

Local news : Great Britain

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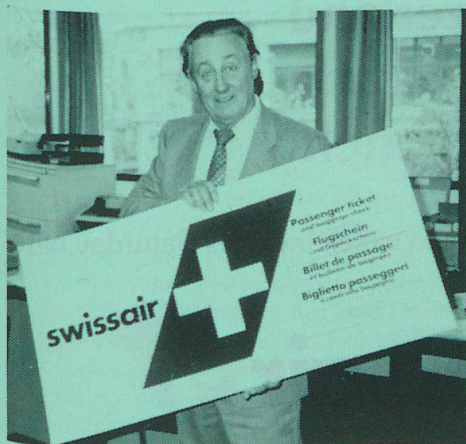
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Local News - Great Britain THE GREEN PAGES

Hello once more to our growing band of readers. It is with great pride that I report another record post-bag in response to our last issue. We received many kind words with regard to my exclusive interview with **Franz and Radmilla Muheim**, better known as the Swiss Ambassador to Great Britain and his good lady wife. Many of you commented that you liked the informative yet informal style. This, to me, is a great compliment as this was the specific intention. Credit must be of course be due (and will indeed be passed on) to the couple themselves. Their very courteous welcome made it easy for myself and my staff to feel relaxed in their company.

Clearly, though, the main reason we found ourselves wading through piles of letters on our doorstep each morning was our latest (and greatest) **'Fly Free to Switzerland'** competition in association with Swissair. We received almost twice as many entries as for our last 'Fly Free' contest last Christmas. As promised, every entry will receive details of their consolation prize within the next month.



Our lucky winner was **Vernon Hartley** of Sutton in Surrey, who is pictured above with his 'big prize', two free Business Class tickets to Switzerland (worth several hundred pounds) which were presented to him by Swissair Advertising supremo **Peter Nutt**. Vernon correctly answered the following questions ...

1. How many seats do Swissair offer every day on their 11 flights to Switzerland from London, Manchester and Birmingham? The answer was 'B' (over 2000). Question 2 caught a few of you out ... What is Swissair's television

advertising slogan? The answer was 'A' ('How very civilised'), and not 'We make all the right connections' (which was the buy-line in a previous campaign). Finally, Question 3. How many worldwide destinations does Swissair serve? Answer B (108) is correct.

The Tiebreak presented a little complication. We asked you to estimate how many passengers would be aboard Swissair flight SR805 London to Zurich, at 1350 hours on October 10th 1989. As Murphy's law would have it, that flight did not leave the ground due to a technical problem and passengers were transferred to another plane. We thought it fair to assume that as 204 people were registered for this flight, 204 was deemed to be the correct answer (Vernon's guess was the nearest).

Advice Line.

The introduction of our Advice Line feature also proved to be very popular. We received numerous questions about matters concerning the Swiss pension fund, military service, dual-nationality, taxation, investment, inheritance etc etc. These were passed on to relevant departments of the Swiss Embassy and, in compliance with Consul Mehr's request, I will NOT publish abridged answers for fear that the official reply may be altered in context. I have, however, asked that the Embassy publishes a written response which will be sent to those who asked the questions initially and made available to other readers via The Green Pages upon request. A full list of your questions will be published in our next issue.

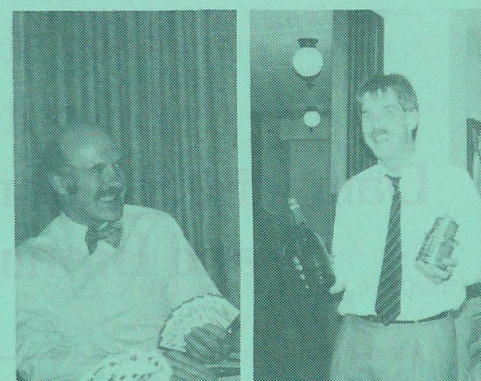
One answer we can give you is in response to a query posed by Nelly Scott-Niederberger of the Tyne and Wear Swiss Club concerning flights to Switzerland from Newcastle Airport. Why, she asks, can Swissair not provide a direct service from Newcastle to Zurich?

