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FOSSUK News

The Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom (FOSSUK) is an umbrella organisation to which some thirty Swiss societies, clubs and organisations throughout the United Kingdom, from Aberdeen to Guernsey, are affiliated. Since its foundation in 1965 (when it replaced the older Presidents' Assembly), FOSSUK has performed two important functions. Within the United Kingdom it disseminates information about matters of interest to the Swiss community to affiliated members. FOSSUK, however, also represents the views of its members to the Swiss government and its agencies. (It is, for example, FOSSUK which elects the British delegates to the Council of the Swiss Abroad.) FOSSUK's importance as the official voice of the Swiss community in Britain is reflected by the regular attendance at its meetings of officials from both the Swiss Foreign Ministry in Bern and the secretariat of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad.

FOSSUK holds an annual general meeting which presidents of all affiliated organisations are entitled to attend. Between meetings the conduct of FOSSUK's business is conducted by a committee of eight members. This committee is chaired by FOSSUK President Jeffrey Long (New

Helvetic Society, London). The other members of the committee are Secretary Max Singer (Torbay Swiss Club), Virgil Berti, Dr Hans Egli, Albert Kunz and Mariann Meier (all London). Two new members were elected to the committee in 1991: Alfred Zbinden (City Swiss Club, London) assumed the duties of vice-president and Eric Westacott (Midlands Swiss Society) became an ordinary committee member.

Eric Westacott is one of the few non-London members of the committee. At the age of 28, he is also one of the youngest presidents of a Swiss society in Britain. Educated in Luzern and Thun, he completed his national service in 1984-85 before moving to the west Midlands. There he set up his own financial planning practice, contracted to Allied Dunbar. After meeting a Swiss client in Birmingham, Eric hit upon the idea of founding a Swiss society in the Midlands. He contacted local newspapers and took part in local radio programmes in an attempt to find members. The upshot of his endeavours was the foundation of the Midlands Swiss Society in 1988.

The 26th annual general meeting of FOSSUK was held on 15 November 1991 at the Swiss embassy in London. The meeting was addressed by Franz Muheim (the Swiss ambassador), Ms. M. Brunner (of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad), and Dr Rolf Bodenmuller (of the Swiss Federal Department for Foreign Affairs). Ms Brunner commented on the new Swiss insurance policies and the youth exchange programme (which was reported on in issue 4/91 of *The Green Pages*). Dr Bodenmuller drew attention to the changes in Swiss electoral and nationality laws which will come into force in 1992. Information leaflets on both of these laws have been published by the Swiss government and are available on request from the Swiss consulates in London and Manchester.

Both Mr Muheim and Dr Bodenmuller commented at length on a subject which is clearly going to preoccupy Swiss diplomats for the foreseeable future: Switzerland's relations with the European Community. The European Community and the countries of the European Free Trade Association, including Switzerland, have agreed to establish a 'European economic area' from 1 January 1993. This will permit EFTA countries such as Switzerland to gain access to the EC's internal market. The free movement of goods, services, capital and people will extend across both EC and EFTA countries.



Eric Westacott

This agreement has severe implications for Switzerland. In practical terms it will require the Swiss parliament to amend or introduce numerous laws. But both Mr Muheim and Dr Bodenmuller drew attention to the many benefits which these changes hold in store for Switzerland. Swiss nationals working in Britain, for example, will eventually no longer require work permits.

While the EC and EFTA countries are already working closely together, in the longer term it is likely that the Swiss government will seek full membership of the European Community. As Mr Muheim suggested, such a move would probably be welcomed in Whitehall: Swiss attitudes to European integration are very similar to those of the British government.

□FOSSUK's 1992 annual general meeting will be hosted by Torbay Swiss Club on 3 July. Further details may be obtained from FOSSUK President Jeffrey Long.

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Around and About

Dunfermline

Dunfermline District Council has decided to name a street in the town 'Winterthur Way'. The street is situated near the town's former Swiss silk factories and the council's decision is in recognition of the contribution made by the Swiss community to Dunfermline's once world famous silk industry. A history of the Swiss silk trade in Dunfermline is currently being compiled by a local journalist. Any readers with information on this subject are requested to contact Dunfermline Swiss Club.

Meanwhile, a Christmas concert given by the Avison Strings marked the end of the club's celebrations to mark 700 years of Switzerland.

