

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1972)

Heft: 1641

Rubrik: Welfare Office for Swiss girls

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

WELFARE OFFICE FOR SWISS GIRLS IN GT. BRITAIN

The 14th Annual General Meeting of the Welfare Office for Swiss Girls in Gt. Britain took place on Monday, 15th May, 1972, at the Swiss Hostel for Girls, 9 Belsize Grove, London N.W.3. Mrs. O. Grob, the President, took the chair.

The following is an extract from the Annual Report of the Committee and Activity of the Welfare Office presented by the Hon. Secretary:

Owing to the departure from London of Madame René Keller early in 1971 the Committee decided to invite Madame E. Iselin to the Annual General Meeting and ask her to become their Honorary President. Madame Iselin kindly agreed to do so and has since shown the same keen interest in the work of the Welfare Office as had Madame Keller and her predecessors.

In January Mrs. H. Rast joined the Committee and attended her first meeting. Mrs. Rast, and also Dr. Rast, have given invaluable help to the Welfare Officer and we are most grateful for their co-operation.

At the Annual General Meeting held in May Mrs. Kaufeler resigned as Hon. Treasurer but fortunately remained a member of the Committee. We very much appreciate the work of Mrs. Kaufeler as Hon. Treasurer and are indebted to Mrs. Gyssler who has taken over this office.

Miss Senn had settled down happily at the Welfare Office and enjoyed a harmonious relationship with Mrs. Sharp who gave her every assistance. During holiday periods Miss Senn had been replaced by Mrs. Lyster.

During a certain period Miss Senn noticed a drop in the number of girls visiting the Welfare Office and suggested that she might hold herself at the disposal of the residents of the Swiss Hostel, where she was living, on two mornings a week. The members agreed to this proposal provided permission was obtained from the President of the Swiss Hostel. Mr. Suess gave his consent and the arrangement proved to be satisfactory.

Although the Welfare Officer has dealt mainly with the problems of young girls the Embassy has from time to time had occasion to send young men to her for advice. For this reason it was suggested in order that young men need not feel excluded that the name of the Welfare Office for Swiss Girls in Great Britain be changed to Swiss Welfare Office for Young People in Great Britain. An application to

make this change was sent to the Charity Commission but it was refused on the grounds that the change of style would affect the object of the organisation whose constitution did not allow any power of amendment.

It was with great disappointment that in November the members learned of Miss Senn's wish to resign her post early in the following year as she intended to get married.

The Welfare Office continues to depend for its maintenance on the annual federal subsidy from Berne, the annual contributions from the Amies de la Jeune Fille and Pro Filia in Switzerland and the Swiss Benevolent Society. Various sections of the Schweiz. Vehband Evangelischer Hilfe who take an interest in our work send donations and occasionally other gifts are received. These are most welcome as the finances of the Welfare Office are strained to the limit since we endeavour to pay our Welfare Officer a salary on the same scale as she would receive in Switzerland.

With regard to the activity of the Welfare Office the number of girls contacting the Welfare Officer rose as compared with the figure for 1970 although there was a slight drop in the number of welfare cases. The majority of enquiries came from Au Pair girls but more full time students have been coming forward for advice and help. The problems of the Au Pair girls followed the usual pattern. They lacked knowledge of what was expected of them and of their position in an English family. This applied mostly to girls seeking posts through advertisements and not realising the difference between "Au Pair" and "Mother's Help". Having taken a post as "Mother's Help" they were surprised that they had little or no time to go to school. Many suffered owing to their lack of knowledge of English and some girls were unable to adapt themselves to the English way of life.

Out of 11 sick girls eight could be treated as out-patients, three had to go to hospital, two were later repatriated. There were also a few cases of mental sickness, most of the girls in question being eventually repatriated.

Eight girls were reported missing but five could be traced. Six pregnant girls visited the Welfare Office and were given the necessary advice and assistance.

The Welfare Office dealt with various court cases but it was only in a few instances that the Welfare Officer had to give financial assistance as either the girls or the girls' parents could provide the money to pay the fines.

Financial assistance amounting to £389 was given to 24 girls and three air tickets and two railway tickets were provided for girls who had to be repatriated. Refund of assistance given has been very satisfactory.

There is no evidence to show that drugs are of specific danger to Swiss girls.