The official answer from Swissair reads as follows: *"At the present time we are actively evaluating possible additional cities in the U.K. for direct air links with Switzerland and Newcastle is one of the potential points being considered. However, it is not likely that any new route to and from the U.K. will be introduced before 1991."*

The same question was put to, and completely ignored by, the alleged Marketing Director of Dan Air, Mr Crawford Rix. A vaguely interested regard for customer relations is often an advantage in a marketing department, Mr Rix!

Cardplaying with Mosimann.

The finals of the **Jassplausch 1989** were held at the Swiss Embassy in London recently and the coveted prize, awarded by Maurice Johnson of 'Cheeses from Switzerland', the **'Milchkannen Cup'** was won by **Heinz Schmid** of the Union Bank of Switzerland. Heinz is pictured below with Channel 4 cookery expert, Belgravia club owner and keen Jass player **Anton Mosimann**.



Mind your languages.

If you speak Schwyzerdütsch, English and/or French and are interested in becoming a key member of a small team, the **Swiss Benevolent Society** and **Swiss Welfare Office for Young People** could be looking for you. A secretary/audio-typist vacancy will be available in January 1990. **Regula Sharp** would like to hear from you on 01-387 2173.

Holidaymaker comes of age.

Finally, congratulations to our faithful advertisers **Airtour Swiss**, part of Holidaymaker Plc, who recently celebrated 21 years of tours to Switzerland with a star-studded bash at the Britannia Intercontinental Hotel. Amongst the celebrated throng was HRH Princess Katrina of Yugoslavia, The Duchesses of Argyll and St. Albans, senior travel trade executives and a various Ambassadors & High Commissioners.

I'm still recovering from all that champagne ...

Best regards, Nick Miller

Local News - Great Britain

THE GREEN PAGES

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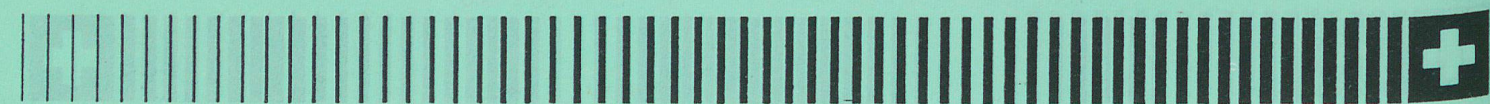
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Opening LETTERS

Inviting comment, as we did with our recently published 'Survey', leaves one as much, perhaps more, open to literal slings and arrows as to praise and encouragement. But just as our editorial column is famed for it's often controversial and provocative comment, so we too must welcome constructive criticism in our efforts to produce a better product. Here is a selection from our mail bag ...

Mrs A-R Sharp of the Swiss Benevolent Society is gracious in her acknowledgement of the difficulty we have in catering for "an extremely varied public of different backgrounds, ages, interests and to some degree culture."

It appears that her worries are as follows ... (i) Of eight pages, four are devoted to advertising. (ii) Our food and drink articles appear to be a 'plug' for various products and are inaccessible to most for geographic or financial reasons. (iii) 'Community' activities receive little mention. I, the editor, should be present at more Swiss functions in order to see what makes the members 'tick'. (iv) Our reference to a Channel 4 programme about philosopher **Carl Gustav Jung** would only appeal to a small section of the community "*as this concerns a highly specialized subject*".