Midlands

The Midlands Swiss Society completed its programme of events for 1991 with a Fondue Evening in November and a 'Sammiclaus' evening in December. The Fondue Evening was held at the club house of Sparkhill Tennis Club. Cheeses of Switzerland prepared and cooked the Fondue which various members described as 'fantastic', 'delicious', 'well-organized' and a 'brilliant event'. The 'Sammiclaus' evening was held at the home of John and Ursula O'Brien.

The programme for 1992 is available from Society President Eric Westacott. Regular meetings are held on the last Friday of the month at 7.30 p.m. in the

Albany Hotel Cocktail Bar, Hill St., Birmingham.

Oxford

Anyone with Swiss-German speaking children in the 4-8 age range and living in the Oxford area is asked to contact Chris Hill on 0844 339 422.

Not Quite London Ladies

The editor has been asked to point out that Harrow, Northwood and Rickmansworth are not in London (issue 2/91). Ladies wishing to meet other Swiss women at informal gatherings in these places, which can all be reached on the London underground, are still requested to ring 0923 773 739 or 081 866 4063.

Swiss Clubs and Other Useful Numbers

Aberdeen Tel: 0224 318316 (Mrs M. Grieve)

Bristol Tel: 0272 873619 (Mrs Trudi Soper)

Bucks./Herts. Tel: 0494-763030 (Mrs S Singh)

City Swiss Club Tel: 071-975 6000 (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 (Eric Westacott)

N. Ireland Tel: 0232-648239 (Hans Egli)

New Helvetic Society Tel: 071 727 4113 (Rose-Marie Breitenstein)

Swiss Rifle Assoc. Write to: Urs Schaefer, 143 Greenvale Road, Eltham Park, London SE9 1PG

Southern (Farnborough, Hampshire)

Tel: 0252-615149 (Marcel Gret)

South West (Taunton): Tel: 0823 74237 (Mrs Haskell)

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, Wickenhamabreux, 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 Broggini)

North of Britain Tel: 061-926 8153 (Berni Simon)

Consistoire Tel: 081-346 8094 (Mrs E. Crack)

FOSSUK Tel: 071-727 4113 (J. Long)

1st August Committee Tel: 0622-39361 (Mr Chris Dyke)

Frauenverein Tel: 081-422 3545 (Mrs Laskowski)

Swiss Benevolent Fund — Scotland (Mrs Drysdale) 4 Victoria Crescent, Clarkston, Glasgow GT6 8BP

Swiss Benevolent Society Tel: 071-387 2173 (Mrs R. Sharp)

Swiss Economic Council Tel: 0952-7346737 (Mr C.J. Pennington c/o British Brown-Boveri Ltd)

Swiss Mercantile Society Tel: 071-636 2892 (Mr R. Kaenzig, SMS College, 34-5 Fitzroy Sq. London)

Mothers Group Tel: 081-340 9740 (Johanna von Orelli)

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 3608 (Mrs M. Lyster)

Swiss Youth Club Tel: 081-340 9740 (Monika Faes)

Union Ticinese Tel: 081-741 4224 (Giuseppe Broggini)

Clubs and societies are kindly requested to send both the editor of The Green Pages and Jeffrey Long, President of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom, details regarding their forthcoming events.

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CH91 – A Message from The Ambassador



The Ambassador, Franz Muheim

The Festival created to mark the 700th anniversary of Switzerland in Britain is now over. From the beginning to the end of the year, more than a hundred cultural and social events took place throughout the whole of the UK. They promoted our country in many different ways.

When launching the idea of a Festival, I had three main aims in mind: to bring the Swiss and their many British friends closer together; to pay tribute to and to foster the longstanding friendly relationship between the two countries; and to present certain aspects of Swiss life, culture and creativity on a rather large scale.

It was, of course, a particular honour that His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and Federal Councillor Flavio Cotti, President of the Swiss Confederation, gave their patronage to the Festival. Prince Charles actually did us the additional honour of coming to Switzerland himself for the celebration of Europe Day in Sils Maria on 7th September. It was also a great privilege to be able to welcome Federal Councillor Adolf Ogi at Battersea Park.

This Festival was indeed a unique venture, quite difficult to set up and to carry through, but also a very rewarding one.

