

Swiss Catholics in London

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE

London Group

The Annual General Meeting of the London Group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique took place at the Swiss Hostel for Girls in Hampstead, N.W.3, on 20th April. The usual items were dealt with, of which the Annual Report deserves special mention. It gives an excellent picture of the activities of the society: during 1966/67 the year of the Society's Golden Jubilee, the following events had taken place: Annual General Meeting and Dinner in April; Informal Dinner with Dr. August E. Höhler, Director of "Forum" 66, Swiss TV Zurich, and Editor of "Tagesanzeiger" (April); Open Meeting with Dr. Paul Stauffer, Cultural Attaché, on "SWITZERLAND'S TESTING WAR YEARS" (May); Folkloristic Performance: "SWISS SONGS AND DANCES" by "Echo Romand" of Berne (George Hall) (July); GOLDEN JUBILEE Dinner with Dr. Gerhart Schuerch, President of the Commission of the Swiss Abroad, with piano recital by Mr. Albert Ferber (September); SWISS ARCHITECTURAL FILM (October); Open meeting, Desmond and Marjorie Parish on "FROM ZERMATT TO THE GLACIERS" with slides (October); Open Meeting, Monsieur Béat de Fischer on "DIE PSYCHOLOGIE EINES SCHWEIZERISCHEN DIPLOMATEN" (November); SOIREE FAMILIALE (December); Informal Dinner with Mr. Hermann Boeschstein, on "PRESENT POLITICAL PROBLEMS AND EVENTS IN SWITZERLAND" (January 1967); ANNUAL FILM SHOW (January); Open Meeting, Dr. Peter Gessler, Director of Studies, Boldern, Zurich, on "DIE SCHWEIZ — EIN EINWANDERUNGSLAND" (February); Open Meeting, Oberstdivisionär K. Brunner, on "SWISS NEUTRALITY AND DEFENCE" (March); Informal Dinner, Prof. Jacob Steiner (Münster), on "SCHWEIZERISCHE LITERATUR DER GEGENWART" (March); Informal Dinner, Ambassador E. Stadelhofer, on CUBA (April).

From the report, it could also be seen that the London Group of the N.S.H. had lost 15 members, amongst them the Swiss Ambassador Monsieur de Fischer, the former Hon. Secretary, Monsieur Bringolf, and Miss R. Preiswerk, Warden of the Hostel. Admissions during the year numbered 11. On presenting the report, the President, Dr. H. W. Egli, appealed for a special effort to enlist more members either as full members (all Swiss over 21) or as junior members (above 16) or as associate members (former Swiss). The annual subscription was left at 25/-, and the Council was elected by the meeting. (President: Dr. H. W. Egli, Vice-President: Mr. R. Baumann, Hon. Treasurer: Mr. L. S. R. Asch, and Hon. Secretary: Mr. A. R. Dissler, have since been confirmed in office by the Council).

The meeting accepted a report by the delegate for Great Britain South to the Commission of the Swiss Abroad (Mrs. Mariann Meier), and the President made an appeal for subscriptions to the "Echo": He pointed out that this monthly periodical in three of our national languages was an excellent complement to the "Swiss Observer" which was mainly in English. ("Echo" published by the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, 3000 Berne, at 15/- for either the French or German

edition, and 21/- for the bi-lingual publication, payable in sterling).

At the Dinner following the Annual Meeting, the Swiss Ambassador, Monsieur Olivier Long, addressed the members. He expressed pleasure at having been made Honorary President of such an important society which had the interest of Switzerland so much at heart.

It has become a tradition that all ladies attending the N.S.H. Annual Dinner are given a present by an anonymous donor. This year, attractive scarves were distributed, and the delight of the recipients added to the enjoyable atmosphere.

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SWISS CATHOLICS IN LONDON

The Annual General Meeting for the year 1966 was held on Sunday, 9th April 1967, at Westminster Ballroom, 30 Stratton Ground, London S.W.1. After opening prayers, the Chairman Mr. O. Grob extended a warm welcome to all present. He thanked His Excellency, Monsieur Olivier Long for having honoured us with his presence and offered him our heartiest congratulations on his appointment as Ambassador of the Swiss Confederation to the Court of St. James's and best wishes for Monsieur Long's continued success in this new position. May his and Madame Long's stay in London be a pleasant one.

We mourn the loss of the following friends:

Mr. Léon Jobin, a great benefactor and supporter of our Mission and our Youth Club, and

Robert Schweizer, K.C.S.S., a member of our Committee from 1962.

