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ST ANN'S CHURCH LOOKS BACK

Christmas and Youth Activities with London Swiss Catholic Mission



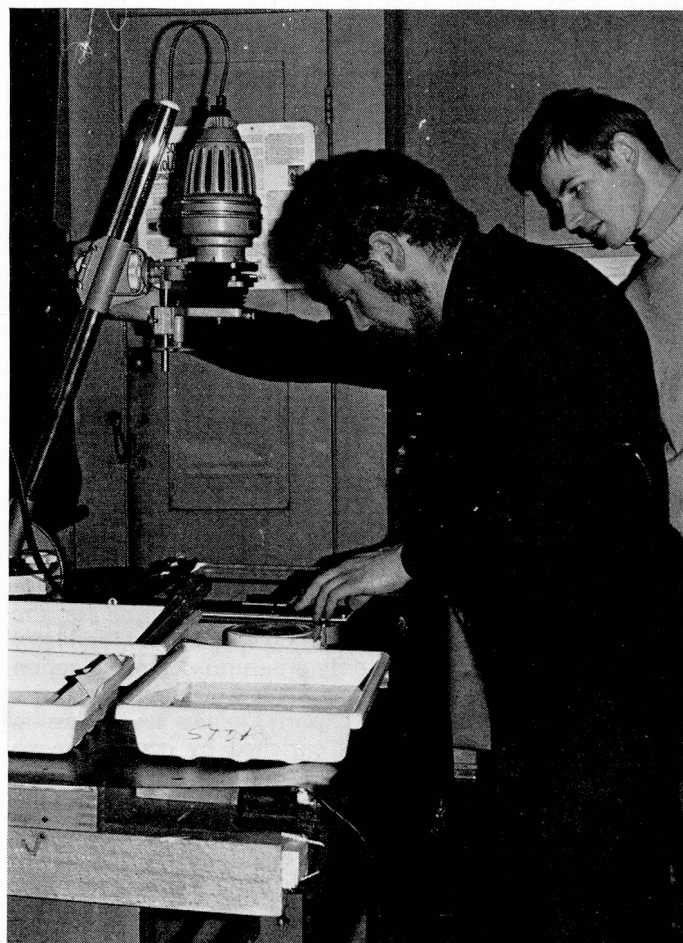
Pushed into a narrow corner and squeezed between high buildings which probably think her a nuisance, St. Ann's Church has never been easily found by newcomers, especially when they expected some kind of a Swiss Parish Church. Many a girl has been walking three times around the blocks until she became aware of her new abode in London. Now the little church finally got her belated Christmas present, a new attractive signboard. She is very proud of it and glad that no real Swiss passing near by could easily overlook her, and now she can look back comfortably to last Christmas:

It all began around the middle of November in a small room which had nearly contained everything which should not be visible in a church. But some members of the Youth Club found it could be more useful for some other purpose. They turned everything out, cleaned it and gave the dustmen a good load to carry away. In a short time, with the help and assistance of the chaplain, a photolaboratory with all the necessary equipment was installed. It became one of the busiest rooms. There was a steady coming and going, and sometimes boys worked until deep into the night or early morning. I did not mind that at all but I really felt sorry that I had no big cellar or attic. How much they could do with such a

place and how many would enjoy it! So a few square yards was all I could offer them, but it was enough. About 2,000 Christmas Cards were printed and sold, and they carried the message of Christ's birth all over England and Switzerland.

For the feast of St. Nicolas they fetched the old boxes from some of my hidden corners covered with one year's dust, which is quite a lot on my premises. They contained the costumes for the traditional visit of St. Nicolas with "Schmutzli" and Au-pair Angels. "Lebkuchen" from the Swiss baker in Tunbridge Wells, oranges, apples and walnuts filled my vestry with a homely smell. During the party when St. Nicolas was in full swing, Father Christmas suddenly appeared and nearly kicked up a row. They started a heated argument, both trying to prove their right of existence and of visiting the Swiss people in London and both scored good points on historical facts and plain commonsense. In the end, they became quite friendly and helped each other to distribute all the gifts to nearly 200 young people who enjoyed the evening until they had to return home.