I am happy to say that our aims have generally been fulfilled. It was most satisfying to observe all the year long our compatriots' pleasure in meeting and enjoying themselves with their British friends. The flood of tokens of encouragement, congratulation and rejoicing which reached the Embassy from people of all backgrounds, both in the UK and in Switzerland, shows how much the opportunity given by the Festival to share the feeling of belonging to the same community or to express friendship was appreciated.

The image of Switzerland we tried to convey did reach a great many people, first of all through the events themselves, but also through the two broadsheets, 110,000 copies of which were distributed, through advertisements and last but not least through the Festival Commemorative Book. The Festival publications generally were a great asset in our effort to make people aware of what Switzerland is all about.

One difficulty we encountered was to penetrate the British media. However, numerous events were reported in the quality press, interviews were given on BBC Radio and concerts were either recorded or broadcast live. Many articles and surveys on

Switzerland — some kind, others rather critical — have been published during the year.

One of the merits of the Festival is that it has laid the foundation stone for a more active presence of Switzerland in the UK in the future.

I should like to express here my deep gratitude to all those who gave their time, their support and their energy to the Festival and who enthusiastically helped to realise this big project. I cannot name them all, since they are so numerous, but I know most of them and want them to be aware how indebted I feel to them. I thank, as well, those who faithfully attended the Festival events.

My gratitude goes in particular to my Cultural Attaché, Livio Hurzeler, and to the Directors of the Charitable Trust Company: Gilbert de Botton, Chairman, who committed himself so successfully to the fundraising; Dr Rudolf Duttweiler, Vice Chairman, who unstintingly gave up his time to help; and the other Directors, Fernand Auberon, Lord Limerick, Jeffrey Long, Mariann Meier and Sir John Wraight. Mr Long had a particularly arduous task during this year as President of FOSSUK. I wish to express my warm thanks as well to the Directors of Festival of Switzerland Ltd: Patrick Koerfer, its most devoted Chairman, Joseph Buehler, Jörg Roth, Andreas Siegenthaler and Peter Summerfield, Legal Adviser to the Festival project. May I also say that I received unfailing support and inspiration from my wife.

Nothing of course, could have been done without proper funding. We were fortunate to get the necessary resources from both public and private, Swiss as well as British, sources, and I should like to say to all those who supported the project financially how much I value their generous contributions.

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CH91 – Looking Back

by Mariann Meier

Frankly, it is an impossible task to do justice to well over a hundred events in a few columns. To name all the planners, sponsors, organisers and hundreds of helpers would alone fill *The Green Pages*. Days, and often nights, were given up by devoted individuals, often without pay or recognition, and it is to these women and men that our special thanks must be expressed.

Which, then, were the highlights of the commemorative year? Each one of us — organiser, helper, participant or just onlooker — has different memories. So it is inevitable that this portrait of a year is a highly personal one.

The first lasting memory is that of the Perrin adagio at the inaugural concert at the embassy, the moving tribute to the forces in the Gulf War and their families. The Festival Ball at the London Hilton Hotel followed, when the Artillery company pikemen, in their picturesque historic uniforms, led the guests to the top table to the music played by the band of the Grenadier Guards.

Then there was the fine day in Yorkshire, when the cultural doyen of the Swiss community, Dr Hans Egli (93), stoutly walked the many miles to Hardcastle Crags, where Swiss history was presented at the *Landsgemeinde* ceremony.

At the reunion dinner of the Swiss Mercantile Society, attended by over fifty former students of the college, Federal Councillor Adolf Ogi reminisced in a humorous way, and in very good English, about his own student days at the SMS in 1961. Mr Ogi, along with other dignitaries from Bern, also attended a special service at the Swiss church. The impressive aspect of that morning was the result of the collection in aid of poor Swiss mountain farmers — almost £700.

And who would have thought it possible to have over 8000 people at the Swiss Fair at London's Battersea Park? Much has been written about that event already, but what impressed me most was the fact that the event passed off without any vandalism, rowdyism or accidents; no children got lost and nothing was stolen.

