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## Fighting for your rights

by Giuseppe Brogginì



*Giuseppe Brogginì*

**The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad represents the interests of all Swiss citizens who live outside Switzerland — all 456,025 of them. Giuseppe Brogginì, from London, has been a member of the Organisation's Executive for some years. He will continue to represent your interests on that body until his mandate expires in 1992. He now outlines some of the Organisation's functions and some of his own duties and responsibilities as an Executive member.**

When, as far back as 1976, I joined the *Unione Ticinese* and the London group of the *New Helvetic Society*, I did not anticipate becoming an officer on the committees of both societies. Then, in 1981, I became the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK's delegate for the south of Britain on the Council of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA). That appointment eventually led to another, as a member of the OSA's Executive.

Founded in 1916, the OSA is a self-governing body which recently acquired the legal status

of a Swiss foundation. It is partly financed by federal subsidies and partly by the Swiss National Fund. There are three constituent arms of the OSA. These are the Council of Delegates (*Auslandschweizererrat*); the Executive (*Vorstand*); and the Secretariat.

The foundation rules of the OSA stipulate that the Council is the policy-making body on issues affecting the Swiss abroad. It also has supervisory functions over the Executive and the Secretariat. The Council has 130 members. Its delegates are chosen from each foreign country on a proportional basis — each country is allocated a number of delegates according to the number of Swiss citizens living in that country. The delegates, who are not bound by political parties, meet in Switzerland two or three times each year and the Council has unofficially been named the 'Small Parliament'.

The OSA's Executive, on the other hand, has been called 'the Swiss government in exile'. The Executive includes members from the three main linguistic regions of Switzerland. Hence its meetings are conducted in the language of whoever is speaking — though it is fair to say that German is most frequently used. Of the ten members of the Executive six, including the President of the OSA, are influential Swiss citizens, based in Switzerland and drawn from legal, academic and business circles. This is in order to ensure direct and effective access for the OSA to the Federal Councillors and governmental bodies. The other four Executive members are drawn from among the Swiss who live abroad. As it happens these members of the Executive presently come from the four largest Swiss communities in western Europe — that is, from those living in France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. I, personally, feel most honoured to represent, at 1989 census figures, 19,534 co-nationals residing in the United Kingdom on such an eminent and dedicated organisation. The four 'foreign members' of the Executive initiate discussion and advise on all issues of concern to the Swiss living abroad.

But what does the Executive actually do? Among its many duties are the responsibility to propose to the OSA Council applications for membership of the OSA from Swiss Clubs abroad — and, if necessary, to recommend their expulsion. The Executive determines the number of delegates for each country on the Council. It drafts documents for the Council's proceedings and informs delegates on the Council and Swiss Clubs abroad of developments in Swiss foreign policy. The

Executive also submits an annual report, accounts and budget forecasts to the Council and it stages the annual summer congress of the Swiss Abroad. In addition to its close links with the Council, the Executive also issues instructions to the Secretariat, checks the Secretariat's accounts, stipulates the employment conditions of the Secretariat's staff and defines the responsibilities of the OSA's Director-General.

All of this may seem of little practical use to the average Swiss citizen living abroad. Much of the Executive's time is, however, concerned with matters of direct interest to emigrant Swiss — matters such as citizenship rights, taxation, old age and invalidity insurance, postal ballots, medical insurance, rights on repatriation and also educational, social and professional integration. The OSA can justifiably claim credit for improving the rights of Swiss nationals living abroad in all of these areas.

1991 is an important date in both the history of Switzerland and the history of the OSA. While Switzerland celebrates its 700th birthday, the OSA will be celebrating 75 years of success in representing the interests of Swiss citizens living abroad. But the OSA will not be revelling in its past achievements. As part of the 700th anniversary of Switzerland, the OSA congress will take place in Luzern. Its main theme will be 'The Fifth Switzerland — yesterday, today and tomorrow': the OSA and its Executive will continue in the future to be instrumental in setting policies to defend the interests of Swiss expatriates throughout the world.

It is the Executive's aspiration and my personal hope that our Federal Councillors, in the interests of Swiss culture and tradition, find the strength of character and vision to redefine our national values and identity, so that Switzerland becomes a leading member-state of a united Europe. Unity in diversity has always been a most envied Swiss characteristic. May 1991 become the year when new principals are laid down for the cultural, social and economic evolution of Switzerland within a new European and world order.

*Joe Brogginì's duties on the OSA's Executive are of course very time consuming. He is especially grateful for the support which he has received from his wife, Alison, and from his daughters, Lara and Sascha.*

*In a future issue of the Green Pages one of the UK's deputy delegates on the OSA's Council will report on her duties and responsibilities.*



## The Conspicuous Consumption of Coffee

The art of coffee drinking was celebrated in an outstanding collection of fine European porcelain which was shown in London in the early summer. Some of the most important items from the Johann Jacobs Museum in Switzerland were exhibited for the first time in the UK at a special loan exhibition at this year's International Ceramics Fair and Seminar, held at London's Park Lane Hotel in June.