Answering those comments in order ...
(i) When there were only four pages in the Green Pages there was a lot less space for editorial. If we carried less advertising we would probably run at a loss. (ii) Surely any mention of a book or film or museum (or even local Swiss Club) could be construed as a 'plug'. (iii) Since I have been touring Swiss clubs I have discovered that rank-and-file members seem perfectly happy that (to use my now well-worn analogy) an out-of-date report of a raclette evening in South-West England is of no interest to a reader in North-West Scotland. Most seem to like our ever expanding range of features. It seems to me, truth be known, that the only readers who REALLY want to read about such subjects are the ones who attended the function and the ones who like to see their name in print. Besides which, as less than 10% of Swiss passport holders in Britain regularly attend Swiss clubs how can such a minority reasonably expect MORE editorial space? (iv) Apart from certain famous fictional legends could there be MANY more influential Swiss persons than Jung? Hardly of such a limited appeal as a review of a long past raclette evening. Oh dear, here I go again ...

Mrs Heidi Miller (now THAT name sounds familiar) feels that more articles of general concern (such as queries concerning Swiss pensions etc) and a feature for children should take precedence over restaurant reviews and such like. As you will see from our new 'Advice Line' feature we are already addressing part of that suggestion and a 'kinder page' is currently under discussion.

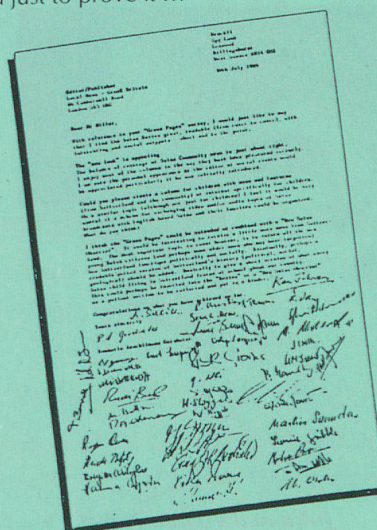
P.W. Amsler of Speen in the Chiltern Hills tells us that, contrary to my comments that **Swiss Radio International** could only be heard atop Ben Nevis, it can be received it loud and clear on his 1935-built short wave radio. Sadly, neither the average household nor the average Ford Fiesta is equipped with short wave in this day and age. Well, it's an improvement. SRI can now be heard on top of Ben Nevis AND in Mr Amsler's house !

J.A. Seiffert, of Milford-on-sea in Hants, seems to share my scepticism. "*SRI. Have they woken up ? I doubt it*" he muses, and rightly suggests that "*surely we can arrange that we in GB can pick up Switzerland. We can get Russia !*" Mr Seiffert, incidentally, is 89 years young and has been resident here since 1920. He likes our magazine but is not keen on either the type or the colour of the page.

Now, despite her apparent lack of awareness as to the name of our magazine (calling us 'The Swiss Observer Review'), **Mrs Francois Coggan** of Salisbury, is definitely on my Christmas card list for her kind comments:

"... I think your magazine is wonderful. I read it cover to cover. I would miss it very much, since there are no Swiss papers at W.H. Smith that the French, German or Italian expatriate can buy."

... and finally. "Great ! The new look is appealing, readable and with interesting and useful snippets. Congratulations on what you have achieved so far." So says **Rosmarie Gershater** of Billingshurst, Sussex in a letter endorsed by 46 of her kind friends ! And just to prove it ...



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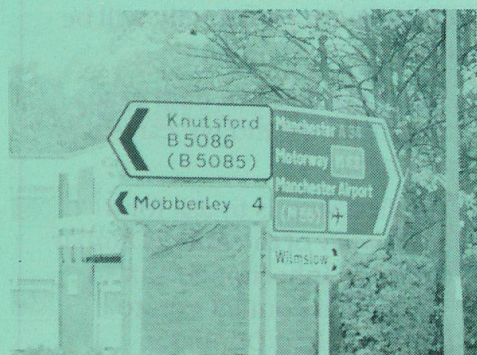
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Nick Miller's TOUR DE SUISSE

October 21st - Manchester

If the 'stockbroker' belts of Britain are currently being tightened then nobody has bothered to tell Wilmslow. Porches and Porsches, conservatories and Conservatives abound. This attractive, semi-leafy suburb of Greater Manchester is precisely the sort of area in which any self-respecting real-life Alf Roberts would aspire to residing. Without wishing to cast aspersions of anonymity, the only thing that distinguishes Wilmslow from the equivalent satellite villages of Surrey and Middlesex are the road signs and those appealingly refined Lancastrian accents.



