

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1972)

Heft: 1641

Rubrik: Swiss church

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SWISS CHURCH ASSEMBLY

The Swiss Protestant parish in London held its Annual Assembly on 4th June. This year the "Journée d'Eglise" broke with tradition. After a masterly sermon to the united French- and German-speaking parishes delivered by Pastor Claude Reverdin, former Minister in London, the congregation remained in the church to carry out its Annual Assembly. It was over in about half an hour, a record in the annals of the Swiss Church. The two linguistic parishes hadn't assembled beforehand, as in previous years, because they had held their respective parish assemblies after service the previous week.

There was remarkably little discussion and the parishioners present did not appear particularly excited by the developments of their church. But the atmosphere livened up during the lunch, which was held afterwards. There were so many people of both languages and every generation that part of the attendance had to take lunch in the church.

The previous evening, the French-Swiss parish had invited its German-speaking brethren to a dinner and a talk on the "life of the Swiss churches at home" given by Pastor Reverdin, who is currently Moderator of the pastors of Geneva. In a long and

detailed exposé he touched on nearly all the spiritual, sociological and political aspects of church life in Switzerland. The most striking feature that emerged from his description was the novel work achieved in many parishes with old people. Also interesting was the speaker's account of the impact of broadcasted religious services. A discussion followed in which the position of the churches regarding the various anti-Militarist declarations voiced recently in ecclesiastical and university circles was brought up by many parishioners.

On Saturday, 10th June, the "Doyens" of the French-speaking parish went out on their Annual Outing. There were enough of them to fill the coach which drove down to the castle of Polesden Lacey, and then to Leith Hill, where they had tea. The outing was a most successful one with plenty of laughing and singing. As usual it was made possible by the selfless co-operation of Mr. Gabriel Godet.

SWISS MACHINE-TOOL FIRM HOLDS EXHIBITION IN SUSSEX

The opening of a three week machine-tool exhibition in the showrooms of *Matchless Machines Limited*, Horsham, Sussex, was a marking Swiss and technological event. On 9th June, this Swiss-founded firm organised a Press preview, a tour of its premises and a cheese and wine party in a specially erected tent to mark the opening of the exhibition.

The British technical press was well represented. Principals of the firm, which has several prestigious agencies, had sent their engineers from Switzerland and Dr. J. A. Iselin, Plenipotentiary Minister at the Embassy had come from London to make the opening speech. Also from London were Dr. Carlo Jagmetti and Mr. R. M. Suess.

The visitors were guided through the showrooms to admire an array of glistening and expensive machine-tools, many of which were exhibited for the first time in this country. They were shown the workshops where machines, some of them actually sent in from abroad, are reconditioned and given a new lease of life, and were guided to the "job shop" where the firm carries out profiling and machining work for customers.

This workshop has highly sophisticated "electrical discharge" (or spark erosion) machines. These are some of the main items sold by the firm. Leaders in spark erosion machines are Agietronic, a Tessin-based company for which *Matchless Machines* act as U.K. sales and servicing agents. The firm has already sold over 500 in this country and controls about 50 per cent of the market for this category of machine. The only other Swiss firm making comparable ones, but on a much smaller scale, is Charmilles, of Geneva.

Instead of using a metallic cutting tool, a spark erosion machine cuts the workpiece to the desired shape by chipping its particles away by electric discharge. The guests at the Press review saw the principle explained by TV personality, Raymond Baxter, in a BBC film shown last January in the "Tomorrow's World" programme. Explaining the working of an entirely new Swiss computer controlled machine-tool to fifty million viewers, Mr. Baxter had to make a few "simplifying floaters" such as saying that "electric discharge" was the same thing as "heat generation". An engineer at the preview told me that Raymond Baxter required a prolonged briefing session before learning his lecture by heart. The film had been made in London where the machine had been specially transported from Horsham. Mr. Baxter also said that the model had been "conceived in Britain". But this misplaced patriotic assertion didn't appear to offend the wife of the inventor of the device as she stood proudly watching the film.

Founded in 1954 and launching its production by producing curtain-like objects, *Matchless Machines* has grown into a highly specialised and compact firm employing 85 technicians. It was started by Mr. J. A. Seiffert, who has now retired but remains Chairman, and is currently managed by his son, John P. Seiffert, an HTL graduate from Winterthur and a deep lover of machines. *Matchless* have the U.K. agency of a number of Swiss companies, in particular, *Studer*, *Wahli*, *Agathon* and *Ewag*. Besides spark erosion machines, much of its sales business is concentrated on a variety of most elaborate and ingenious grinding machines costing £8,000 or more. The firms represented by *Matchless* are all individually the Rolls Royces' of grinding machines.

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