The introduction of coffee from the Orient in the 17th century marked the beginning of a social revolution which swept through Europe. This exotic new beverage transformed the behaviour of sophisticated society since here was a special practice that was considered both elegant and fashionable. The enormous popularity of coffee prompted factories to design entirely new receptacles for its consumption other than in glass and silver, and this stimulated efforts in Europe to rediscover porcelain, a material that until 1708 proved elusive. The development of a durable white porcelain by the Meissen factory permitted increasingly elaborate forms of containers to be created as this exhibition illustrated.

The exquisite pieces from the Johann Jacobs Museum reflect the wealth of design and decoration of porcelain coffee services and figures created during the rococo and neo-classical periods. The first piece ever acquired by the Museum was a superb Meissen group of a lady, blackamoor and coffee table, by the celebrated modeller J. J. Kaendler. Dating from 1740, this exceptional piece depicts an elegantly dressed lady seated by a table, holding a tiny cup of coffee in one hand and a red rose in the other. By her chair stands a turbaned blackamoor offering his mistress another cup of the tempting brew. The theme is a variant on the gallant kissing the lady's hand, only in place of the gallant is the coffee table and the blackamoor, the latter signifying the provenance of the exotic beverage.

During the first decade of the 18th century, porcelain manufacture still presented technical problems until Johann Friedrich Böttger discovered the formula for hard white porcelain. Most early Meissen products were made of a red stoneware, and an example in this

exhibition is the stunning coffee-pot dating from 1710-13. The curving spout protrudes from a dragon's mouth and the whole design is reminiscent of a Chinese rice wine vessel. A later coffee-pot by Chelsea, dating from 1745-49, shows how the form developed during the 18th century. Fashioned in brilliant white porcelain, the bulbous body is fluted in design and further embellished with delicately modelled garlands of tea flowers and jasmine. In the early 18th century coffee was a rare and curious plant and was often described as resembling jasmine and the juxtaposition of the two plant types suggests that the pot may have been used for both tea and coffee.

This superb collection also includes a fine pair of figures depicting a servant couple, the woman wearing a floral patterned dress with pink bodice carrying a beautifully detailed "déjeuner", the man in a pink suit with sprigged waistcoat carrying a carafe of wine and a glass.

These charming figures were modelled in 1773 at the Schooren factory by Johann Jacob Wilhelm Spengler, who later left Switzerland to work at the Derby factory. Another figure dating from the same period shows a girl sipping coffee. Modelled by Johann Peter Melchior at the Höchst factory and dating from 1770-75, this piece is of particular interest as the girl is sipping not from the cup but from the saucer. This was common practice until the late 18th century, the advantage being that the coffee cooled more quickly and by decanting the liquid from the cup to the saucer, the drinker avoided swallowing the grounds.

The collection, which forms the basis of the Johann Jacobs Museum, was established in 1980 by Klaus J. Jacobs, former owner of the prominent coffee, chocolate and confectionery company, Jacobs Suchard, and is devoted to the cultural history of coffee. In 1984 the collection was opened to the public as the Jacobs Suchard Museum and in 1990 became part of the Johann Jacobs Foundation and was renamed the Johann Jacobs Museum. It is named after Johann Jacobs (1869-1958) who first opened a coffee shop in Bremen in 1895 from which originated "Jacobs Kaffee", a brand that

is known worldwide today. This unique collection of documents, paintings, silver and porcelain, is housed in a gracious mansion on the shores of Lake Zurich where the fascinating role of coffee in the social history of Europe is illustrated through literature and works of art.

### Compatriots Recalled

Dr Hugo Rast was born in Bern one hundred years ago. Although greatly interested in beautiful things and music — he was no mean violinist — his main hobby had always been medicine. He studied in Bern, Lausanne and Paris and became assistant to several famous surgeons. Having been ill with typhoid fever during the first world war, Dr Rast was granted sick leave from military service and he acted as Medical Officer supervising trains which carried prisoners of war to be repatriated under the Geneva Convention.

He came to London in 1919 and started as House Surgeon of the German Hospital in London. He obtained both an FRCS and an LRCP. He was later promoted to Head Surgeon. The War Office appointed him Chairman of the Mixed Medical Commission for Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees of the Allied Forces.

Hugo Rast received a great many professional distinctions. He was also a great sportsman, loved riding and mountaineering. He again climbed the Matterhorn on his 70th birthday.