Prayers were said for the repose of their souls and for the Rt. Rev. George L. Craven, M.C., V.G., Bishop of Sepastopolis, Provost of the Westminster Chapter, who died on 15th March. Bishop Craven has always been a very good friend of the Swiss Catholics in London, who will treasure his memory.

The Chairman stated in his report that 1966 can be recorded again as a year of steady progress in the activities of the Swiss Catholic Community, in which both permanent and temporary Swiss residents took an active part.

His Excellency Monsieur Béat de Fischer retired at the end of 1966. During his term of office, he and Madame de Fischer always showed keen interest in all our activities. We express to them our sincerest thanks and appreciation for the valuable support always so readily given to us. We wish them both a very happy and long retirement. We also thank other members of the Embassy for their welcome support.

We wish to thank the Editor of "The Swiss Observer" Mrs. Mariann Meier, and the publishers for accepting our appeals and reports on our social activities during the year.

The Chaplain, the Rev. Father Joseph Scherer said the following in his report:

Our foremost duties are the priestly ones: worship, sermon and administration of the sacraments. So we held regularly our Sunday Evening Service for the Swiss people; Holy Mass and Sermon in German and French; this was mostly attended by the young ones, and according to the seasons really satisfactorily. Opportunity for Confession was given regularly and on call.

Seven children of Swiss descent were baptised, two boys given special instruction for their First Confession and Communion. Two prospective converts were instructed through the year. One funeral had to be conducted at the Streatham Crematorium. Eight couples received the preparatory instruction for marriage; five marriages were solemnized by the Chaplain.

Four times a year the Swiss Catholics domiciled in this country whose addresses are known to us were invited to a special Swiss Service: after Easter in connection with the Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Catholics in London, for the First-of-August Celebration and the Swiss National Day of Prayer and after Christmas. The attendance of the permanent resident Swiss Catholics could and should be better.

Frequently, we were able to give advice in spiritual and material need. Also through the past year we were called to visit sick compatriots in hospitals and homes; These visits were more frequent than ever before, even outside London. Pastoral visits to families were more numerous, too.

Much work had to be done by correspondence *viz.* letters of welcome to the hundreds of newcomers whose addresses we received from them or their respective families or agencies. These letters offered also information about facilities regarding Holy Mass, confession in our native languages at other churches and information about our Swiss Catholic Youth Club.

Very often we had enquiries about employment and families to stay with from people wishing to come over and learn English. As we do not run an agency we had to direct those letters to the respective Swiss offices at home or in this country. Only occasionally were we in a position to help.

A very important part of our pastoral work is the Swiss Catholic Youth Club. Most of our young people who attended our Sunday Evening Service at St. Ann's Church gather later at the Westminster Ballroom, for the Club's Social Evening, joined by others. Every fortnight a dance was held; on the other Sundays we arranged talks, film and slide shows, raffles, etc., often we sang Swiss songs. During the summer excursions to Canterbury, Oxford, the Isle of Wight, Kew Gardens and a Surprise Country Walk were organised. The number of participants rose from 80 (Canterbury and Country Walk) to 160 (Oxford and Isle of Wight). Twice we visited the Tower of London, twice the Houses of Parliament in Session (once with 90 participants), and four times Westminster Abbey. We had an impressive First-of-August Celebration, a *Kilbi* (*kermesse*) in October, and a happy St. Nicholas Day. On each of these three occasions 250 young compatriots enjoyed these genuine Swiss functions. A very fine celebration on Christmas Eve led all 140 of us to think we were in the warm atmosphere of a loving Swiss family where the spiritual and the material sides played their happy part. For the Chaplain the Club Meetings give a good opportunity for making personal contact with the young compatriots. The traditional Swiss Christmas Service was held on 15th January. It was followed by the Swiss Catholic Children's New Year Party at our Club Hall, which followed our already well proved line and gave much pleasure to the children (who received gift bags with Swiss chocolate and sweets and a nice toy) and to their parents and friends.

One outstanding event of the past year must not be forgotten. In recognition of his sterling work for the Swiss Catholics in London and his work as a Catholic layman

our Chairman Mr. Oscar Grob, was created a Knight of the Order of St. Gregory the Great by His Holiness Pope Paul VI). On 12th July 1966 we celebrated this happy event when at a Dinner at the Dorchester Hotel, His Lordship Bishop P. Casey, V.G. Auxiliary to Westminster, presented him with the Insignia of the Order and the Papal Brief of Appointment. Surrounded by more than eighty relatives and friends, Swiss and British of both denominations, our Chairman must have realised the true affection of all present for him. Quite a number of speakers congratulated him on the honour bestowed on him and praised his work. The new Knight of St. Gregory replied to the kind words and wishes in an endearing and original way.

