News from the colony

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

COMMITTEE OF SWISS CATHOLICS IN LONDON: CHAPLAIN'S REPORT FOR 1973

After the worries of the year 1972 in finding and building up a new pastoral centre for the Swiss in London were over, the chaplain began to explore the best way to make it available. Right from the start it was understood that the building known as John Southworth Centre was intended to serve different groups in the neighbourhood and that the Swiss should be an integral part. Therefore he has readily accepted the task to act as chaplain of this Youth and Community Centre. Much time and devotion had to be invested in its success since the Swiss Catholic Mission has gladly accepted the hospitality and with it also a responsibility. In this way contact and mutual understanding with the local community will be established, and the Church acts as servant.

The Chaplancy for the Swiss on the second floor remained open throughout the week and welcomed the many young people who came for advice and help in various problems and sometimes just to come and say "thank you" for everything they had received during their stay in London.

Divine Services were held on weekdays for the local neighbourhood and office workers at noon and on Sundays especially for the young Swiss. The Mass at noon (11.30 a.m.) has not yet been discovered as an excellent means to find contact with the local people but it is hoped that time will help to make it more known. The evenings where the service is followed by much social activity and is held in German is still known as the main Sunday-Mass for the Swiss. Much time and preparation is involved to make the divine service meaningful and the foundation of community life. There are always signs among the young people that this is appreciated especially for the ecumenical spirit which is evident in all the Swiss Churches in London.

Though the administration of the Sacraments has always been scarce, preparation for marriage and advice has often been sought. The difficulties of the Church in finding new ways for the use of the sacrament of penitence is also felt, but there are always young people who appreciate the time given to them for a serious revision of their lives and principles.

Home-visits were few, perhaps too many other things have burdened the mind of the chaplain so that he was not always able to sense the hidden wishes. The parish magazine *Die Stimme* has offered the service and once people begin to make use of it, one priest alone will not be able to cope with the demands, he will depend on the co-operation of residents who live in the neighbourhood. He is confident that this will be readily given.

The most rewarding aspect of all the activities of the chaplian is undoubtedly the ecumenical co-operation with the ministers and members of the other Swiss churches. This co-operation has grown to a real sense of togetherness, so that everything which is done and planned is supported by the others. Regular pastoral meetings ensure the common planning and an exchange of ideas and new aspects. The ministers help one another also in the conducting of services and the chaplain serves twice a month on Sunday mornings at the Eglise Suisse. This is an aspect that makes the work for the church in London really satisfying which is to unite people and to serve them.

For the mothers and the little children there is the third Wednesday of the month at the Eglise Suisse which is more and more visited by catholic mothers too, and provides an excellent means of contact and mutual help. For the old people of the neighbourhood in SW1 the John Southworth Centre has started a club on Thursday mornings, 10.30, and the Swiss will be most welcome. They run the club themselves and publish their own newsletter which is printed by the chaplain, the *Link Up*.

Youth club activities are, as always, the most successful and occupy most of the efforts and the time of the chaplain. The excursions in late spring, summer and early autumn and especially the camp in Ireland (two weeks in horse-drawn caravans) have shown a great response and have helped to create community, mutual help and deeper understanding of life and responsibility.

Bible and discussions groups met regularly on Sundays between 4 and 6 p.m., information about life in England, about schools and au-pair problems, etc., have regularly been attended on Sundays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. The most popular activity, of course, has been the dancing after the Mass on Sundays. To make it more enjoyable courses for ballroom and modern dancing have been organised on Thursdays and were well attended.

In order to guide groupwork and study the dynamics and reaction of people in groups the ministers attended regular lessons in sensitivity training and encounter groups which led to a deeper understanding of themselves and their work.

The chaplain is very grateful to the Committee of Swiss Catholics in London, especially to its Chairman, Oscar Grob K.S.G., and the different members who assist him with their support in spiritual and financial matters. It is, however, obvious to everybody that it could never meet all the expenses involved. The youth club, especially the social evenings and the membership contributions are an essential contribution towards the running costs, rates and rents and the treasurer, Mr. B. Frei, does a tremendous job in collecting and registering the weekly contributions. The Bishops' Conference in Switzerland and through them the "Schweizerische Fastenopfer" are the other great benefactors who help to keep the work going. To them and to all the silent helpers and benefactors we owe our thanks.

We also mention gratefully His Eminence, Cardinal Heenan, the Swiss Ambassador, Mr. A. Weitnaur and the staff of the Swiss Embassy for the interest, help and co-operation and we trust that in the times to come, when extensive renovations have to be undertaken on the building, we shall not be left alone to carry the burden of our share in putting the work for our youth on a safe footing.