In the Swiss Community we always affectionately called 'our Dr Rast'. He was not only a famous surgeon, but an excellent physician and counsellor. He took a great interest in Swiss community activities. Large numbers of friends were delighted when he got married in 1970.

During the last few years of his retirement he and his wife, Ruth, lived at Kaufdorf near Bern. But it was on a visit to London in 1982 that he died. He was mourned by a vast number of friends and former patients of many nations — he had been medical advisor to no fewer than fourteen embassies and legations in London. A great many of our compatriots and others still remember him with admiration and affection. (MM).



## Swiss Clubs and Other Useful Numbers

**Aberdeen** Tel: 0224 318316 (Mrs M. Grieve)  
**Bristol** Tel: 0454-775042 (Mrs Trudi Soper)  
**City Swiss Club** Tel: 071-975 6002 (Dr Duttweiler)  
**Dunfermline** Tel: 0383-723540 (Mrs U. Ditchburn)  
**Edinburgh** Tel: 031-334 2430 (Mrs U. Ross)  
**Guernsey** Tel: 0481-48188 (Mrs Ferbrache-Amman)  
**Liverpool** Tel: 051-427 1816 (Mrs M. Moor)  
**Manchester** Tel: 053 833291 (D Meakin)  
**Midlands** Tel: 021-631 4050 (Erich Westacott)  
**N. Ireland** Tel: 0232-648239 (Hans Egli)  
**New Helvetic Society** Tel: 071 727 4113 (Rose-Marie Breitenstein)  
**Swiss Rifle Assoc.** Write to: Urs Schaerer, 143 Greenvale Road, Eltham Park, London SE9 1PG  
**Southern (Farnborough, Hampshire)** Tel: 0252-615149 (Marcel Gret)  
**South West** Write to: Mrs Guppy, 101 Green Way, Bishops Lydeard, Taunton TA4 3DB  
**Surrey** Tel: 081-647 9630 (Mrs Heidi Miller)  
**Torbay** Tel: 08030-842355 (M Singer)  
**Tyne & Wear** Tel: 091-536 1047 (Mrs Nelly Scott-Niederberger)  
**West of Scotland** Tel: 0360-22204 (Mr Sheffield)  
**Yorkshire** Tel: 0274-588189 (Jeffrey Long)  
**Anglo Swiss Society** Write to: Mrs F. R. Cobb, 2 The Mill Yard, Wickehambreaux, Canterbury  
**"La Causerie"** Tel: 081-673 4955 (Annette Yucottier)  
**Cercle Genevois** Tel: 0923-221704  
**Swiss Church** Tel: 081-340 9740 (Rev P. Von Orelli)  
**Commission of the Swiss Abroad:**  
 South of Britain Tel: 081-741 4224 (Joe Broggin)  
 North of Britain Tel: 061-926 8153 (Berni Simon)  
**Consistoire** Tel: 081-346 8094 (Mrs E. Crack)  
**FOSSUK** Tel: 071-727 4113 (J Long)  
**Ist August Committee** Tel: 081-892 2512 (Mr V. Berti)

**Frauenverein** Tel: 081-422 3545 (Mrs Laskowski)  
**Swiss Benevolent Fund — Scotland** (Mrs Drysdale) 4 Victoria Crescent, Clarkston, Glasgow G6 8BP  
**Swiss Benevolent Society** Tel: 071-387 2173 (Mrs R. Sharp)  
**Swiss Economic Council** Tel: 0952-502000 (Mr C. J. Pennington c/o British Brown-Boveri Ltd)  
**Swiss Mercantile Society** Tel: 071-638 2800 (Mr K. Deutschle c/o Union Bank of Switzerland)  
**Mothers Group** Tel: 0992-46687 (Marlies Davies)

**Swiss National Tourist Office** Tel: 071-734 1921  
**Swiss Relief Society:**  
 Liverpool Tel: 051-486 1168 (Mrs Stevens)  
 Manchester Write to: P. Senn, Cloud Park Farm, Dial Lane, Congleton, Cheshire CW12 3QJ  
**Swiss Welfare Office** Tel: 071-387 3806 (Mrs M. Lyster) or 081-458 3859 (Mrs A. Ficker)  
**Swiss Youth Club** Tel: 081-340 9740 (Monika Faes)  
**Union Ticinese** Tel: 081-568 3916 (Mr Berti)

## Around and About

### Manchester

Manchester Swiss Club held its AGM at Cheadle in February. Bernard Simon, vice-president of the club, reported on the successful programme of events organised in 1990-91, the club's 140th jubilee year. Mr P. A. Senn and Mr L. Dewcarrat, both having been members of the club for forty years, were declared Veteran Members. Following the elections for new office-bearers, John Easter was appointed as secretary and Derek Meakin takes on the duties of president. Mr Meakin and his wife, Lucie, have been active and enthusiastic members of the club since 1960. Mr Meakin is also a former editor and publisher of the *Swiss Observer*. The effervescent Bernard Simon will be a hard act to follow, but if anyone is up to the task it is surely Derek Meakin. After the meeting the consul-general, Gilbert Schlaefli, delivered an address on the position of Switzerland in Europe and the world today. In light of the article by Bernard Simon in the last issue of the *Green Pages*, readers may be interested to know that at the end of 1990, a majority of the club's members (56%) were female!