Manchester itself, to some the very 'heart' of Britain if only geographically, is famous for its famous. Bobby Charlton and 'Franny' Lee. Bet Lynch and Ken Barlow. Eddie Shah and the print unions. Ship canals and Polytechnics. Piccadilly railway station. Piccadilly radio station. Granada TV and bingo.

Joe Illi is a small name in print but obviously a big name in **Manchester Swiss Club**. It was he who invited me to experience an evening of food and frolic thinly disguised as a 'Sauerkraut and Wiernli Evening'. Jolly Joe seemed quite scrupulously mannered on first meeting. It was only when the 'party game' began that I began to have my doubts.

As I watched several grown men shuffling like penguins across the polished floor, attempting to drop a 10 pence piece from between their upper thighs into a beer mug, I wondered whether I had unwittingly stumbled into some sort of bizarre Masonic ritual. I could just imagine the press headlines as I sat in open-mouthed disbelief ... 'POLICE RAID ACID CHALET PARTY'.



Manchester Swiss Club has a cosmopolitan membership encompassing various cultures, creeds, socio-economic groupings and an age span of some 75 years. At the senior end of the scale is **Hans Scheiwiller**. 87-years-young Hans, who has graced Manchester with his warm, friendly nature and good humour for more than fifty years, is surely Britain's oldest Swiss club member (unless, of course, YOU know different ...). Wife **Odette** dryly quips that their thirty year liaison is "a passing infatuation that is still passing!"

At the other end of the age differential is the endearingly hyperactive **Julia Nobel**. Not much chance of a Peace Prize here, though. Allured by my red shoes, Julia summoned me to her table in the Wilmslow Parish Church Hall inhabited that evening by over 60 Mancunian-Swiss persons engrossed in Autumnal revelry. I was introduced to Julia's mother, **Viviane** (who could be mistaken for her older sister) and subjected to a barrage of personality and intelligence tests before being dismissed and allowed to mingle further afield. In the other's absense each confidentially informed me of the current infatuation of the other. For daughter it was a boy at school. For mother a tennis coach ... but don't tell them I told you !!



Julia and Viviane Nobel.

12-year-old expert 'word-search' compiler **Julia**, born in Aargau but resident here since as long as she can remember, is destined to impeach **Jeremy Beadle** as Britain's foremost practical joker. As I sat chatting with another attractive mother and daughter **Doreen** and **Nichola Weber**, Julia kindly brought me another can of lager. Naively allowing myself to be impressed with this act of kindness I proceeded to pull open the ring on top of the can. Little realising that it just been shaken like a maraca I then proceeded to shower **Doreen** with the low-alcoholic contents.

In an effort to regain some self-esteem I went walkabout, shaking hands and exchanging conversation with such notaries as **Consul Bruno Ritter** and FOSSUK committee member **Bernie Simon**. FOSSUK, for the uninitiated, is the Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom, and the amiable **Bernie** is responsible for the North of Britain, lobbying parliamentarians and the Commission of the Swiss Abroad. Bruno, along with the Consul General and a handful of staff in their Central Manchester office, has diplomatic jurisdiction over 3,000 Swiss passport holders in the same areas as **Bernie**.



Swiss Jas fans at play.

As I began photographically recording the exploits of the hardened Jas players on another table I began chatting with a charming lady called **Kirsti Fattorini-Bühler**. Whilst insisting that she is no relation to a certain famous travel editor, Kirsti proudly boasts that her father was once painted by HIS namesake, well-respected Royal Academy artist **Robert Bühler**. Kirsti, herself a sculptress and potter of note, has exhibited her works in Winterthur, Zurich and Klosters (where she sold out !) aswell as in England.

My enjoyable evening at an end I retired to the sort of hotel that forgets to give you a morning alarm call. In fact ... is that the time ? I'd better get up. I've got to catch a steam train ...