The Committee are extremely grateful for the assistance given to the Welfare Office by the Swiss Embassy, in particular Consul F. Adams, Dr. Ch. Bruggmann and Vice-Consul F. Robert, by the Swiss Churches in London and by the Swiss Benevolent Society, both for their financial aid and the help given by Mrs. Sharp, and also the Swiss Hostel who place accommodation at their disposal. They also very much appreciate the support of the Editor of "The Swiss Observer" and the services rendered to them by the Auditors. The members would also like to express their appreciation of the assistance given to the Welfare Officer by the following English organisations, i.e. the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child, the Aliens Police Registration Office, the Immigration Office, Police Inspectors, social workers and all those who have contributed directly or indirectly to their cause.

The Committee of the Welfare Office for 1972 consists of the following members:

Madame E. Iselin, Hon. President; Mrs. M. H. Ellis, M.B.E., Hon. Vice-President; Mrs. O. Grob, President;

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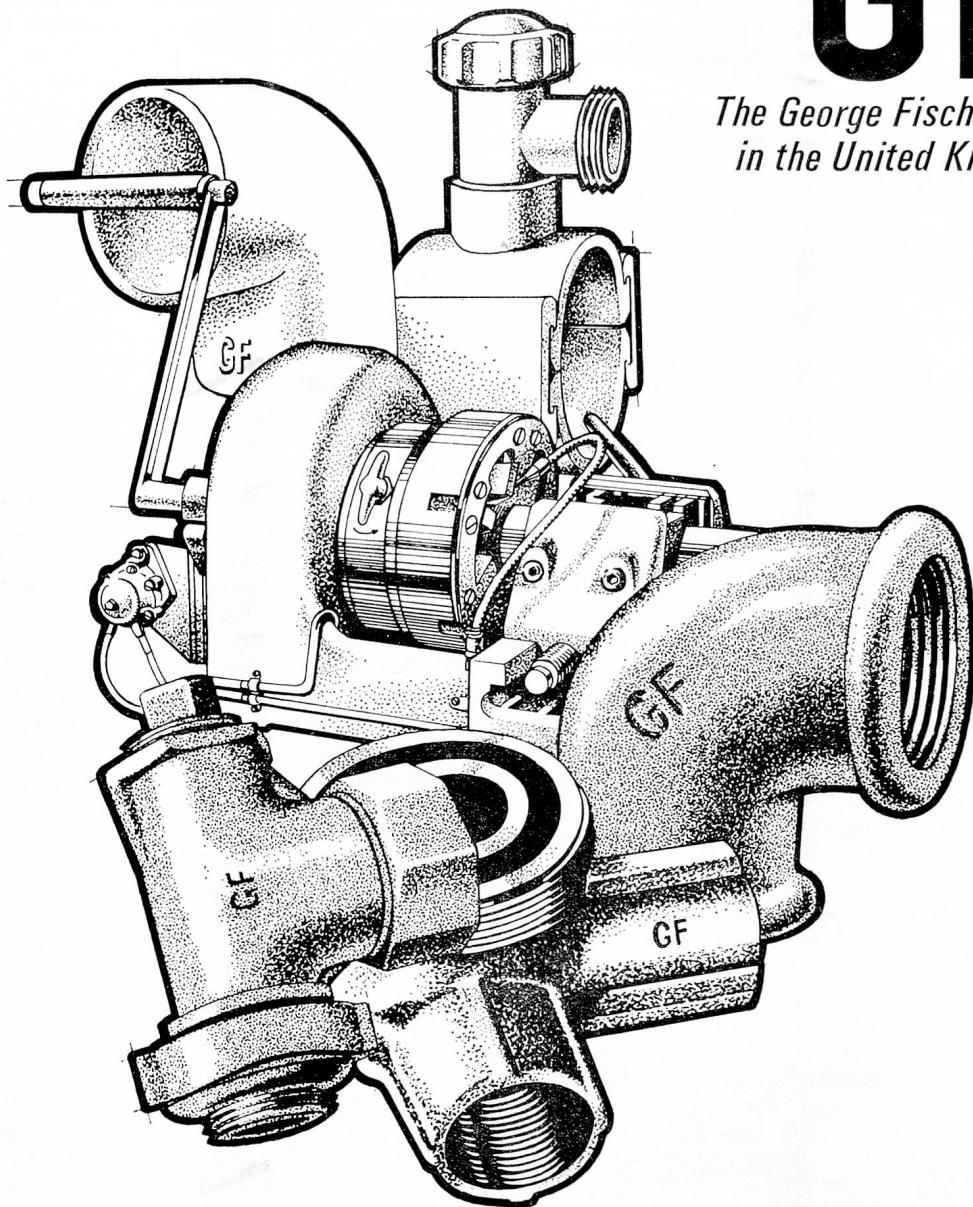
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SWISS CHURCH ASSEMBLY

The Swiss Protestant parish in London held its Annual Assembly on 4th June. This year the "*Journée d'Eglise*" broke with tradition. After a masterly sermon to the united French- and German-speaking parishes delivered by Pastor Claude Reverdin, former Minister in London, the congregation remained in the church to carry out its Annual Assembly. It was over in about half an hour, a record in the annals of the Swiss Church. The two linguistic parishes hadn't assembled beforehand, as in previous years, because they had held their respective parish assemblies after service the previous week.