### Southern

A long way south of Manchester, a smaller, a younger, but a no less cheerful club was also holding its AGM. As a result of the meeting the Southern Area Club, founded in 1978, amended its title to Southern Area (Farnborough, Hampshire) Swiss Club. The club meets on the first Friday of every month at 8 p.m. in the Elles Hall, Farnborough Community Centre. All readers in the Farnborough area are warmly invited to the club's meetings.

### Tyne and Wear

Swiss clubs and societies often wonder how they can attract more members. The Tyne and Wear club has come up with a good idea. Club member Ron Cavanagh printed several posters inviting possible new members to make contact with the club. The posters have been displayed in shops, libraries and town halls in Newcastle, Sunderland, South Shields, Whitley Bay and Washington. If you live in Tyne and Wear, haven't seen a poster, but would like to learn more about the club's activities, contact Nelly Scott-Niederberger, 22 Southlands, Jarrow (Telephone 091-536-1047).

### Bristol — Salisbury

Congratulations to Mr Emil Krantz who celebrated his 98th birthday last december in the company of Bristol Swiss Club. Mr Krantz travels to the meetings of the Bristol club all the way from his home in Salisbury. He would like to hear from any Swiss-German speakers in the Salisbury area — especially if they would be interested in a game of Jass! Mr Krantz can be contacted via Vreni Knights of the Bristol Swiss Club at 12, Argyle Road, Clevedon, Avon BS21 7BP.

### London Ladies

Ladies! How would you like to meet other Swiss women? Several Swiss women living in Harrow, Northwood, Rickmansworth and district would like to hear from compatriots with a view to arranging regular informal get-togethers. If you are interested please ring 0923 773 739 or 081 866 4063. It is intended to hold the first meeting in Northwood.



To organise a banquet and ball for an unknown number can cause many a headache. In cooperation with the Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom (FOSSUK), the Anglo-Swiss Society and the Sherlock Holmes Society, the City Swiss Club turned its 126th Annual Banquet and Ball into a Festival event. The venue was the Hilton Hotel in London's Park Lane and it was soon evident that the function was extremely popular. 800 people was the maximum the Hilton ballroom could accommodate and in no time at all every ticket was sold and a long waiting list had to be opened.

The first surprise on arrival was a sentry of two lieutenants of the Swiss Papal Guard in Rome. When the participants had moved from the cocktail rooms to the ballroom — decorated with large Swiss cantonal flags along the wall and red and white candles on the 80 tables — the second surprise was the arrival of the principal guests behind the picturesque pikemen and musketeers of the Honourable Artillery Company, personally delegated by the lord mayor of London.

Music was played by the band of the Grenadier Guards, by permission of the regimental Lieutenant Colonel, Major General B.C Gordon Lennox.

Grace was said by the Rev. Philip von Orelli, minister at the Swiss church. The menu included Swiss specialities like *Buendnerfleisch*, *Gefuellter Kalbsbraten mit Zwetschgen*, *Roesti*, Cheeses from Switzerland (kindly sponsored by the company of that name) and Swiss chocolates (by Lessiters). The wine was the special festival vintage with the Tinguely drawing on the label.

The loyal toasts were proposed by the Swiss Ambassador, Franz Muheim, and by the earl of Limerick, president of the Anglo-Swiss Society.

There used to be a time when complete lists of guests and verbatim reports appeared in the colony's official periodical, *Swiss Observer*. There is neither space nor interest to take up that custom although the speeches at the festival banquet were of very high standard and would be well worth reporting in detail.

Dr Rudolf Duttweiler, president of the City Swiss Club, welcomed the guests on behalf of the organising societies. The

guests included the Swiss ambassador and Madame Muheim, the lord mayor of Westminster and the mayoress, Dr and Mrs Fritz Leutwiler, former presidents of the Anglo-Swiss Society and several distinguished diplomats and personalities from British political life. Among members of the embassy staff present were Minister and Madame Faessler and Consul-General and Mrs Mehr, who were soon to depart for Bangladesh. Mr Mehr was later presented with a small token of appreciation. Also present were Dr Hans Egli, 92 on his last birthday and cultural doyen of the Swiss community in London; Mrs Mariann Meier, who has attended every single ball organised by the club for 59 years; and Bernard Simon, tireless delegate of the Swiss in Britain on the Council of the Swiss Abroad, who had brought a group of compatriots from the Manchester area.

