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Twenty years with the Swiss Observer



Mrs Mariann Meyer . . . writing since she was 14 years old

FIFTY years ago, in November 1932, at the annual banquet and ball of the City Swiss Club at the Mayfair Hotel in London, a young Swiss girl from Liestal/BL met a young man from Zurich. They had eyes only for each other and fell helplessly in love. The stuff romantic fiction is made of . . .

In June 1935 the young couple, Walter and Mariann Meier, née Gysin, were married

and made their home in England, where they also spent the war years. They had four children and a very happy family life with many shared interests – music, sport, walking, languages, etc.

Both of them were very active in numerous London based Swiss societies and kept an open house to their many friends and people in need. Then in 1961, Walter Meier died of cancer.

In 1962 Mariann was

approached by Fred Stauffer, who had retired as editor of the Swiss Observer after 32 years, to take on his job. She agreed and edited the paper for seven years. But her association with the publication dates back to 1932 when she submitted her first contributions, a poem in German and an article in English.

In the same year, she also became a delegate to the Commission of the Swiss Abroad.

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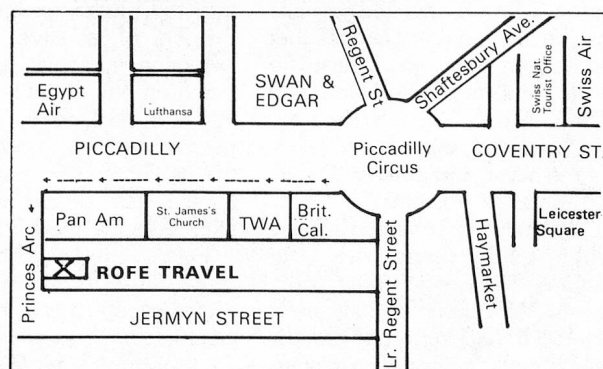
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Mariann Meier has always found time to devote to her many involvements in the Swiss colony in spite of her full and busy domestic life. She joined the Nouvelle Société Helvétique at the end of the war and has been its president since 1969.

She is a committee member of the Swiss Solidarity Fund, the Anglo-Swiss Society, the Swiss Benevolent Society, a member of the Swiss Mercantile Society, the Consistoire of the Swiss Church London, the "Frauenverein" and others.

Mariann Meier has been writing since she was 14 years old and her first article appeared in a women's magazine in Switzerland. Apart from the Swiss Observer, she has contributed to the "Echo", the magazine of the "Schweiz. Kaufmännischer Verein", etc.

In the '50s she wrote a book, "The Young Traveller in Switzerland", which was published by Phoenix and translated into several languages.

Hopefully Mariann will find time some day to write her memoirs spanning more than five decades in Britain, which should make interesting reading.

Now in her late 60s, Mariann Meier enjoys excellent health, vitality and energy, leading as busy a life as ever, and loves her rôle as travelling grandmother.

Visitors from Zug

WHEN the Manpower Services Commission, Granada Television and the Merseyside Police organised a youth five-a-side football tournament recently representatives from Belgium,

Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, Britain, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland took part.

The young Swiss teams came from the Football Club Zug and one of them got to the semi-finals.

The participants, organisers and personalities were received by the Lord Mayor of Liverpool, and the Consul General of Switzerland in Manchester gave a reception in honour of the visitors from Zug.

The young footballers and their parents were given the opportunity of meeting some of their compatriots from Liverpool and Southport at this very successful event.

'Praline King' is 90

THIS month Schwyzerclub South West and the Swiss Observer join together to send warmest birthday greetings to Mr Emil Krapf of Salisbury, who celebrates his 90th birthday on December 8.

Ruth Cole, of Schwyzerclub South West writes:

"Emil Krapf came to England from the north east of Switzerland in 1919 and worked as a confectioner in Birmingham and Cheltenham. From 1925-1947 he carried on the Swiss Café in Eastbourne, and moved later to Salisbury, where he still leads an active life.

"Besides reading, playing chess, walking and completing large jigsaw puzzles, he still produces the most delicious pralines.

"He still travels to Switzerland



Emil Krapf

for long holidays. Above all, he is a very lively member of our young Swiss Club South West. Last summer he entertained over 20

members for lunch in his lovely home town.

"We wish Emil health and happiness for the years to come."

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A look back at 1982's

THE Swiss calendar has been particularly rich in special anniversaries, and now that 1982 is drawing to a close let us mention a few of them.

The first five are historical: 630 years since Glarus and Zug joined the Confederation, and in June it was 270 years since Rousseau's birth. On August 10, 190 years ago, the Swiss guards in the service of the French king heroically defended the Tuilleries in Paris and 650 dead Swiss were left in the palace; 200 prisoners were executed barely a month later. Only some 200 got away thanks to the help of friends.