Next stop:

Nick has a 'Brief Encounter' with the Midlands Swiss Club on board the Severn Valley Railway.

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 Swiss Embassy Tel: 01-723 0701
 Swiss Mercantile Society Tel: 01-638 2800
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 Mothers Group Tel: 0992-46687 (Marlies Davies)
 Swiss National Tourist Office Tel: 01-734 1921
 New Helvetic Society Tel: 01-727 4113
 Swiss Relief Soc Tel: 051-486 1168 (Mrs Stevens)
 Swiss Welfare Office Tel: 01-458 3859 (Mrs G. Ficker)
 Swiss Youth Club Tel: 01-836 1418 (Information)
 Union Ticinese Tel: 01-568 3916 (Mr Berti)

Bill Buddle REPORTS

Bienz means cakes

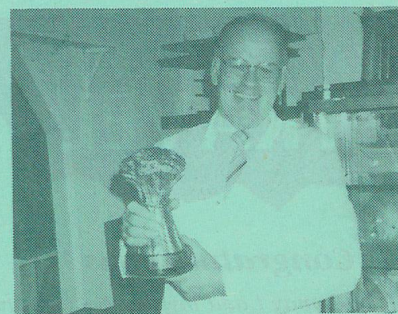
Last September, the Grosvenor House Hotel, London, saw a glittering gala dinner attended by 650 guests connected with the very best of the British baking industry. An important part of the grand occasion was to bestow an award for the 'Best Confectioner and Patisserie of 1989' and was the climax of a nationwide competition with over 600 entrants.

The recipient of the honour was one **Sigis Bienz** whose road to this top accolade started at the age of sixteen when he ventured to Vevey, Lake Geneva to work as a general help in a bakery. Coming from a family of thirteen children, apprenticeships were not easily affordable, but the owner saw potential in Sigis and offered him free tuition.

Seizing the opportunity, Sigis set about learning French and three years later in Lausanne was able to inform family and friends at home in Kriens (near Lucerne) that he had become the first non-French apprentice to take top place in his final exams.

In 1957, Sigis came to England. With now characteristic diligence he learnt enough of the language to whisper 'sweet' nothings to a beautiful young lady called Ann who he met at a Streatham dance hall. Three years later, after Sigis had left the Merchant Navy where he had furthered his trade, they were married.

Their first venture into self-employment was to be a patisserie in Tunbridge Wells, Kent, and, in 1971, they and their two children, Nicola and Louise moved to their present location,



Sigis Bienz with his coveted prize.

Eastbourne. They opened 'The Swiss Patisserie Bienz' and 'Cavendish Bakery Patisserie' which are now both thriving family concerns.

I asked Sigis, who is a member of the British Confectioners Association (a select band of just 60 invited members throughout the U.K.) about the competition he won whilst sampling one of his excellent cream slices. It was run by 'Baking Update', the bakers trade magazine and sponsored by Renshaw and Co. Ltd. Entrants were asked to submit a product available in their shops on an everyday basis. After submission of the recipe, and an accompanying photograph of the pastries, the contestants were visited by judges anonymously to enable them to sample the delights (or horrors) incognito. Sigis was then informed that he was one of three finalists and at the gala dinner received his award which he happily tells us represents the "Crowning point of my career".

To see and taste the frazipan delights together with the whole range of cream cakes and goodies on offer in his shop is a testament to his craftsmanship. He hopes to defend his title next year and 1991 will see him become President of the Master Bakers Association of Hastings and Eastbourne for the second time. Many congratulations !!

Bill Buddle is an MGB Publications staff writer and 'Food and Drink Specialist' (always on the look-out for a free lunch !)

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Joseph Buehler TRAVEL

Congratulations !

*First of all, may I add my hearty congratulations to reader **Vernon Hartley**, the winner of our Fly Free to Switzerland competition, in association with Swissair. I am sure he and Mrs Hartley will enjoy their trips in Business Class luxury. Now, on with the show ...*

Over 40 sports shops in Swiss resorts have joined **Swiss Rent-a-Ski**, a new franchise system enabling them to offer a revolutionary rental service starting this winter. A full range of top name Alpine and cross-country skis, boots, bindings, poles etc will be available.