The mayor of Westminster addressed the gathering next. In a both informative and witty speech, he referred to the many ties between Britain, London in particular, and Switzerland.

The last speaker was Dr Fritz Leutwiler, former president of the Swiss National Bank and of the Bank for International Settlements and now chairman of the board of directors of ASEA Brown-Boveri. He mentioned his and his wife's great attachment to London and Britain and went on in a serious, at times critical, vein to describe some of the difficulties Switzerland was facing and changes which were necessary if the country wanted to compete in a new world.

Dancing then followed to the band of the Grenadier Guards under the leadership of Colour Sergeant Batten. Their participation continued a long-standing relationship dating back to 1870 when the Grenadier Guards played for the City Swiss Club for the first time.

Later in the evening, the Sherlock Holmes Society produced a lively sketch, *A Scandal in Helvetia*, a crime being solved by the great detective. In the presence of Queen Victoria and her retinue (sadly the microphone went on strike so that her voice was not audible to the main assembly) a superbly executed 'choreographic masterpiece of bovine beauty and delicacy' was presented: *Les*

*Vaches Dansantes*, produced by Peter Horrocks. One figure from the play should be mentioned, Albert Kunz, for many years in charge of the Swiss National Tourist Office in London and still working indefatigably on the Anglo-Swiss relations. He appeared as a Swiss hotelier proudly welcoming Queen Victoria and her ladies and gentlemen in waiting.

But that was not the end of the surprises. The Swiss Folk Music Band Alder from Appenzell — some of its members, actually Alder family, were first heard in London in the 'thirties — played for dancing, performed on the alphorn, executed bell-ringing, *Talerschwingen* and yodelling.

All too soon, Auld Lang Syne and the national anthem brought a successful evening to a close.

To organise a function of this magnitude means an enormous amount of work. May one single out from many who were involved Mrs F. R. Cobb, secretary of the Anglo-Swiss Society, and of course the president of the City Swiss Club, Dr R Duttweiler, and his capable assistant, Mrs Monika Sallows? In spite of one or two embarrassing hiccups beyond the organisers' control, the evening was a huge success.

As the president said in his welcoming speech the Gulf war had overshadowed preparations, especially as Swiss residents in this country were deeply conscious of the involvement of the British people. 'Switzerland more than any other country understood and appreciated the willingness of Britain to stake everything in order to come to the aid of a small country against the threat of an aggressive neighbour. So heavily did the position of our British friends weigh on our minds that we had to consider cancelling our celebrations in Britain. Thank God — in more heartfelt ways than one — that proved unnecessary.'

(MM)

### Recipe Corner

Dunfermline Swiss Club is presently compiling a Swiss cookery book. If you have a favourite Swiss recipe and would like to have it incorporated in the book, please send your recipe to Friedgard Adams, 10 Old Kirk Place, Dunfermline, Fife.



# CH91 – SCOTLAND: Concert at Hopetoun House in September

## An Invitation

The Swiss Clubs of Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dunfermline have planned to mark the 700th Anniversary of Switzerland with a Gala Evening in Hopetoun House, South Queensferry, near the Forth Bridges, on Saturday, 28 September 1991 at 7 p.m. for 7.30 p.m.

The magnificent ballroom of Hopetoun House, Scotland's finest stately home, provides an ideal setting for our celebration.

The programme will commence with a classical concert, given by the well-known Oberengadiner Baroque Ensemble from Switzerland.

After an interval for a buffet supper, the evening will continue with a display of Scottish country dancing and both Swiss and Scottish folk music. Then it will be your turn to dance the night away.

A sight-seeing programme will be arranged on Sunday for those staying overnight.

Please complete and return the attached slip at your earliest convenience, so that we can make adequate arrangements for your comfort.

On behalf of the Organising Committee, may I assure you all of a warm welcome to Scotland.

Yours faithfully,  
*G. L. Drysdale*

Consul and Chairman of the  
Organising Committee

## Hopetoun House

Hopetoun House is situated in West Lothian, 12 miles west of Edinburgh, on the shores of the Firth of Forth. The house is the home of the Hope family, whose present head is the fourth Marquess of Linlithgow. Construction work on the house, which was designed by Sir William Bruce, began between 1699 and 1702. During the course of the eighteenth century the house was greatly enlarged. The interior

decoration of the building was largely completed between 1752 and 1767 and many of the original furnishings and hangings survive to this day.

