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London's Swiss enjoy a patriotic occasion

ONCE again, the Swiss colony in London was invited to a successful National Day celebration at the Swiss Church.

Nearly 200 people packed the church and hall decorated with strings of cantonal flags on Sunday evening, July 31.

As on the same occasion last year, the official and patriotic part of the festivity was kept to a minimum. It was limited to a welcoming address by Mr Virgil Berti, chairman of the 1st August Committee, who recalled that this was to be our Ambassador's last National Day celebration with us

in London.

Thanking Mr Berti for his words of welcome, Monsieur Caillat said that the Swiss community in London was a "good colony" with a "good spirit" and that he would regret having to leave it.

Briefly referring to the situation in the motherland on this national occasion, he said that during the current month the peace agreement in the metal-working industries was being renewed for another five years.

The agreement in force for the past 50 years was an example of

the consensus by which the Swiss lived in peace and prospered.

Monsieur Caillat also stressed the need for Switzerland to defend this democratic way of life by having a strong army. In addition, it was necessary for the country to continue defending its reputation as an honest and hard working people.

Monsieur Caillat referred to the problems of the Third World and said that world stability in the future will not depend on the situation in industrialised nations but rather on what would happen in developing countries.

These two short speeches, which were delivered after a taped message by the President of the Confederation, Monsieur Pierre Aubert, to all Swiss abroad were followed by the Swiss national anthem, "Trittst im Morgenrot daher", sung by everyone in his own language.

But the official part of the evening, however essential on such an occasion, was only a fraction of the whole event which had started well over an hour before and carried on much later.

The evening was given over to

communication and merriment with a background of Alpine music.

In contrast to last year, catering was entirely organised in-house, which made it considerably cheaper and contributed to the enormous success of the veal sausages, Wienerlis, cakes, raclette, wines and other drinks aptly served by members of the 1st August Committee.

Preparing this vast amount of good food couldn't have been possible without the contribution of the Rev. Urs Steiner, youth club leader Barbara Schwartz and a great many young people whose help proved all the more indispensable when the lift bringing food from the kitchen below broke down at a hectic moment.

Everybody agreed that this was an exceptionally successful 1st August celebration proving that despite the dwindling of the colony, it is still possible to attract people in large numbers and organise lively events.

A profit of several hundred pounds was realised and it was planned to donate it to the Swiss Church. — PMB.

PETER and Debbie Bürge of Clevedon, Avon, opened their house and gardens on August 1 to many Anglo-Swiss families.

Over 40 guests enjoyed a well-planned and homely gathering, feasting on a buffet of Bratwurst, potato salad, Wäbe and coffee.

While many just mingled and chatted with old and new-found friends in the garden, which was

lit by rows of lanterns and burning torches, Peter played Swiss traditional melodies on the accordion accompanied by his daughter on the clarinet.

Fireworks, dancing, a solo of the "Rütlilied" and recorder playing by the children completed the evening festivities.

**Ruth Cole,
Schwyzerclub South-West.**

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***A message to readers
of the Swiss Observer
from Ambassador
CLAUDE CAILLAT
on his departure
from London***

KNOWING that changing posts at more or less regular intervals is at the very heart of a diplomat's profession, you might expect that leaving a country is just part of the routine. This is far from true.

It is certainly not so in my case. I cannot leave London without emotion. My career is ending at the place where it started, so to speak, for I served in London as a young Secretary during and after World War II.

This adds a special touch of harmony to my career – I have come full circle; it also means that I feel a profound sympathy with this country, its moral strength and its outstanding capacity to distinguish between the essential and the less essential.

When my wife and I have been with you, the Swiss Community – and you know what great importance we attached to those contacts – you have always given us the impression of a community which felt at ease in the country of its choice.

This has never prevented you – and why should it? – from maintaining and carefully deepening your close ties with Switzerland.

Incidentally, I have always believed that, given the many values Switzerland and the United Kingdom have in common, it was not difficult to remain a real Swiss and at the same time to feel at home in this country.

Looking back at the development of Anglo-Swiss relations since my arrival in early 1980 I am glad to note that these relations invariably have the mark of high quality, based on long standing mutual confidence.

This excellent relationship has found expression in the many meetings at ministerial and high official level over the past four years and in the very warm popular welcome given to Her Majesty the Queen in Switzerland in 1980.

I have always considered it a particular privilege to have been

involved in the preparation of that visit and to have had the opportunity of accompanying Her Majesty during her stay in our country.

Given my particular interest in economic affairs, it will come as no surprise to you that I note with especial satisfaction that Switzerland's economic presence in this country remains strong.

Swiss companies are among the most important direct investors in the United Kingdom, and that trade is favoured by the commitment of both governments to an effective free trade system. I do hope that Swiss exporters will take further advantage of this favourable framework.

Leaving a post is certainly made easier when you know your duties are being taken over by an outstanding successor. I am in this happy position and, while bidding farewell to you, I wish Ambassador François Pictet all the success he deserves.