Cricket batty

Britain may have invented many sports but St Moritz is renowned for its ingenuity in adapting grassy pursuits to far more tricky elements. Latest venture is a cricket tournament on St Moritz lake during the first weekend in February 1990. 'An ice' idea for any cricket fan !

Winter wonderland

A winter wonderland for children with igloos, wild toboggan runs and a crazy ski roundabout is the latest treat in store at the innovative ski resort of Grächen. Set high in the Valais region near Zermatt, Grächen has hit on a formula that will please all the family. While parents spend a carefree day on the superb slopes, their youngsters will be entertained and supervised in their own ski-village.

And all these facilities are free for children over six years old ! Schnöö, the chief snowman, rules over this children's ski paradise, surrounded by pines. If it's too chilly for camping out in the igloos, there are indoor heated play areas equipped with toys and games, and younger children are also well taken care of and provided with a meal.

For the adults, Grächen has top class winter sports facilities including curling, ice-skating, indoor tennis, swimming and gymnasium, and cross-country ski-runs. In the evening there's a wide choice of entertainment, food and drink.

The Pfahlbau Exhibition

The Pfahlbau Exhibition is a novel form of prehistoric theme park on the outskirts of Zurich, built around the site of a 4,000 year old lakeside village evacuated in the early

1980s. The centrepiece is a reconstructed bronze age lake dwelling on an offshore island where all the various buildings are authentically furnished and fitted out.

Visitors are given an insight into the life of our neolithic and bronze-age ancestors (how they worked, hunted, traded and lived together in families and villages) and can try such ancient skills as potting, weaving and working with stone and bone. The exhibition runs from April 28 until the end of September 1990.

Forthcoming dates

For those who already suffer from what is clinically known as 'incurable carnival fever', the big dates for 1990 are in **Basel** on 5th to 7th March and **Lucerne**, 22nd and 26th/27th February. Meanwhile, motoring enthusiasts will eagerly await the Geneva Motor Show from 8th to 18th March 1990.

Other dates of interest are: The Wengen **Lauberhorn Race** (27th to 28th January). **Swiss Industries Fair**, Basel (10th to 19th March). **The Watch, Clock and Jewellery Fair**, Basel (19th to 26th April). **Zurich Sechseläuten** (22nd to 23rd April).

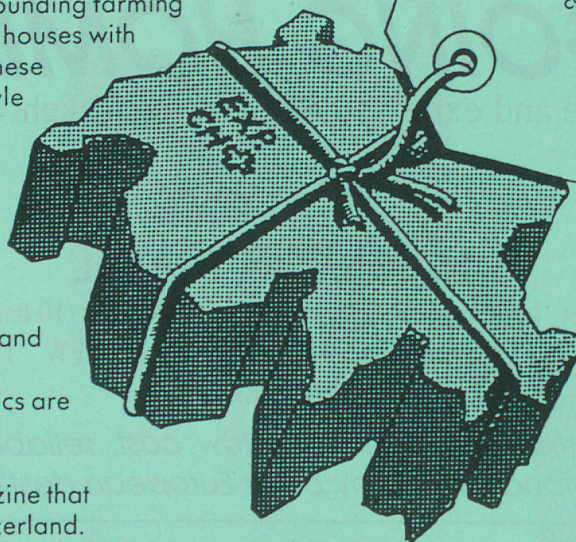
Joseph Buehler is the Director of the Swiss National Tourist Office in London. For further information on any subject discussed above please telephone: 01-734 1921.

Switzerland by post

Regularly, every month. So many memories and discoveries. Things familiar and things new. 60 pages of carefully researched articles in English, French, German and Italian, with an impressive range of photographic illustrations.