The house is set in one hundred acres of magnificent parkland, which contains woodland, deer parks, nature trails and many

wild flowers. There is a rooftop viewing platform on the house from which visitors can enjoy a panoramic view of the Firth of Forth, the Kingdom of Fife to the north and the Forth Bridges. The Forth Rail Bridge celebrated its centenary last year and is now illuminated at night.

## CH91 – Scottish Gala Evening Application Form

Name ..... Telephone .....

Address .....

Number of tickets required ..... @ £18.00 = .....

TOTAL ENCLOSED .....

Accommodation: (please tick)

- I/We would like accommodation with Swiss Club members
- I/We would like bed and breakfast accommodation in the following price range, per person (please tick)
  - £12-£14.50
  - £20
- I/We would like hotel accommodation in the following price range per person (please tick)
  - £28-£35
  - £41-£45
  - £55-£65
  - £48-£50 per room

Number and types of rooms required .....

Transport: (please tick)

- I/We require transport from our accommodation to Hopetoun House
- I/We are interested in participating in the Sunday sight-seeing tour
- I/We require transport for the sight-seeing tour

Completed forms should be returned with a self-addressed A5 envelope to Mrs G. Bott, 10 Station Road, South Queensferry, EH30 9HY. Cheques should be made payable to CH91 Scotland.

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Small, international, English-language boarding school would like to hear from Swiss nationals or persons with working permission for Switzerland, interested in full-time employment from September 1991. Qualified elementary school teachers for English-speaking children 6 to 14, or persons interested in serving as Housemother or household Assistant or cook should write to:

**William Lovell, Director.**  
or telephone: (030) 4.13.72

For Information, Advice  
or Help contact the  
**SWISS WELFARE**  
**OFFICE**

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**31 Conway Street,**  
**London W1P 5HL**

Telephone:  
**071-387 3608**

Underground Stations:  
Great Portland Street, Warren Street



## CH91 — LONDON: Inaugural Concert in February

The war in the Gulf cast a shadow over social events in Britain as elsewhere. The Swiss Ambassador and Madame Franz Muheim decided not to cancel the inaugural concert which took place in the lecture hall and foyer of the Swiss Embassy, eminently suited to be transformed into a concert hall, accommodating a distinguished company of some 180 people. Among them were the ambassadors of some of Switzerland's neighbouring countries and members of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, including the Minister of State, Douglas Hogg, and the Permanent Under-Secretary, Sir Patrick Wright.

A number of members of parliament and representatives of the House of Lords were among the guests, as were the Lord Mayor of Westminster and Mrs David Avery. Festival sponsors and personalities concerned with events organised within the framework of the Festival programme had been invited, as well as members of the Festival Charitable Trust.

The Ambassador and Madame Muheim were assisted by Minister and Madame Christian Faessler and the Cultural Counsellor and Madame Livio Huerzeler.

The concert programme consisted of the

Mozart piano quartet in G minor K478 and the Schoek string quartet no.2 op.37. The artists were Sir Georg Solti and the Sine Nomine Quartet from Lausanne. It was a splendid performance much appreciated by the audience.

But the most impressive item was the opening work. The Ambassador in his welcoming address, mentioned that although the decision to hold the concert in spite of the Gulf war had been taken, an adagio from Jean Perrin's string quartet would be played before the main recital, but in deference to the war, without applause. The music could not have been better chosen. Together with the following silence, the whole act was like a prayer, a most sensitive acknowledgement of the serious situation, coupled with a sincere hope for the swift end to hostilities.

The concert was followed by an excellent buffet dinner in the Residence reception rooms, offering the guests ample opportunity of mixing. It was a truly splendid occasion, an excellent way of thanking many British and Swiss personalities involved in the Festival and for supporting it morally and financially in a most generous way. (MM).

## Consular News



Mr Eduard Jaun has been appointed as the new Consul General in London in succession to Mr Albert Mehr. Mr Jaun was born in 1942 in Meiringen. He is married and has three daughters. He entered the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in 1965. Apart from a brief spell of duty in Bern, Mr Jaun has spent most of his career abroad, having served in Paris, Strasbourg, Hanover, New York, Dublin, Tel Aviv and Sydney. On hearing of his appointment Mr Jaun said, 'My wife and I are looking forward to meeting many of you in the near future and I hope to continue the good relationship built up between the consular staff and the Swiss community in Britain.'

## The Lady and the Alphorn



Arrangements had been made during the British Prime Minister's visit to Switzerland in September 1990 to present her with an alphorn. Due to bad weather the then Prime Minister's programme was altered and she returned home without her alphorn. But although she has since lost her job, Lady Thatcher has not lost her alphorn. It was recently presented to her by Joseph Buhler of the Swiss National Tourist Office, London, and Meir Wagner of the Hotel Silberhorn, Grindelwald. With time now on her hands, what price an ex-prime ministerial performance at one of the 1991 celebrations? (Photograph: Joseph Buhler, the alphorn, the Lady, Sir Denis Thatcher, Meir Wagner)

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## An Editor's Lot is no Sinecure: Remembering Some of the Breed by Mariann Meier

Thirty years ago the longest serving editor of any Swiss community publication in the UK retired. He was Alfred Stauffer who had been at the helm of the *Swiss Observer* for 32 years. By any standard that was a remarkable record.