Some days later, on 11th December, I witnessed the grand Christmas draw and how conscientiously it was conducted by President and Treasurer of the Committee of Swiss Catholics. But the first prize of £20 did not, as some people thought, go to the Swiss Bank, but to a hard-working family father who has done and still does a lot for the Swiss in London and who earns his living at the Bank. I was so glad for him and congratulated him very sincerely. Thanks to the generosity of many Swiss friends and also the active participation of the Youth Club, the sale



of raffle tickets and several donations have realised about £400. Special thanks to all supporters!

Around the middle of December, a boy from Switzerland who had run away from home — I felt so sorry for him — found a home in my vestry over Christmas. He did most of the decorations, polished the brass and silver, painted the worn-out steps, put up the Christmas tree and did his best to make me look nice and respectable. May God protect him on his journeys!

On 24th of December, Christmas Eve, well over 100 people attended Holy Mass and joined the Christmas party in the well-decorated club hall. Singing carols, they enjoyed a good meal and even entertained some kind policemen who protected them from harm and stray drunkards. Besides the happy faces, one also could notice some stray tears of homesickness. But I really admired those young boys who had organised a taxi service with their cars until 3.30 a.m. to take the girls home after Midnight Mass.

On Sunday, 29th December, the traditional Children's Christmas Party took place, and I had the chance of seeing many Swiss families with their children for the first time, since most of them live too far away to attend services here. There were about 150 parents and children at Holy Mass and the following tea party. Father Christmas paid them a visit and brought each child a lovely Christmas parcel.

Looking back on these busy days, I keep smiling about the happy life which had been going on within and without my blackened brick walls, for instance on New Year's Eve or at the different farewell parties. It is difficult for me to imagine that these young people of to-day should be worse than those of yesterday. They may have different problems and the same faults and they always will, but so many come to the right place to find strength, guidance and friendship. And I wish to express my sincere thanks to all who have helped to make last Christmas a happy memory in the lives of so many people.

P.B.

ZURICH IS PLANNING BIG RECREATION CENTRE

Zurich is Switzerland's largest population agglomeration. The metropolis on the River Limmat, with its steadily growing economy and its highly industrialised suburbs and neighbouring communities houses nearly one million inhabitants on a territory with a diameter of not much more than 50 km. (about 35 miles). The demand for recreation space within easy (and inexpensive) reach grows as quickly as the population. Modern man suffers from chronic lack of exercise. In order to make up for this deficiency he tries to substitute sports. Everybody, not only a sports champion, has to regenerate his body which is yearning for oxygen as often as possible with those elements he misses in places where people for the most part are engaged in commerce, business, industry and traffic. Therefore, it is only a natural defensive action to help oneself that manifests itself in an impulsive desire for sun, oxygen and ozone. Sports, games and hikes in clean mountain air, in forests enriched by ozone, are an excellent means of providing just that necessary replenishment. This is the result of modern scientific research in the fields of hygiene, sports and medicine. From this point of view one cannot but cordially welcome Zurich's project to create a modern centre for sports and recreation just to the South of the city, in the pre-Alpine region of Schwyz.

As a basis Oberiberg (also sometimes spelled Hoch-Ybrig) at an altitude of 1,000-1,800 m. (or 3,280-5,900 feet) is given consideration. This region has for a long time been well known to many summer and winter tourists and devotees of cross-country ski-ing. What with the growing trend "Return to Nature" it is conceivable that Zurich, due to its central location as an intercontinental airport city, would be able to offer its numerous visitors another welcome attraction if the plans for this recreation centre materialise.

[S.N.T.O.]

INTERNATIONAL TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS

From 22nd to 27th July, Gstaad will organise what will probably be the biggest and most important international tennis championship which has ever taken place in Switzerland. Thanks to the renewed definite assurance, the International Lawn Tennis Association has given to the inhabitants of Gstaad, the "Internationals" will for the first time be played in Switzerland as a so-called "open", that is by professionals *and* amateurs. As far as Gstaad is concerned, this will be the second time that an "open" championship game has been granted this village so rich in the tradition of organising international championships. It is already known that eight professionals will take part, led by Roy Emerson, together with seven players of world-championship calibre. Also, the championships next July will feature such ladies of the world's top class as the Misses Casals, King, Dürr and Jones. Thus one may look forward to a tennis festival of the first order.

[S.N.T.O.]

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