Paul Bossard

A NEW SWISS RESTAURANT IN SOHO

For hundreds of young people the St. Moritz Club in Wardour Street is probably the best known Swiss "institution" in London. Indeed, it is quite likely that many au pair girls and trainees who come to do their stint in London never see St. Paul's Cathedral, or the British Museum, but soon find out about the St. Moritz and make it one of their regular haunts. Lorry drivers commuting from Britain to Switzerland have made it their obligatory port of call. The people one always sees crowded round the Stammtisch, drinking Warteck beer, speaking noisily with the heavy accent which is part of our legacy, are often veteran drivers who, having covered several hundred miles, find congenial companionship at the St. Moritz.

The owner of the club, Mr. Armin Loetscher, known to his young customers as *Sweetie,* has now added another string to his bow in opening a superbly decorated restaurant at No. 161 Wardour Street, next door to his club, whose inaugural evening followed the 1st August celebration at Wimbledon.

The St. Moritz Club Restaurant, as it is called, is purposefully small (24 seats in all) and thus offers an intimate atmosphere. What is more, this atmosphere is authentically from back home. Armin's decorators have revived a mountain chalet, or Carnotzet environment with pinewood on the walls and many decorative items from rural and traditional Switzerland.

There is a beautiful ancient buffet from central Switzerland with earthenware bowls arrayed on its shelves;

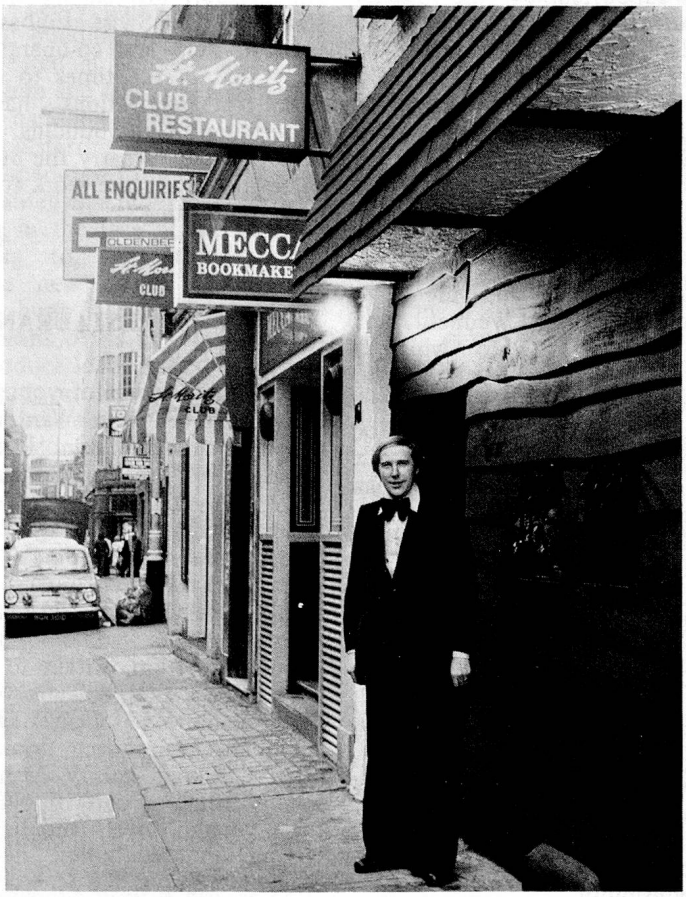
a horse headstall; cartwheels, a wooden board used for carrying loads on one's back (which I believe is called a *Raef*) and on which an old fireman's helmet is mounted.

A look at the elaborately and hand-drawn menu-card shows that the fare is fairly straightforward with nothing particularly exotic. There are some standard Swiss dishes such as *Emincé* in the Zurich fashion, Rösti, grilled Cervelas, Fondue bourguignone and neuchateloise, Bratwurst and oignons, Ramequins, Grison meat, Croute au fromage, and Jurassian-style entrecote. Prices appear to be quite standard (£1.65 for an entrecote) but VAT and service are explicitly added to the bill.

But, really, the place has an enchanting atmosphere and in view of its small size, those who intend to give it a try are well advised to make a reservation in advance. The number is 734 3324, and the entrance is about three hundred yards from Oxford Street.