As I remember him, my thoughts go back over the years to the beginning of the *SO*. During the First World War relations between Great Britain and Switzerland were somewhat strained and, in 1916, the New Helvetic Society was founded in London. Its main task was to strengthen the ties among the Swiss in this country and to re-establish the old Anglo-Swiss friendship by better mutual information of the press in both countries.

Dr Arnold Laett took up his work as full-time secretary of the NSH in London, and, thanks to his sterling work, the Group's activities were highly successful.

It was in 1919 that a few influential friends of the NSH and the City Swiss Club gathered round Paul Boehringer of the Frederick Printing Company and launched the project of a new paper for the whole of the Swiss community in Britain. There had been an attempt at running a colony paper before — Mr Scheidegger's small *Gruetli* which, however, had not been successful.

Mr Boehringer could give the necessary financial backing and Dr Laett was invited to be the first editor, a job he could easily combine with his secretarial work for NSH. On 17 November 1920 the first copy of the *Swiss Observer* was published from 21 Garlick Hill, London EC4. It was a fortnightly periodical of eight pages and the annual subscription was 8/6d. Both size and price were increased over the years. The publication became weekly but it remained the community's official organ.

To say that the *SO* went from strength to strength would be far from the truth. But it overcame many difficulties, mainly due to the valiant efforts of the founder and his son, Oscar, assisted by successive editors.

After the first editor's short-term of office — Dr Laett returned to Switzerland — Dr A Lang followed, succeeded in turn by Dr H. W. Egli in the 'twenties. In 1929 Mr Boehringer discovered the man who was to edit the paper most successfully for over three decades: Alfred Stauffer.

All through the second war the *SO* appeared regularly, though it was necessary to reduce it once more to

fortnightly issues. In spite of the difficulties, the paper survived. It was published at 23 Leonard Street in the City.

A few years after Paul Boehringer's death in 1948 an Advisory Council was formed. And then, in 1961, the faithful 'ST' retired. A young Vaudois, Pierre Hofstetter, took over for a short time. Then Fred came back for a few months until the Council appointed me as the first woman editor.

I had started writing for the *SO* in 1932, but editing and producing a paper was a different matter. But I received help and instruction from Fred Stauffer, Oscar Boehringer and the expert members of the printing company staff. Sadly, Fred died in 1965, mourned by a grateful community.

I had been engaged as a part-time editor but the work filled all my days and after seven years the job of writing, editing, office work as well as covering many events became too much for me.

Pierre-Michel Beguin took on the editing, followed by W. G. Sommer and then Mrs M Hill (née Moser). Much of the administrative work had been taken over by H. J. Thomson of Frederick Printing Company. I was asked to give some assistance, always with the founders ideas as an example.

### A new era

In Spring 1979 the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK (FOSSUK) became the proprietor of the *Swiss Observer*. A new publisher and managing editor was found in the person of Derek Meakin and the *SO*, which had become a monthly publication some time before, was published near Manchester from June 1980 onwards.

Even when the paper was still published in London, an agreement had been reached to have the *Review* incorporated in it — the *Review* being the quarterly publication the Swiss government sends to all Swiss citizens registered abroad. This arrangement was terminated due to some difficulties between Bern and the publishers and Derek Meakin informed the Federation that publication would stop. The last issue of the *Swiss Observer*, number 1819, appeared in November 1984. It was a sad day for many when this valiant undertaking came to an end, having coped with many obstacles successfully,

thanks to the devotion of some men and women, the support from individuals, organisations and companies, not forgetting the Embassy and Consulates.

A new monthly publication was launched by Mrs Ann Doy, *Swiss News and Views* — a courageous undertaking. When the *Review* was first sent out in 1973, Mrs Lisa Hall, née Zeller, took on the editorship of the local *Green Pages*. What she lacked in professional know-how, she made up in zest and admirable devotion. The FOSSUK committee, compatriots and friends were sorry when she gave up her work on returning to Switzerland in 1988. Nick Miller took over from her and he was succeeded by the present editor in 1991.