For this past year we have to thank God our Lord for His love and His protection. In this Report we can relate the external work and the visible happenings. How much these things have been God's instruments of salvation, He alone knows. We are grateful to Him that He has called us and let us do something for Him.

We wish to express our most sincere thanks to His Eminence Cardinal Heenan, Archbishop of Westminster, His Lordship Bishop Ellis of Nottingham, the Chairman of the National Council of Migration, under whose authority the foreign priests in this country work and to the Right Reverend Mgr. A. Rivers, Secretary of the Council, for their support given to our cause.

Not less grateful are our thanks to their Lordships the Swiss Bishops, especially to their Dean, Bishop Angelo Jelmini, and my own very generous Bishop, Dr. Franciscus von Streng. We would be most ungrateful if we did not mention the Swiss "Sekretariat für Auslandseelsorge", its Secretary, Right Reverend Mgr. K. Boxler and its Hon. Treasurer, Right Reverend Dr. J. Bannwart for their understanding and help, and the Swiss Lenten Action which supports us so well.

It would not be good and proper to close this Report without thanking our Committee, headed by its untiring Chairman, Mr. O. Grob, K.S.G., and all who helped us in our work during the past year. Here we also thankfully remember the friends of the Swiss Catholic Youth Club, Messrs. Ronus, Käufeler, Bartholdi, Bazzani and the Misses L. Huber and E. Mühlebach for their great generosity. Let a last word of thanks be expressed to all the members of the Youth Club who worked for the good of the Club.

The Chairman and the Chaplain were thanked for their report.

The Finance Report was given by our Hon. Treasurer, Mrs. K. A. Grob. Thanks to the generosity of all our friends, the sale of tickets and donations received for our Christmas Draw 1966 produced an income of £292.1.5. With this amount, the contributions from 68 Donors, the Church Collections and Income Tax recovered on Covenants we had a Total Income of £712.17.9 against our Expenditures of £829.0.2, resulting in a deficit of £116.2.5 for the year.

We learned with great sorrow of the death on the 1st April 1966 of our friend Mr. Jean Jordan, a former Committee Member. Mr. Jordan had retired in 1960 to his native town Neuchâtel. With gratitude it can be reported that he left us a legacy of Fr.s. 5,000.—, which we have put into a JEAN JORDAN MEMORIAL FUND, thus signifying to our members the generosity of our dearly beloved friend and benefactor.

The adoption of the accounts was proposed by Mr. E. Bonvin and seconded by Mr. E. Käufeler and unanimously passed by the meeting, with thanks to the Hon. Treasurer.

The Chairman thanked the Chaplain, the officers and members of the Committee for their loyal support during the past year. He especially mentioned the good work rendered by our Hon. Treasurer Mrs. K. A. Grob, who acted as the Promoter of our very successful Christmas Draw.

As all the retiring members of the Committee had offered themselves for re-election, the meeting elected them unanimously for the ensuing year. Furthermore Mr. G. Bazzani was proposed as a Committee member and Madame J. D. Grandjean as a member of the Ladies Committee and both were duly elected.

The final composition of the Committee for 1967 is as follows: Chaplain: The Rev. Father Joseph Scherer; Chairman: Oscar Grob, K.S.G.; Vice-Chairman: Mr. E. Bonvin; Hon. Treasurer: Mrs. K. A. Grob; Hon. Secretary: Mr. E. P. Siegfried; Members: Miss C. Affentranger, Miss L. Bonetti, Mrs. F. McKenna, Messrs. L. F. Ackermann, G. Bartholdi, G. Bazzani, J. J. Boos, K.S.G., I. R. Daetwiler, F. de Maria, E. Eha, E. Frey, J. R. Gächter, C. Gallo, J. D. Grandjean, R. E. Gut, P. Jacomelli, E. Käufeler, L. W. Krucker, M. Schneebeli and R. Voegtli.

The Ladies Committee consists of Mrs. E. Bonvin, Chairman; Miss C. Affentranger, Miss L. Bonetti, Mrs. C. T. O. Clarke, Mrs. G. Gallo, Mrs. J. D. Grandjean, Mrs. K. A. Grob, Mrs. E. Käufeler and Mrs. F. McKenna.