The Manchester Swiss gathering, too, surpassed all expectations, with over 2000 attending the Tatton Park event in Cheshire. The Swiss in Scotland held their festival event at Hopetoun House. My

memories include the lovely music performed by the Oberengadiner Baroque Ensemble, four women artists, whose colourful Engadin costumes vied with the picturesque kilts of the Scottish dancers. Many were the first of August celebrations and other individual festive gatherings of compatriots in all parts of Britain. For me, it was the 75th anniversary dinner of the New Helvetic Society; the *Castagnata* of the Unione Ticinese, with traditional chestnut meal and Ticinesi accordionists; the Anglo-Swiss Society dinner, at which the unusual collection of vivid engravings, *Bodmer's America*, was on display; the *Escalade* of the Cercle genevois, celebrating the courageous feat of Mère Royaume; and finally the various Christmas gatherings which had a special 700-year cachet, of the City Swiss Club, the NHS and the Swiss Church.

Musical Events

Incredibly, there were over sixty concerts all over the UK, featuring Swiss music and/or artists at concert halls, churches, colleges and art centres, not forgetting Swiss music and musicians on the air.

I fondly remember the Vivaldi played by the Luzern Festival Strings at the Wigmore Hall, Honegger's cello concerto, superbly rendered by the great Rostropovich at the Barbican and Frank Martin's Requiem at the Festival Hall.

These two halls were the venue for the two London concerts by the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande under Armin Jordan — the other two took place in Birmingham and Cardiff. The first of the two concerts in the capital was preceded by a talk given by Professor Jean Starobinsky on Ernest Ansermet (the legendary founder conductor of the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande) and Stravinsky. This eminent Geneva humanist gave further talks on subjects related to Swiss music and the arts.

The second concert was the gala event at the Festival Hall on 1 November — another wonderful experience with the 120 musicians of the OSR. Frank Martin's concerto for wind instruments and orchestra still lingers on. The concert, like so many other big festival events, was followed by generous hospitality by the Swiss ambassador.

Another tune still in my ears is from

Stravinsky's music-theatre piece *Histoire du Soldat*, based on the text by C F Ramuz, performed at a small theatre in Islington. Swiss films, too, were given great prominence, including the unique *Die Schweizermacher*. Plays were performed, like Durrenmatt's *Visit*.

Lectures

And so we come to lectures and seminars. These took place at universities, institutes and quite a few at the embassy lecture hall. Some lasted several days, like the Canterbury Week. The subjects covered every aspect of Switzerland and the speakers were distinguished personalities from here and over there. Red Cross, neutrality, travel and finance, literature and the arts — nothing was left out.

I'll just mention the famous mountaineer Andre Roch on *Adventures in the Himalayas* and *Reflections on William Tell* by Professor Madeleine Therrien — this fascinating talk left one none the wiser regarding the truth or fiction about the Swiss national hero. I must also mention the superb talk by Sir Peter Ustinov. In a most charming and complimentary manner, the accomplished artist made fun of the Swiss. Some of our compatriots who have not acquired a British sense of humour didn't even realize it!

And finally we were acquainted with the life and work of the Great European writer, the Ticinese Piero Scanziani. The modesty of this octogenarian genius was as remarkable as the excellent Italian spoken by the Scot, Professor M Wilkins, who introduced him.

Exhibitions

It is equally impossible to mention all of the exhibitions. They ranged from photography to *Ella Maillart in Asia*; from the show on Swiss federalism, *Face to Face with Switzerland*, to Albert Giacometti's *The Artist's Studio*; from Martin Disler's sculptures to a panorama of contemporary Swiss art at the Hammersmith Studios.

The first superb exhibition was that of the Buehrle Collection at the Royal Academy in London — *The Passionate Eye* — a breathtaking display of some eighty-five great works. The presentation of *Swiss Artists in Britain 1991* was due

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100'000 Francs For An Idea

to Madame Muheim's, the ambassador's wife's, personal efforts and persistent quest — a most rewarding venture. And I still see in my mind's eye the symmetrical designs by Max Bill, so simple, yet beautifully executed and fascinating in their colour arrangements. Bill is another octogenarian Swiss artist who is still very creative.

The crowning glory of the exhibitions must have been *Switzerland 700* at the British Library (London), a comprehensive display of Anglo-Swiss treasures spanning over one thousand years. The presentation was arranged most imaginatively and expertly by Dr Peter Barber. The all-embracing show included all manner of maps, prints, clocks, watches and medals, Turner watercolours, a draft of Byron's poem *The Prisoner of Chillon* and such precious items as the illuminated manuscript of the Bible of Moutier-Grandval dating from 850.