There was remarkably little discussion and the parishioners present did not appear particularly excited by the developments of their church. But the atmosphere livened up during the lunch, which was held afterwards. There were so many people of both languages and every generation that part of the attendance had to take lunch in the church.

The previous evening, the French-Swiss parish had invited its German-speaking brethren to a dinner and a talk on the "life of the Swiss churches at home" given by Pastor Reverdin, who is currently Moderator of the pastors of Geneva. In a long and

detailed exposé he touched on nearly all the spiritual, sociological and political aspects of church life in Switzerland. The most striking feature that emerged from his description was the novel work achieved in many parishes with old people. Also interesting was the speaker's account of the impact of broadcasted religious services. A discussion followed in which the position of the churches regarding the various anti-Militarist declarations voiced recently in ecclesiastical and university circles was brought up by many parishioners.

On Saturday, 10th June, the "Doyens" of the French-speaking parish went out on their Annual Outing. There were enough of them to fill the coach which drove down to the castle of Polesden Lacey, and then to Leith Hill, where they had tea. The outing was a most successful one with plenty of laughing and singing. As usual it was made possible by the selfless co-operation of Mr. Gabriel Godet.

SWISS MACHINE-TOOL FIRM HOLDS EXHIBITION IN SUSSEX

The opening of a three week machine-tool exhibition in the showrooms of *Matchless Machines Limited*, Horsham, Sussex, was a marking Swiss and technological event. On 9th June, this Swiss-founded firm organised a Press preview, a tour of its premises and a cheese and wine party in a specially erected tent to mark the opening of the exhibition.

The British technical press was well represented. Principals of the firm, which has several prestigious agencies, had sent their engineers from Switzerland and Dr. J. A. Iselin, Plenipotentiary Minister at the Embassy had come from London to make the opening speech. Also from London were Dr. Carlo Jagmetti and Mr. R. M. Suess.

The visitors were guided through the showrooms to admire an array of glistening and expensive machine-tools, many of which were exhibited for the first time in this country. They were shown the workshops where machines, some of them actually sent in from abroad, are reconditioned and given a new lease of life, and were guided to the "job shop" where the firm carries out profiling and machining work for customers.

This workshop has highly sophisticated "electrical discharge" (or spark erosion) machines. These are some of the main items sold by the firm. Leaders in spark erosion machines are Agietronic, a Tessin-based company for which Matchless Machines act as U.K. sales and servicing agents. The firm has already sold over 500 in this country and controls about 50 per cent of the market for this category of machine. The only other Swiss firm making comparable ones, but on a much smaller scale, is Charmilles, of Geneva.

Instead of using a metallic cutting tool, a spark erosion machine cuts the workpiece to the desired shape by chipping its particles away by electric discharge. The guests at the Press review saw the principle explained by TV personality, Raymond Baxter, in a BBC film shown last January in the "Tomorrow's World" programme. Explaining the working of an entirely new Swiss computer controlled machine-tool to fifty million viewers, Mr. Baxter had to make a few "simplifying floaters" such as saying that "electric discharge" was the same thing as "heat generation". An engineer at the preview told me that Raymond Baxter required a prolonged briefing session before learning his lecture by heart. The film had been made in London where the machine had been specially transported from Horsham. Mr. Baxter also said that the model had been "conceived in Britain". But this misplaced patriotic assertion didn't appear to offend the wife of the inventor of the device as she stood proudly watching the film.

Founded in 1954 and launching its production by producing curtain-like objects, Matchless Machines has grown into a highly specialised and compact firm employing 85 technicians. It was started by Mr. J. A. Seiffert, who has now retired but remains Chairman, and is currently managed by his son, John P. Seiffert, an HTL graduate from Winterthur and a deep lover of machines. Matchless have the U.K. agency of a number of Swiss companies, in particular, *Studer*, *Wahli*, *Agathon* and *Ewag*. Besides spark erosion machines, much of its sales business is concentrated on a variety of most elaborate and ingenious grinding machines costing £8,000 or more. The firms represented by Matchless are all individually the Rolls Royces' of grinding machines.

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