Another heroic fight took place in November 1812 when the Helvetic Legion died on the Beresina. The Canton of Baselland celebrated its 150th

anniversary in the spring. In 1832 it became independent, and although re-unification proposals were put to the people in December 1969 they were rejected and the canton proudly goes it alone.

Another 150th anniversary was celebrated by the Swiss Federal Gymnastic Society. It was founded by a group of theological students and has grown to be the largest sporting association in Switzerland - 450,000 members in 3,882 societies.

The President of the Confederation, Federal Councillor Dr Fritz Honegger, started the Jubilee Relay Race on January 1. It passed through the whole of

Switzerland over some 330 days combined with a sponsorship for funds for a gymnasium at Magglingen and the promotion of young gymnasts.

Incidentally, "Jugend und Sport" has celebrated its 10th anniversary.

The first telegraphic connection was established in Switzerland 130 years ago between Zurich and St. Gall. Five years later the largest Swiss life insurance company, the Schweizerische Lebensversicherungs- und Rentenanstalt, was founded in Zurich.

Next we come to a number of centenaries. The Salvation Army

was established in Switzerland in 1882, and they have been celebrating the jubilee by raising large sums of money for several homes and social centres.

A very important anniversary was that of the Gotthard tunnel. Swiss television showed the old film, "Der letzte Postillion von St. Gotthard", and at the Swiss Credit Bank in Zurich there was an exhibition of photos, original documents, models and various implements and tools.

The founder of the Swiss Credit Bank, Alfred Escher, was also the first president of the Gotthard railway.

The first tram in Zurich ran on

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anniversaries

September 5, 1882. A horse-drawn replica took part in the centenary celebrations, and the "Tagesanzeiger" published a series of articles describing the many aspects of the Zurich tram from its beginnings to the present.

On February 11, 1882, 65 hotel keepers founded the Swiss Hoteliers' Association. Today, it has 3,800 members.

Another organisation which has grown considerably over the past 100 years is Moebel-Pfister. Jacob and Margaretha Pfister-Christen von Zunzgen (BL) opened a workshop and sales room at the Rheingasse in Basle.

In the address book he was called "Troedler, Bettwaren-und Moebelhaendler". Today, there are 27 large centres, and a staff of 3,000 looks after the organisation and its customers in all parts of Switzerland.

The last centenary to be mentioned is that of the Waffenplatz Chur, one of Switzerland's largest and most important military training centres.

It is 90 years since the University of Fribourg was founded, and also since the Swiss composer Arthur Honegger was born.

Two 75th anniversaries took place, that of the first state domestic science college in Switzerland, the Baeuerinnenschule in Sursee, and that of the Swiss Social Archives in Zurich.

Seventy years ago, on May 29, 1912, the cutting through the Albula Tunnel was completed. On the first day of that year the Swiss Civil Code came into force, and on February 4 the same year the Swiss accident and sickness insurance law was adopted.

The 60th anniversary was celebrated by Weleda AG at Arlesheim with the opening of the new factory and centre. Also in 1922, the Gotthard line was electrified.

A number of golden jubilees took place in 1982. The Federal Office for Energy was established in Berne 50 years ago. On August 18, 1932 August Piccard undertook his second flight into the stratosphere. Duebendorf honoured the pioneer with an exhibition at its aviation museum.

Brienz and its surroundings have been the centre of wood carving for a couple of centuries, and the only Swiss college for wood sculpturing is situated

there. On the occasion of the golden jubilee of the "Berufsverband Oberlaendischer Holzschnitzerei", a special exhibition was held at the college.

In 1931 Consul Stisser founded the Gemuesebau A.G. Taegerwilen, and "Biotta", the biologically grown vegetables and juices, now celebrates its 50th anniversary. On an area of 130,000 square metres, over two million vegetable plants are produced every year, and every day some 100,000 bottles of Biotta juices are drawn off.

Fortieth anniversaries, too, have been celebrated. On January 1, 1942 the Swiss Penal

Code came into force. On the 25th of that month the Swiss electorate rejected an initiative for popular election of the Federal Council.

A few days later, the wireless station of the League of Nations, "Radio-Nations", was taken over by the Swiss broadcasting body. And it is 40 years since the farmers' masters examinations were instituted.

In April 1952 the Swiss Air Rescue Service was founded thanks to pioneering work by the St. Moritz hotelier, Fredy Wissel. In the 30 years of its existence the service has saved countless lives.

We remember dates and contemplate past events and achievements. May those who have celebrated enjoy a successful future.

Mariann Meier

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