One more event deserves mention. On 15 April, the lord mayor of Westminster unveiled the pole carrying the cantonal crests, donated to the city of Westminster by the Swiss Centre, and the new street sign. What an honour to have New Coventry Street renamed for all times Swiss Court!

Distinguished visitors from Switzerland included Marco Solari, the Federal Council's delegate for the anniversary celebration in Switzerland. He confessed that what the Swiss community in Britain had organized to celebrate the 700th anniversary of the Swiss confederation was second to none. Who are we to quarrel with this statement by someone who knows?

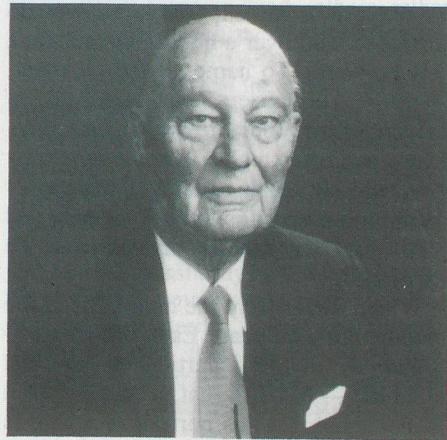
These are very fragmentary, personal impressions — fleeting glimpses of the vast panorama of cultural and popular events spanning the whole year and all of Britain. Switzerland's image as the land of holidays in superb surroundings, of yodelling and alphorn playing, of cheese and chocolate, of watches and machinery, of the gnomes of Zurich and banking secrecy, has certainly been enlarged. Its immense cultural riches, which the Festival has revealed, have left a lasting impression. Our efforts will go on into the new century of the Confederation's existence. Whatever the future brings by the way of changes due to the new face of Europe, Switzerland's splendid cultural past will remain unchanged and untarnished.

To my mind, the Festival of Switzerland in Britain in 1991 has been an unqualified success and I feel deeply grateful to have been involved in it.

William de Vigier, born in Solothurn (Switzerland) and living in London, made that promise on his 75th birthday four years ago. He presented the mayor of Solothurn with 5 million Swiss francs to set up a Foundation providing **non-repayable** start-up capital of 100,000 francs for each of up to five projects a year submitted by young entrepreneurs. The sole condition was that the award-winners have to be Swiss and must set up a limited company in Switzerland to market their concept. The basic idea behind William de Vigier's foundation was to provide "seed money" to actively promote the economy. Its purpose is to give initial backing to inventive and pioneering young people who are also willing to establish a performance-oriented company with a foreseeable growth potential.

William de Vigier was motivated not only by his goodwill towards the business sector but even more by his own experience. In 1936, a 24-year-old William de Vigier emigrated to England with the firm intention of trying his luck there. With just fifty pounds in his pocket and the idea of making adjustable steel struts for the building industry, he set about founding a company. In his quest for funds, he met Arthur Crow, a lawyer, who offered to help him to set up the new enterprise, which young de Vigier called "Acrow" after his sponsor. Bill de Vigier pursued his goal single-mindedly and finally became a successful businessman. A 1980 newspaper article described him as "the man from Solothurn who amazed England", and it is a fact that Bill, with his empire of companies, is one of the most successful Swiss industrialists living in Britain.

In the meantime, de Vigier, who is still



William de Vigier

full of vim and vigour, has kept his promise. Over the past three years, he has presented the Vigier start-up capital in person. One woman, one married couple and six men have received cheques to help them make their entrepreneurial plans come true. The ideas selected by the Board of Trustees were: a modular industrial robot, a natural diaper with a special swathing method, an elastoplast for sensitive skin, a gasketfree pump, a parallel data-flow computer for real-time image processing, edible biological crockery made of cereal, an automatic grab hoist and an intelligent conveyor belt. Some 300 projects in all have been submitted to the Foundation to date.

Swiss living abroad, who would like to make a creative idea reality and are willing to set up a company in Switzerland in which they themselves play an active entrepreneurial part, are invited to apply to the Foundation. Application forms are available from the W.A. de Vigier Foundation, Swiss Volksbank, P.O. Box 1047, 4502 Solothurn.

