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CHURCH ASSEMBLY 1975

This year's annual Church Assembly was held before a joint Sunday Service on 15 June. This event brings together members of the French- and German-speaking parishes to hear the Report of the Consistoire, to examine the accounts, to ask questions and generally to take stock of the Church's activities during the past year.

The Annual Report for 1974 had been sent to all members of the parish councils of the Swiss Church and the points raised in it were, in the main, the same as those raised by the President of the Consistoire, Mr J. Bader and representatives from both parish councils.

Mr Bader expressed great satisfaction with the results of the Church's last bi-annual bazaar, which was held at Central Hall, Westminster, last November. He made particular reference to the help received by the Embassy and noted that the Swiss Catholic Mission had for the first time been associated with the event.

Church expenditure had risen by 24 per cent, in keeping with inflation, but had fortunately been covered by the additional revenue derived from the bazaar, from a fund-raising campaign by former members of the Swiss-German Parish in Switzerland, and by a legacy.

The Consistoire also registered its gratitude for the help received from the Swiss societies, and in particular from the Nouvelle Société Helvétique for its eagerness to promote social and cultural events to the Churches' benefit.

In recalling those that had left the Swiss Church, Mr Bader mentioned Mr Fritz Adams, former General Consul in London, who had given invaluable support to the Churches during his stay in London.

His work was also mentioned by Mrs E. Crack, who chairs the Swiss-German Parish Council.

Others mentioned were the organist, Mr L. Rabes, who has replaced Mr Paul as the French-speaking parish organist following Mr Paul's death last year. Mr Bader also referred to the dedication and benevolence of the

Consistoire's former longest-serving member, Mr Gabriel Godet, who died last year in his Swiss retirement.

In giving their reports on the activities of the year, the chairmen of the two parish councils gave a good picture of all that the Swiss Church does and represents.

Mrs Crack spoke in particular of the renewed success of the Bible evenings organised by the assistant minister, Marcel Hauser. Both parishes have similar activities, but it would seem, judging from the two reports that the Swiss-Germans have the "edge" on their French-speaking compatriots.

Although the latter report slightly higher attendances at Sunday service (20 to 30) against an average of 20 reported by the Swiss-Germans, the latter register very high attendances on special occasions.

Surprisingly, the French-speaking services tend to be poorly attended on such occasions. The Swiss-Germans have furthermore taken fruitful initiatives in getting Swiss women and young mothers together in separate groups that meet every month.

Against this, the French-speakers continue to hold their "réunion de couture" which attracts a perhaps slightly more elderly participation. They are, nevertheless, useful in keeping links between the parish and people who are often lonely.

The "réunions de quartier" which used to be held by the French-speaking parish are in a period of uncertainty.

Some were held last year but none this year because of a great many departures. The Rev. Languillat suggested that the parish should together reflect on the future of this institution which, fortunately, continues to thrive with the Swiss-Germans. They continue to hold meetings at private homes in Sevenoaks (for the 20th year!) Dulwich, Wimbledon and North London.

Both parishes organise Sunday schools and both report satisfactory activities. Sunday school in the German-speaking parish is entrusted to

NEWS FROM THE COLONY

Mrs Ursula Stefan while it is held, in the other parish, in conjunction with the French Reformed Church in Soho Square.

Both reports hail the successful activities of the respective youth clubs. There is a marked difference between the attitudes of the two groups. Whereas the French-speaking club under the care of Pastor Renou, assistant to the Rev. Languillat, attach great importance in maintaining the Christian vocation of such a group, the German-speakers under the good care of Pastors Stefan and Hauser and Father Paul Bossard, do not hesitate to have fun and dancing at the John Southworth Centre in Westminster.

Indeed, Mrs Crack noted that activities of the Youth Club "seems to have shifted from Wednesday in the foyer of the Swiss church to Sunday evening at the John Southworth Centre".

This not surprising fact also accounts for the difference in participation of the two groups.

Other activities mentioned in the two reports were the Prayer Meetings in the French-speaking parish and the ecumenical services regularly uniting German-speaking Catholics and Protestants at the John Southworth Centre.

Last year was the 50th Anniversary of the German-speaking parish. On that occasion the VEGSIL (Verein ehemaliger Glieder der Schweizerkirche in London) organised a fund-raising campaign which collected no less than £4,000 for their former church.

This is surely an indication of the meaning of the church to the young who



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come to London. The VEGSIL meets every year. Similar meetings are held by the former members of the French-speaking parish.

A last interesting point which ought to be drawn from the report of the French-speaking parish pertains to the Rev. Languillat's aim at working towards an "exclusively Biblical liturgy". Passages drawn from the Bible, he says, have more impact and meaning than standard liturgical texts.

A look at the accounts shows that the total expenditure of the two parishes for 1974 lay at £11,103 (not much considering the figure covers the salaries of the two ministers and their two assistants, rents, rates, transport, administration, and repairs).

To meet these expenses, the churches received income from the following sources: Sunday offerings £829, subscriptions and donations from Great Britain £1,696, from Switzerland £3,091, covenants £863, covenant tax recovery £589, contribution by Federation of Protestant Swiss Churches £3,400, special collections (disbursed entirely to charities) £184. £6,075 was received in legacies, £6,000 of which was bequeathed by Mr J. Steiner.