The task of an editor is not an easy one and with very little financial return. To edit the local *Green Pages* every three months obviously does not require the same amount of time as editing and producing a fortnightly or even a monthly publication like the old *SO*. The editor's time then was spent on dealing with news from Switzerland, selecting suitable information on events at home and matters relating to Swiss public and political life, as well as attracting subscribers and advertisers, and writing a fair amount of correspondence. But even now editing still means writing and/or editing reports of community events, acquiring adverts, pasting-up the layout, correcting proofs and finally sending the films to Bern — for the *Review* is printed in Switzerland and then distributed by the Embassy and Consulates.

### How Can Readers Help?

The main worry of the *Green Pages*' editor is to get enough material at the right time. So please send reports of events in your community, information about interesting Swiss personalities and undertakings to the editor well in time to meet the deadlines published in every issue.

The *Review* is the official publication of the Swiss government and the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad. The *Green Pages* reflect the life of the Swiss community in the UK. It is YOUR own publication. YOU can use it to help to strengthen the ties of friendship among compatriots. It is up to YOU, the readers, to make it into the fine publication that the founders of the original *Swiss Observer* had in mind.



## Book Review

Christina Yates, *Man of Two Worlds. Portrait of Brother Klaus 1417-87. St Nicholas of Flüe in Switzerland.* (York: William Sessions, 1989. x + 82pp. ISBN 1 85072 049 5. £5.50)

Every Swiss child learns at school about Brother Klaus and how he saved the nascent Swiss confederation from disintegration in 1481. As Christina Yates demonstrates in this little book much of what the average Swiss child learns about St Nicholas of Flüe is wrong or, at least, not quite accurate.

Nicholas of Flüe was born in 1417. His life took a dramatic turn in 1467 when he abandoned his family and career as a relatively prosperous peasant to become a hermit. Famed for his rigorous fasting, his hermitage at Flüe in Obwalden became a mediaeval tourist attraction, visited by the curious from throughout the Empire. Even before his death in 1487 Nicholas was widely regarded as a living saint, though canonization was not forthcoming until 1947.

Partly as a result of this spiritual fame, the hermit's views on political affairs were often sought. In 1481 he dispatched a message to a meeting of confederate envoys in Stans. This meeting took place against a background of longstanding and serious rivalry between the forest cantons and the city cantons. The intervention by Nicholas allegedly broke the deadlock at the meeting which had threatened to lead to the collapse of the confederation. In fact, both the message and its exact impact remain unknown.

Ms Yates' book is divided into four sections. In the first she examines the life of Nicholas. Sensibly, she does not allow the intervention at Stans to overshadow the subject's hermetical life, though the long mediaeval tradition of hermits and anchorites might have been explained: the life of St Nicholas, in that respect, was not unique. The second section of the book is perhaps the most interesting. It includes several almost contemporary accounts of Nicholas which have been translated by the author. The religious visions experienced by Nicholas are discussed in the third section while the main text of the volume concludes with an appraisal of 'Brother Klaus Today'.

The tone of the book is hagiographical rather than historical. On occasions the author might be accused of vagueness and repetition. There are also a few glaring errors: Burgundy, for example, was not a kingdom and Mattias Corvinus was never a pope (p 23). There is little new in the book. It relies heavily on Robert Durrer's *Bruder Klaus: Die ältesten Quellen über den seligen Nikolaus von Flüe* (1917-21).

Nevertheless, Ms Yates' book does perform a valuable function. Precious little has been written in English on mediaeval Swiss history and the author has opened up a window on the subject for English readers. Her book will undoubtedly be of interest to the readers of this journal — especially perhaps to second generation Swiss, whose minds have not been indoctrinised by the inaccurate legends of St Nicholas of Flüe. (DD)

## Swiss Church Event

The biennial Bazaar will be held this year on Saturday 16 November 1991 in the Swiss Church, 79 Endell Street, London WC2. This will be another opportunity for the Swiss community to celebrate the 700th anniversary of Switzerland. As usual there will be many stalls at which a large selection of Swiss goods, such as cheeses, jams, home-made cakes and also home-made art and craft articles, will be sold. Light refreshments will be available along with simple Swiss specialities. There will also be a children's corner.

Donations, gifts and raffle prizes will be gratefully accepted. These should be sent to Ref. Ph. von Orelli, 1 Womersley Road, London N8 9AE.

The Swiss Bazaar is a wonderful opportunity for meeting old friends and for making new ones and, at the same time, supporting the valuable work done by the Swiss Church. So why not come along and make this Bazaar a very special one? (UT)

Further information about the Bazaar is available from Ursula Talary. Telephone 081 778 4878.

## The Green Pages

The Editor of the Green Pages welcomes letters and comments from readers. Correspondence should be addressed to: Dr David Ditchburn, Department of History, University of Aberdeen, King's College, Old Aberdeen AB9 2UB. (Telephone 0224 272999; Fax 0224 487048)

The deadline for submission of articles for Issue 3/91 is 31 July; and for issue 4/91, 30 September.

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