To celebrate the existence of his new "child", Mr. Loetscher threw a cocktail party to his friends on Thursday, 15th August. We were glad to see that many of these friends came from the Swiss Rifle Association – what better credentials can one have – while some others were regular members of the club. We were lavishly treated with champagne and with the bounty of a well garnished hors d'oeuvre table. The star dish was without doubt an exquisite Avocado purée mixed with peanuts. Never, in our (limited) cocktail party experience, had such a function replaced supper so advantageously. We wish Armin plenty of success with his new restaurant.

P.M.B.



Mr. Armin Loetscher in front of his restaurant.

1st AUGUST CELEBRATION IN WIMBLEDON

A numerically encouraging attendance filled the Merton Town Hall to celebrate the National Day on 1st August. But the trend for these patriotic functions to become essentially youth gatherings was accentuated again this year. At least three-quarters of the 400 people who packed the floor and the galleries must have been youths, the majority of them girls. The resident members of the Colony were few and confined to the gallery while some were lost among a multitude of young people on the floor.

This fact had been predicted by the organisers who had, for this reason, reduced the ceremonial part of the evening to a minimum and left most of it open to dancing and amusement. The few residents who had come to Wimbledon regretted the omissions to the older versions of these regular and important colony functions. They regretted the somewhat limited scope of the programme. There were, for example, no more Swiss choirs from London to give a note of authenticity befitting a patriotic function like this. But the organisers couldn't be blamed for the disappearance of Swiss choirs in London, and for the rising costs which had prevented the screening of patriotic or touristic films.

Some residents went down on the floor after the end of the official part of the programme, when the evening was given to the sounds of the Old Time Jungle Cats, the Swiss Dixieland band that formed the mainstay of the evening's programme. They were discouraged by the crowds of young people which obviously put the generation gap in evidence.

One must therefore expect future National Day celebrations in London to be a meeting-place for the immense population of young people – au pair girls, language students and trainees who live in the Capital. But the 1st August Committee still hopes that residents will continue to come because this function must, after all, remain a patriotic event and can't be entirely transformed into a glorified "disco".

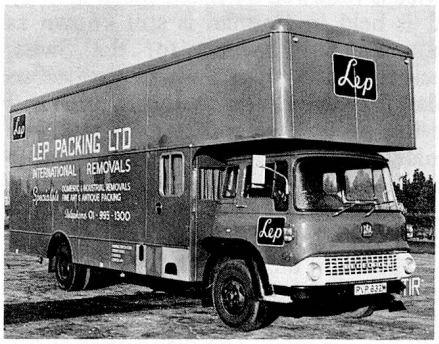
The patriotic element, although



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very much reduced compared with previous occasions, was maintained and opened with a Lesson read from Luke 19:41-44 by Father Paul Bossard, Swiss Catholic Chaplain, who officiated and compèred for the whole evening. After reading this passage on Christ's sadness at the future destruction of Jerusalem, Father Bossard said a prayer and invited the attendance to sing "Lobe den Herren", the words of which were available to all in handouts placed on everybody's seat.

The youth club of the Swiss church then led the gathering into singing three well-known songs in each of our national languages, words of which were also supplied. These songs were *Là-haut sur la montagne, Aprite le porte* and *Heisst ein Haus zum Schwizerdegen.*

A shortened version of the National Pact, which sealed the original Confederation of four cantons on 1st August, 1291 was then read. The text was as follows:

"In the Name of God, Amen! We, the people of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden, considering the evil times that are upon us and the better to protect and defend ourselves, swear upon oath to aid and succour one another mutually with our deeds and counsel, with our strong right arms and earthly goods, with all our might and soul, against each and all who do us hurt and wrong. With one voice do we swear and promise not to tolerate in our valleys the dominion of foreign overlords. None of us shall do harm unto a comrade whether to his body or to his possessions. He amongst us who shall be judged blameworthy shall repair his wrongdoing. Should discord arise between Confederates then shall our elders foregather and act as mediators. This our Covenant is drawn up for the good of all and shall, with God's help, endure forever. Delivered in the year of Our Lord one thousand two hundred and ninety-one in the beginning of the month of August."

The prayer and presentation completed, it was our Ambassador's turn to deliver his traditional speech. Dr. Albert Weitnauer spoke briefly and most appropriately. Thanks to an efficient supervision of the back of the hall, his address was not troubled by a background of chatter and clatter of glasses as was the case two years ago. Dr. Weitnauer's address is reprinted in extenso in a separate column.