From the accounts it is clear that as much as half of the church's normal income comes from Switzerland. Swiss contributors are also at the source of the bi-centenary appeal fund 1962 which stands at £20,472, producing a net income of £1,373.

There is one thing the Swiss church in London will never do, and that is to sever its vital links with the homeland and its former members.

PMB

Dear Sirs,

July 1975 - Vol 61

The front cover is a colour picture of some mountains and on page 2 WGS asks if they can be identified. Yes, I can do so; they are as follows:

Foreground - from left to right: Täschhorn, Dom, Lenzspitze and Nadelhorn.

Middle distance: Breithorn, Kl. Matterhorn, Furggrat, with Theodulhorn and Furgghorn.

Background: Italian Alps and Mont Blanc.

I should be most interested to know how many others were able to identify the peaks.

Yours faithfully,
Miss B. Seiffert

Editor's note: Is Miss Seiffert right?

Swiss Reunion in the Orkneys

An unusual sight recently in the port of Kirkwall, in the Orkney Islands, was a yacht flying the Swiss flag.

It attracted the attention of Gerald G. A. Meyer, Editor of *The Orcadian*, county weekly of the Islands, whose father, the late Emile Meyer, stamp dealer in the Strand, formerly of Geneva, was a well-known member of the Swiss colony in London, his wife, Lucy, playing an active part in the Swiss Church, Endell Street, London.

On board the yacht was a party of three Swiss holiday-makers. They had left the Clyde a fortnight earlier in their 35 ft Gosport-built sloop *Vogel Gryff II*. They were owner and master, Hans R. Bolliger, his wife Trudi, and a friend, Otto Annaheim. All belong to Basle.

Mr Bolliger and his wife have lived in Britain since 1955. He is research and development director of the Clayton Aniline Co Ltd, Manchester. Their friend had come over, as he has done on previous occasions, from Switzerland to make up a full crew.

The Bolligers keep their yacht in the Clyde and this particular cruise took them to Oban, Fort William, the Caledonian Canal, Kirkwall, Stromness then on to Stornoway, Kyle of Lochalsh, Oban again and back to the Clyde.

It had to happen - put more than one Swiss together in distant lands and they form a society! In this case, however, it was a pleasant get-together, first in a hotel and then in Gerald and Nora Meyer's home, Springbank, Stromness.

From ship and Springbank there appeared, as if by magic, some Fechy and Fendant, not to mention Kirsch to accompany the "eats" and over the chatter later hung that convivial fug that only good stumpens can produce!

In the course of their island exploring, in these distant isles, the yacht lost its flag - which now lies many fathoms under the North Sea - but Mrs Bolliger saved the day by producing in no time a substitute made up from a red towel and snippets off a white sheet.

The Orkneys are known for their bird life - but this Swiss one, the *Vogel Gryff II*, was an unexpected and particularly welcome visitor.

Switzerland in Britain's cultural life

Monday 22 September - Luton Music Club, Library Theatre, Bridge Street, Luton, 7.30 pm - Piano Recital by *Albert Ferber* (Franck, Mozart, Chopin, Liszt, Glinka, Prokofiev, Rachmaninov).

Monday 22 September - Purcell Room 8 pm - *Poèmes d'Automne* by *Ernest Bloch* is one of the songs sung by the contralto Aafja Heynis.

Tuesday 30 September - Royal Festival Hall, 8 pm - *Martha Argerich* plays Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No 3 with the New Philharmonia Orchestra under Riccardo Muti.

From 30 September to 17 October - Goldsmith's Hall, Foster Lane, EC2; Monday-Friday 10 am-5 pm - *Montres et Bijoux*, an exhibition of antique and modern watches, clocks and jewellery from Switzerland (many of the pieces lent by the Geneva Musée de l'horlogerie).

Sunday 12 October - Queen Elizabeth Hall, 7.15 pm - Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale* (libretto by *C. F. Ramuz*) is one of the two works presented by the Richard Hickox Orchestra.

Friday 17 October - Queen Elizabeth Hall, 7.45 pm - The oboist *Heinz Holliger* is one of the soloists at the Berio 50th Birthday Concert, given by the London Sinfonietta conducted by Luciano Berio.

Tuesday 21 October - Eglise suisse de Londres, 79 Endell Street, WC2, 7.30 pm - The *Orchesterschule der Kammermusiker Zurich* (conductor: *Brenton Langbein*) and the Iverson Consort (leader: *Erich Vietheer*) perform works by Chausson, *Klaus Huber*, Mozart and Blow. Admission free; collection.

Thursday 30 October - Queen Elizabeth Hall, 7.45 pm - Recital by the pianist *Albert Ferber* (Franck, Glinka, Rachmaninov, *Ernest Bloch*, Debussy).

Thursday 20 November; Monday 24 November; Friday 28 November - Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, 7 pm - *Silvio Varviso* conducts performances of *Der Rosenkavalier*, in which *Edith Mathys* sings the part of Sophie.



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