It was decided to hold a Christmas Draw again in 1967 instead of a Bazaar.

On 25th January 1967 AN HOUR OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY was held at our Church, together with our Brethren of the Reformed Swiss Church (French and German speaking Communities). This unique Service, which must be the first of its kind in the Swiss Colony, was simple but impressive and was well attended by members of both denominations. Both the Consistoire of the Swiss Church and our Committee, as well the Embassy, were represented.

Finally the Chaplain thanked Mr. Grob for conducting the meeting which was followed by the Easter Service at St. Ann's Church and a social gathering afterwards at the Westminster Ballroom.

E.S.

SWISS ARTISTS IN LONDON

Hans-Martin Linde, an excellent recorder player from Switzerland, gave a Recital at the Purcell Room on Saturday, 18th March. He played one of his own compositions "Phantasien und Scherzi" (1963) for solo recorder. He was accompanied on the harpsichord by Walter Bergmann.

Heinz-Roland Schneeberger, well-known Swiss organist, gave an Organ Recital at the Church of St. Mary Le Bow in Cheapside on 3rd April.

Albert Ferber, our eminent compatriot resident in London, gave a most successful concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on Tuesday, 2nd May. The large hall was well-filled, and the audience applauded Mr. Ferber's performance as enthusiastically as the critics received it, especially his Debussy, Poulenc and Frank Martin — "a convinced and convincing interpretation". "The Times" wrote: "By and large this century's music seemed to mean much more to him. Three pieces from *Images* delicately evoked Debussy's world of halflights and undefined mystery, and here Mr. Ferber's expositive skill matched the composer's especially in the aquatic ripples of the far from metallic *Poissons d'Or*."

CITY SWISS CLUB NEWS

The City Swiss Club in London held its Annual General Meeting at the Dorchester on 25th April. Edgar Bonvin, the retiring President welcomed the guests and especially our new Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Monsieur Olivier Long.

Edgar Bonvin thanked the members for the splendid turn-out on his departure. This will be a great loss to us all as we always enjoyed his jovial and efficient direction of the affairs of the Club. We should all like to thank him very much for the enormous care with which he presided over the Club in the past year and for the many hours he spent on conducting our meetings and social events.

During his address, Mr. Bonvin mentioned that the annual Summer Evening of the Club would take place on 30th June at "Monkey Island" near Bray and he expressed his confidence that all the members would give this event their wholehearted support by being there. Details will be sent out in the near future to all members with particulars of how to reach this delightful Thames-side place.

Mr. A. Kuhn, our Honorary Treasurer, read out the financial report for the year ending 31st March 1967. During his speech he mentioned that the Club House Funds had remained remarkably stable in spite of the strain through which some of our private investments must have gone during this difficult year.

After that, our new President, Mr. C. Nater, addressed the meeting. We all wish him a happy year in office. Donations and Subscriptions were voted for, by which the Club contributed to the French and German Protestant Churches and the Catholic Church in London, as well as the Swiss Benevolent Society.

Looking forward to the meetings in the coming year, the President mentioned that the next meeting in May would be a Card Meeting and that we were also looking forward very much to seeing H.E. The Swiss Ambassador and Madame Long at our *Soirée Familiale*. One of the members mentioned that it would be very useful to all of us to have a list of members available for reference. The President agreed to such a proposal and he asked the support of the members of the club.

To achieve this it will be necessary for the members to fill in the address cards correctly and fully when they are sent to them. May we count here on the fullest support from our members.

R.M.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We wish to thank the following subscribers for sending donations in addition to their subscriptions and/or for taking out or renewing gift subscriptions to friends or old-age pensioners:

Miss B. I. Deutsch, Mrs. S. Dibsedale, Mrs. H. Grant, Mrs. R. H. Manning, Mrs. O. H. Morton, Mrs. H. Philipps, Miss C. J. Schweizer, Mrs. T. Tanner, Miss Sophie Wyss, Monsieur G. Franel and Messrs. F. E. Brunner, A. Bussmann, F. Conrad, L. J. Faivre, J. Frei, E. J. Howell, E. Kuebler (Winterthur), H. H. Landolf, P. Lequint, E. Rietmann, R. A. Schmid (The Hague), H. Schwander (Basle), E. Schwenter, J. Steiner, A. Steinmann (Basle), A. C. E. Wander.

We are most grateful for their kind and welcome support.