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Sinfonietta Helvetica

On 6 December the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra performed the second of eight concerts taking place at Glasgow's Royal Concert Hall during the 1991-92 season. The concert, which was broadcast live on Radio 3, featured the world premiere of *Sinfonietta Helvetica*, a BBC commission by Scottish composer Robin Orr. The sinfonietta comprises three movements: Lake of Geneva (a forlane — the dance form occurring occasionally in instrumental suites of the 16th to 18th centuries and the French character being appropriate to Geneva); Zurich (a sarabande — solid and very slow, the second and fourth sections being quiet, human and tender); and Lake of Luzern (a Burloesque — developing the previous material and, towards the end, introducing a simple folk-like dance tune which evokes the rural aspect of the Ruetli meadow, close to Lake Luzern).

Robin Orr's compositions include three commissioned operas: *Full Circle*, by Scottish Television for Scottish Opera in 1967; *Hermiston* Scottish Opera for the Edinburgh Festival in 1975; and *On the Razzle*, by the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in 1988. He has also composed three symphonies. The first, *In One Movement*, has had some sixty performances worldwide, including some at the Edinburgh Festival and the London Proms. There have been other important commissions for the Llandaff Festival, Peter Pears and Janet Baker and several pieces of chamber music and church music. His *Songs of Zion* has recently been recorded for Numbus by George Guest and the St. John's College Choir, Cambridge.

Robin Orr was the first chairman of Scottish Opera, a position which he held for fifteen years, and also the first full-time professor of music at Glasgow University.

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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

Letters

Battersea

Sir,

With reference to the letter of Gerald and Ursula Whitbread concerning SwissFest 700 (*Green Pages* 3/91), I would like to say that we (Swiss wife, English husband, three children) experienced exactly the same let-down as the Whitbreads.

We had really looked forward to giving the children a taste of Switzerland as we cannot afford the trip over there as often as we would like. But after having spent two hours at the fair we still had not spotted a single person in national costume nor saw a *Volkstanz* nor heard any Swiss music. The children's activities (except for the ones in the tent of the Swiss church) seemed to have been abandoned and as for the souvenirs, they were a joke. I think there was a selection of three or four overpriced articles on offer.

We then proceeded to the food tent. The children had been given a voucher which enabled them to get a free sausage which was a great help. Unfortunately, they all chose *Wienerli*, which were not only lukewarm and tasteless, but simply inedible. So we looked around for some cheese, chocolates or any other specialities to buy. There was nothing except for some cake. All in all a most disappointing day.

Yours faithfully,
Gabriella Williams,
London.

Sir,

In the September issue of the *Green Pages* a couple from Richmond expressed their dissatisfaction with the Swiss Fair at Battersea. They asked for elucidation.

The organisers sold 4600 admission badges at £2.00 in advance and they optimistically expected a further 1400 visitors on the day. In the event over 8000 turned up altogether. Is it surprising, therefore, that catering was not what it was expected to be? This is, indeed, regretted by the organisers, but it was out of their or the caterers' control.

It is a pity that Ursula and Gerald Whitbread left immediately after the disappointing lunch. They missed the performances of the *Alpsteinblick* (an Appenzell folk band), the alphorn players, the amusing children's entertainment and the 'Family Fun Run'. They may have heard the Zurich Police Band, but they missed the sprightly *Ur-Li-Ju* band, a group of excellent players from Urswil-Ligschwil. There was also a performance by the Swiss *chansonnier* Markus Dolder; a play by the Swiss Mercantile College in London, *700 Years in*

20 Minutes; a Jass competition; and two shows presenting *Les Vaches Dansantes* excellent bovine ballet. There was also the song contest, most enjoyable singing by four young choirs and jolly community singing in the afternoon.

The highlight of the day, after the balloon release, were the official speeches. The Swiss ambassador, Mr Franz Muheim, gave the welcoming address. The guest of honour, Federal Councillor Adolf Ogi, who had specially come over for the festival, spoke next in English. It was a speech of substance and the fact that the large audience received it with great applause was proof of its success. The reply was given by Lord Hunt, of Everest fame.

Had the couple stayed for the evening they would have been able to enjoy a most lively party of healthy fun and great Swiss spirit.

I must refute absolutely the suggestion that the fair was 'some sort of charity or fundraising exercise for the Swiss government'. This seems to me rather insulting also to the great number of people who devoted time and effort to making the Battersea Fair a huge success for the vast majority.

Yours sincerely,
Mariann Meier,
London.

Bazaar

Sir,

The organisers of the Swiss church's bazaar hoped, but did not expect, the bazaar (held in London on 16 November) to be such a great success. Some three hundred members and friends attended. The inviting displays, the Swiss food and catering, as well as the excellent raffle prizes, proved a great attraction.