Following the Ambassador's speech, the Old Time Jungle Cats, a well-known amateur Dixieland band from home which the 1st August committee had had the ingenuity of getting hold of for a moderate remuneration, performed a series of fast and swinging numbers. The official programme was closed by Father Bossard, who, standing in front of the Youth Club with all cantonal flags displayed, led the attendance into singing that most glorious of national anthems which is apparently due for replacement: *Trittst im Morgenrot daher.*

During the long pause that followed, chairs were moved to the side of the hall and people rushed to the cervelas counter and a well stocked bar. Having enjoyed a snack behind the stage, the Jungle Cats returned to action stations and launched into the second part of the programme that was to see unabated dancing until midnight.

The general consensus was that the band gloriously played in a style which has been gradually swamped by pop, soul music and various esoteric blends of modern jazz. Some had the opportunity to hear the Jungle Cats the following night as they performed at Slough's Holiday Inn Hotel during a Swiss evening which also included Fondue and Raclette for an inclusive £2.

P.M.B.

SPEECH BY DR. ALBERT WEITNAUER, SWISS AMBASSADOR

My dear compatriots,

You have come here to celebrate the birthday of Switzerland. That you should have turned up in such considerable numbers shows that you deem the occasion worth celebrating. I know full well, of course, that this is not just because of my speech which you will have to listen to for a few minutes, but also the whole programme of entertainment that is to follow, and I certainly haven't forgotten about the pleasure of dancing to the "Old Time Jungle Cats".

Still, the reason why we have gathered here on this day – the First of August – focuses everybody's attention on the country of Switzerland. With your permission I should like to reflect a little on the question whether patriotic occasions and, more than that, patriotism as such still fit into the pattern of modern life. It is true that the modern world has many problems to cope with, political, economic, social and others. On the other hand, the family of Western European nations and for that matter the Western world as a whole, is well organised, solidly structured. Therefore, it might seem, at first sight, superfluous to ruminate on the great deeds of our forefathers and even more, to emphasise the necessity for us, the Swiss of today, to concentrate on – or simply remember – the patriotic virtues which have made our country such a smooth-running, prosperous and peaceful entity, producing all we need, plenty of it and "hopefully", as many would say, more to come.

Let me express to you here my deep-felt conviction that this is not so. If Switzerland is a true democracy, if the rights of the citizens are fully safeguarded, the education of our young people at all levels taken good care of and the economic rewards of our own efforts guaranteed fully and completely – all this is only possible because Switzerland and the individual Swiss actively profess a certain political creed which is our real "raison d'être". I might say the same thing about the Western world in general but to elaborate on this would really take too long. I should like, however, to stress the importance our country of residence, the United Kingdom, attaches to the fundamental values of Western political civilisation. This country's political institutions and the way they are practised in actual fact have always provoked the admiration of the whole world, and I should like you to know that I fully share these feelings.

Coming back to our own country, may I point out how indispensable it is – in my opinion – for the Swiss of today to maintain the great qualities that have made Switzerland what it is: discipline in both the private and the public sphere, willingness to work and to work hard, to learn and to learn much and never stop learning, readiness to play one's full part as a citizen by not only taking an interest in public affairs but also contributing actively one's own share to the manifold tasks that face Switzerland. You might think that I am describing to you an ideal human being no Swiss has ever borne any resemblance to in actual fact. That is not what I meant to do. The Swiss are no saints. They have always had a very keen feeling for where their interests lie. But we had in the past – and still have in the present, I am sure – political instincts just as keen, an awareness just as great, to make us grasp the simple truth that for everything in this world we have to pay a price. Nothing should be taken for granted, nothing is just a matter of course. If I have been successful in driving home just this one point – that our country can only remain what it was and is today through the continued effort of all of us – I shall be quite content. But this effort is of a political character, and that is why I say that true patriotism is not just obsolete today. It has nothing to do with smugness, self-satisfaction or a foolish feeling of superiority. It has everything to do with a feeling of responsibility and a willingness to forge ahead and never relent in that supreme endeavour to keep our country a going concern.

I hope that this has not been an overdose of serious talk. I also hope that I have been understood as I sincerely wished to be understood. But let the programme now take over from me and lead you into a most enjoyable evening.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SWISS CHURCH: Sunday, 15th September, 11.15 a.m. Eglise Suisse, 79 Endell Street, WC2, Bilingual and Ecumenical Service on the occasion of the Federal Day of Thanksgiving and Prayer and to celebrate the *Golden Jubilee* of the German-speaking Community of the Swiss Church.

SWISS RIFLE ASSOCIATION. Next shoots on 1st September, 8th September, 6th October and 20th October.