This month, for example, we discover Appenzell. Where peasant traditions and heathen customs are still fascinatingly interwoven. Where, every New Year, local mummer groups enact ancient traditional entertainments for the surrounding farming community. Where behind the rows of houses with neat façades and spotless windows, these highly individual townfolk live a lifestyle unchanged by the passage of time.

In future months, we'll visit Delémont, Switzerland's newest cantonal capital. The streets of olde Berne with their many arcades and picturesque fountains ... and the Lötschberg, featuring the well-known railway line and the not-so-well known mountain pass. These and many other fascinating topics are all discussed in forthcoming issues of SCHWEIZ SUISSE SVIZZERA SVIZRA SWITZERLAND. An illuminating magazine that captures the many splendours of Switzerland.



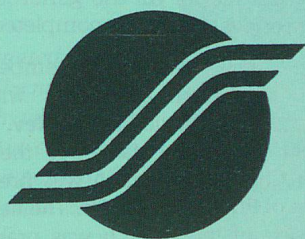
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Mariann MEIER

Lest we forget

Our thoughts, at this time, go back 50 years to the outbreak of the war in 1939. I well remember the day my husband and those not wishing to ask for exemption, as well as many temporary residents, were called up, assembling at Swiss House in Fitzroy Square, each allowed no more luggage than he could carry.

The soldiers, under the guidance of 1st Lt. W. Bernhard Sigerist and Mitrailleur Walter Meier, were bussed to Waterloo and then left for Switzerland via Southampton and Le Havre, where they were joined by another convoy on a train bound for Vallorbe.

Those who had full-time jobs, my husband included, were given return visas once it was clear Switzerland was not involved in the war. Activities in the Swiss community were restricted in wartime, but Swiss Benevolent Society and the Swiss Church remained busy. The German-speaking congregation held services at St Anne's in the City until it was bombed. In 1969 that we joined the Romands at the Eglise Suisse in Endell Street, their home since 1855.

A big thank you

Readers may recall an appeal in our September 1988 issue. The Swiss Church was badly in need of repair and redecorating. Donations have come in very handsomely. The Swiss Protestant Churches collected around Fr. 320,000, considerably more than estimated. Fr. 22,400 came from private sources in Switzerland and £66,000 has been received from Swiss companies in the U.K., and from many

private donations, after a personal appeal by former Ambassador Pictet. Consistoire President Edith Crack has asked me to express sincere gratitude for all the generous gifts enabling renovations to be completed.

On 16th April the newly embellished Church was inaugurated with a Rededication Service, led by the Rev. Philipp von Orelli. A representative of the Swiss Protestant Church Federation was present in the person of Pfr Andres Streiff. The new look of the inside of the Church was praised by most. The colour scheme was suggested by the English Heritage Foundation who gave us £9,000 for the restoration fund so we were only too willing to accept their suggestions. As more money comes in, more work can be carried out to kitchen and cloakrooms, and providing a much needed loudspeaker system etc.

Many successful events have since been held. It was wonderful to have Whitsun Celebration in the Church again instead of the Foyer! The 1st August celebrations saw a bumper attendance. On the Federal Day of Thanksgiving a large group from a parish in Lausanne attended the service at which the new Community/Youth Worker, Monika Faes, was introduced. In September, a trio from Lausanne (Jennifer Paull, oboe; Christine Sartoretti, on the overhauled organ, and Marcus Stocker, cello) provided music (sponsor: Credit Suisse).

It was the Parish of the former Minister in London, the Rev. Urs Steiner, Obstalden-Claruss, in agreement with its supporting Parish of Zumikon/ZH, who gave the first Fr. 25,000 for the renovation of our Church. On Sunday October 15th our service, followed by a luncheon, gave us a welcome opportunity of saying thank you for a most generous gift.

A time to remember, a time for reflection and for gratitude.

Mariann Meier is a former Editor of Swiss Observer and author of 'The Young Traveller in Switzerland' published by Phoenix House

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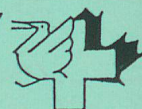
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