It is an impossible task to thank everybody who worked towards the admirable result. The almost £7000 which was raised could not have been realised without the buyers and the generosity of the Swiss business community. But those who really deserve thanks are the organisers, the stallholders and the many helping hands behind the scene, like the tireless kitchen team. The support of the Swiss ambassador and his colleagues also helped towards the Bazaar's success. The presence of Mr and Mrs Muheim and other members of the embassy was greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,
Ursula Talary,
Chairman of the Bazaar Committee,
London.



Book Review

by Till Geiger

Cultural Life

John Wraight, *The Swiss in London: A History of the City Swiss Club, 1856-1991* (Bodmin, 1991. 198 pp. Illustrated. ISBN 0 9517706 0 8 £11.00)

The difficulty of writing the history of an institution or society is often underestimated. Societies, such as the City Swiss Club, do not exist in a vacuum. The important task of the historian of such organisations is to place her or his study within a wider context, taking account of political, social and economic developments. The author of this history of the City Swiss Club, Sir John Wraight, is to be congratulated for embarking upon such a challenging venture.

Most of the original members of the City Swiss Club were brought together by a keen interest in political developments, such as the Neuchatel crisis of 1856. But common economic interests, especially in Anglo-Swiss trade, were (and have remained ever since) a matter of major concern to the membership. Unfortunately most of the club's archives were destroyed during the second world war and, therefore, the author has had to piece together these early years of the club's history from *The Times* and other external sources. Such sources, it seems, yield only a few glimpses of the club's history in the nineteenth century. There are few biographical sketches of the first members of the City Swiss Club. Little emerges about the background and the living conditions of the Swiss community in London at this period. Although there is some analysis of Anglo-

Swiss relations, this rarely amounts to more than cliches. The patriotism of the Swiss in London is hardly surprising. More surprising is the author's disinclination to study the political affiliation of the club's members. It is sad that he has not placed his study within the wider context of the social environment of Victorian London — especially given the wide array of literature on other ex-patriot communities in which this has been done.

Such shortcomings persist throughout the rest of the volume. Wraight seems to be obsessed with presenting readers with endless descriptions of banquets. (Some of the menus at the annual balls are mouthwatering and remind the reader of the hearty appetite of a bygone age.) Yet, throughout the description of the club's history in the inter-war years, it is hard to gauge how the life of the Swiss community in London was affected by the Great Depression. Here the author might have made use of the recollections of long-standing members of the club. The analysis of post-war developments is similarly deficient in detail.

In many ways my criticisms are perhaps a little harsh, given the grave difficulties of this genre. Nevertheless, how much more interesting this book might have been for a wider audience had the author analysed the underlying developments more rigorously. The penetrating observations offered by Sir John in his conclusions demonstrate just how much the nature of the City Swiss Club has changed over the last one hundred and thirty-five years.

If you wish to be informed of Swiss cultural events in the UK, then the newsletter *Switzerland in Britain's Cultural Life* is your answer. Please contact the Cultural Section of the Swiss Embassy (16-18 Montagu Place, London WIH 2BQ; Tel: 071 723 0701) to put you on the mailing list for this bulletin which appears every second month and covers the whole of the British Isles.

The Cultural Section is always very pleased to mention any cultural event with a Swiss theme in the publication. The deadline for the May/June issue is 20 April and for the September/October issue it is 20 June.

The Cultural Section has also recently received several requests for Swiss folklore groups or individuals/couples living in the UK who would be willing to perform at specified events. If any reader is interested, please contact the Cultural Section at the Embassy.

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.)

Articles for issue 2/92 should be sent to the editor as soon as possible. The deadline for submission of articles for issue 3/92 is 30 July.

Due to lack of space **Regula Sharp**'s article on the Swiss Benevolent Society has been held over to the next issue. Also in the next issue, our series *Compatriots Recalled* returns with a profile of Paul Boeringer.

I wish to order.....volumes of the book @ £11.00 each (incl p & p):

The Swiss in London, A History of the City Swiss Club 1856-1991
by Sir John Wraight

I enclose my cheque for £ made out to the City Swiss Club

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Please reply to: **Monika Sallows, c/o Credit Suisse**
24 Bishopsgate, London EC2N 4BQ