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Swiss Welfare Office for Young People - Annual Report 1975

The 1st April 1975 was both a very nostalgic and exciting day in the history of the Welfare Office. "The Welfare Office for Swiss Girls in Great Britain" after just over 25 years gave way to the "Swiss Welfare Office for young people". All the necessary formalities had been successfully completed and the occasion was celebrated with a most enjoyable Sherry Party at the Office.

As the statistics show the number of young people seeking advice from the Welfare Office has increased steadily over the past twelve months. This has been largely due to the Welfare Office "Bus Card" which has found its way far afield. Small "Bus Posters" have been successfully distributed to a great many schools with English classes for foreigners, for display on their notice boards.

It has been our hope that agencies would distribute the Bus Cards to the young people coming to England under their auspices, but sadly they have been reluctant to do so as they fear the girls will turn to the Welfare Office rather than return to them when in need of help. In such cases we either advise the girls to get in touch with their agencies or offer to do so on their behalf. However, we are pleased to say that our relationships with many of the agencies have improved considerably during the past year.

Together with the Swiss Benevolent Society we have for the first time employed a secretary which has proved of great benefit to us both and it is hoped that the arrangement can be continued.

Once again we must express our gratitude and appreciation to our patrons; the Federal Authorities, "Freundinnen Junger Mädchen", "Pro Filia", "Swiss Benevolent Society" and many branches of "Schweizerischer Verband Evangelischer Frauenhilfe" without whose help the Welfare Office would not have been able to fulfil a fraction of its task, especially in the difficult economic times we have experienced during the past year. Fortunately we have continued to have the benefit of a rent-free office provided by the Swiss Benevolent Society, our Social Worker has been prepared to accept a lower salary than she would be able to get in Switzerland and our overheads have remained minimal.

During the past twelve months 284 young people sought help from the Welfare Office, 50 of which were Welfare cases.

	1975	1974	1973
New cases	284	248	165
Receptions	628	367	218
Visits	75	134	17
Actions	62	63	31
Escorts	11	16	13
Letters	774	667	476
Phone calls received	1118	1124	962
Phone calls made	899	1013	614

Out of the 284 new cases in 1975 were:

- 230 German speaking of which 38 were Welfare Cases
- 50 French speaking of which 11 were Welfare Cases
- 2 Italian speaking of which 1 was a Welfare Case
- 2 others.

Some of the problems were:

- Difficulties with employer or agency
- Advice on abortion
- Mental illness
- Physical illness
- Run away from home
- Personal problems
- Pregnancies
- Attempted suicide
- Difficulties with police
- Missing people
- Boyfriend problems
- Depression
- Rape
- Advice on divorce
- Court case
- Prison case

Theft of passport and money
Accusation of theft

Case from 1974 involving the adoption of a baby and helping the mother.

We would like to express our thanks to the following people and organisations who have assisted and helped us in our work during the year: The Swiss Embassy, the Ministers and helpers of the Swiss Churches, the Wardens of the Swiss and Austrian Hostels, agencies both here and in Switzerland, Swissair and British Airways, hospitals and psychiatric clinics, the British Red Cross, Crusade of Rescue, Seraphisches Liebeswerk in Solothurn, Nazareth House in Southampton, particularly Sister Francis and Nurse Farren, the Friends of the Elderly and Gentle Folk, the British Police, the Citizens' Advice Bureau and last but by no means least, the Swiss Benevolent Society for their help in assisting us with our change of name and in particular Mrs. Sharp, whose unfailing help and understanding we never fail to appreciate.

NEW PRESIDENT FOR THE LONDON SWISS PHILATELISTS

The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the London Swiss Philatelic Society took place on Wednesday, 30th June, 1976 at Swiss House and although the number of members attending was somewhat sparse, the President, Mr. Paschoud, extended a warm welcome to all and said that in view of the very hot weather prevailing he was nevertheless pleased that so many turned up.

Following the minutes of the previous A.G.M., Mr. Paschoud reported briefly on the activities of the Society during the past year, mentioning in particular the most enjoyable Annual Dinner at the Prescala Club, the successful Cup Competition in November with no less than eleven participants and won, incidentally, by Miss Grunberg, and an equally successful display of Swiss stamps by Mr. Bulstrode at the January meeting.

All these activities were fully reported in the Society's Bulletin. On a sadder note he referred to the great loss to the Society by the passing away of the Hon. member and past president, Mr. Oscar Grob, who was one of the founders of the Society. On the other hand he was pleased to report that seven new members had been admitted during the year. Mr. Paschoud concluded that he had greatly enjoyed his year as President and hoped he had served the Society well, but he felt it was time that someone else should take over the reigns.

The accounts, ably presented by the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Rothlisberger, showed a satisfactory surplus for the year, thanks mainly to the marked increase in the commission from the exchange club packets and the generous support by members for the raffle at the Annual Dinner.

Both the President's report and the accounts were accepted with acclamation and a vote of thanks was proposed to all principal officers for all the work done during the past year.

Mr. Paschoud proposed and the meeting endorsed the appointment of Mrs. Mariann Meier as chairman *pro tem* to deal with the election of a new President. Mrs. Meier, an Hon. member of the Society, admitted to being a non-philatelist but stated that she nevertheless felt she had some close connection with the "London Swiss" as her late husband had originally been instrumental with some other members of the Swiss Mercantile Society in forming a "philatelic" section and which eventually culminated in the formation of the present Society after the last war.

She thanked the meeting and said she felt honoured at having been elected into the chair *pro tem* but admitted that she could not hope to match the eloquence of the late Mr. Grob who had performed this task for so many years, but all the same hoped to be satisfactory.