITAIN

(For Information, Advice or Help)

11 Belsize Grove, London N.W.3.

(Nearest Underground Station: Belsize Park)

Telephone: PRImrose 4260

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WELFARE OFFICE FOR SWISS GIRLS IN GREAT BRITAIN

The Annual General Meeting of the Welfare Office for Swiss Girls in Gt. Britain was held on the 25th April, 1966 at the Swiss Hostel for Girls, 9 Belsize Grove, London N.W.3.

The President opened the meeting with a word of welcome to Madame B. de Fischer, the Honorary President, Mrs. Mueller, the Secretary of the Swiss Catholic Girls Association who happened to be in London, as well as to Mr. X. M. Speckert, President of the Swiss Benevolent Society, and Mrs. E. Cottet, both of whom had been invited to attend the meeting.

The President then called upon the Secretary to read the Annual Report for the year 1965 which incorporated the Report of Activity of the Welfare Office, of which the following is an extract:

"As in 1964 the main problem of the Committee was to find a successor to Miss E. Hubacher who had resigned in August after only one year's service. From that month until the end of the year Mrs. A.-R. Sharpe, who has assisted the welfare workers over a number of years, was responsible for the running of the office, together with Miss M. Schwendimann and later Miss F. Bielman, a student trainee. This arrangement had proved very satisfactory and the work had in no way suffered. Unfortunately Mrs. Sharpe was unable to take over the duties of the Welfare Office in a permanent capacity. The Committee was however pleased to announce that the Staff problem now appeared to be settled. Mrs. B. Kind, a fully qualified welfare officer who had trained in Zurich, had applied for the post of welfare officer and had been accepted. Mrs. Kind had taken up her duties in February of this year and was being assisted by Miss Bielman, whilst Mrs. Sharpe would continue to work part time.

As in the past the Welfare Office had been maintained by the annual Federal subsidy from Berne, the annual contributions from the Amies de la Jeune Fille, the Katholischer Mädchenschutzverein and the Swiss Benevolent Society. Donations had been received from some sections of the Schweiz. Verband Evangelischer Frauenhilfe.

There had been no change in the composition of the Committee during the year except for the welcome addition of Mrs. O. Grob who had been invited to become a member.

The Committee continued to be deeply concerned with the improvement of conditions for "au pair" girls in this country. The Welfare Officer had been able to organise a meeting of twelve Swiss girls with a lady journalist at the Swiss Hostel. The Swiss girls appreciated the opportunity of putting forward their views, from which it was clear that in many cases neither the employer nor the employee fully understood the conditions of "au pair" employment. A fresh leaflet on this subject is in course of preparation in Switzerland for distribution to girls coming to this country.

In spite of the unsettled Staff position the activity of the welfare office was fully maintained. Contrary to the usual trend there had been no slackening of work during the summer months. The number of girls who contacted the Welfare Office during 1965 was 538, compared with 323 in 1964 and 300 in 1963.

To illustrate the nature of the activity of the Welfare Office the work had been divided into four categories:

General Information, Employment, Help for Students, Welfare Cases.

Much time was still lost replying to enquiries made by persons seeking Staff and by girls seeking information about prospective employees. These latter enquiries can be passed on to the British Vigilance Association.

It is of course not possible for the Staff of the Welfare Office to meet all girls arriving in this country but the Staff work closely with the International Travellers' Aid. Sometimes girls are met by voluntary helpers.

As regard the actual Welfare cases, these followed the usual pattern. There were more cases of mental illness than physical. Fortunately arrangements could be made for mental patients to return to Switzerland. Cases of pregnancy were fewer.

Sometimes parents in Switzerland write to the Welfare Officer asking her to prevail upon their daughters, many of whom are of age, to return home and should they be unwilling to do so, to endeavour to have their permit suspended. In many cases the girls have good reasons for remaining in London and even if this were not so, it would be impossible for the Welfare Officer to intervene with the authorities unless the girls appeared to be in moral danger.

From contacts made by the Welfare Office with the National Association for Youth Clubs it was learned that these Clubs are of little interest to Swiss girls, as they meet there mostly younger people who have a different background from their own. Efforts are being made to find families who would be willing to invite girls who are genuinely interested in getting to know more about England and the English people.

The report concluded with an expression of appreciation of the service rendered to the Welfare Officer by the various English authorities with whom they are in constant contact, and an expression of thanks to the Swiss Embassy, in particular to H.E. the Swiss Ambassador and Madame de Fischer for their active support, also to Monsieur Ansermoz and the Consul Tosio, and to the following persons and institutions:

Union Suisse des Amies de la Jeune Fille, Katholischer Mädchenschutzverein, Seraphisches Liebeswerk, Schweiz. Verband Evangelischer Frauenhilfe, Swiss Benevolent Society and in particular to Mr. Zimmermann, the Editor of the "Swiss Observer", the Swiss Clergy in London, Miss Preiswerk, Warden of the Swiss Hostel, the Auditors, the members of the Committee, the Staff of the Welfare Office and in particular Mrs. Sharpe, and to the President, Mrs. Ellis, for her splendid leadership during a most difficult year.

The Committee of the Welfare Office for 1966 consists of the following members: Hon. President: Madame B. de Fischer, President: Mrs. M. H. Ellis, Vice-Presidents: Mrs. A. Zumstein (representing Katholischer Mädchenschutzverein), Mr. J. Zimmermann (representing Swiss Benevolent Society), Hon. Secretary: Mrs. H. Knoll, Hon. Treasurer: Mrs. R. Thomas, Members: Mrs. A. Woods (representing Amies de la Jeune Fille), Miss R. Preiswerk (Swiss Hostel for Girls), Monsieur F. Ansermoz (Swiss Embassy), The Rev. Father J. Scherer (Swiss Catholic Mission), Pasteur A. Nicod (Swiss Church), Pfarrer M. Dietler (Swiss Church), Mrs. O. Grob.

E.K.