

Swiss Embroidery Centenary

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objektyp: **Article**

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

Band (Jahr): - **(1930)**

Heft 437

PDF erstellt am: **11.07.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-689825>

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SWISS EMBROIDERY CENTENARY.

One hundred years now have passed since the first embroidery machine was brought to St. Gall. This machine, though by no means perfect, was destined to revolutionize the Swiss embroidery industry. It had been constructed at Mulhausen, in Alsace, by a certain Josué Heilmann, who subsequently sold two similar but improved machines to François Mange, a St. Gall industrialist, who stipulated that Heilmann should sell no other machine of the same kind either in Switzerland or within fifty mile of that country. Mange made some improvements in these machines but was still dissatisfied with them. One of his successors, Rittmeyer, made further experiments, and, about 1840, produced a machine which proved excellent. The Swiss embroidery industry then began to develop rapidly. Its products were exported to all countries of the world, particularly to America, and, until recent years, it was one of the most flourishing among Swiss industries. Its output ranges from handkerchiefs to dress goods and fancy and novel embroideries.

A few years ago there were 1,850 embroidery establishments in Switzerland with 23,000 machines and some 60,000 workpeople. Exports, which totalled about £17,000,000 in value in 1919 and £16,500,000 in 1920, have since progressively dropped to £4,300,000 in 1927 and £4,200,000 in 1928, while the total in 1929 will probably be only £4,000,000. The decline in the industry since 1920 is attributable mainly to changes in fashion, and also to the levy of import duties in Great Britain. Nearly one half of the workshops have been closed or converted to the production of other goods, and the number of persons employed is not at present over 17,000. There is no sign of any improvement in the Swiss embroidery industry, which now seems doomed unless a change in fashion should give it a new impetus. (The Times.)

INDESTRUCTIBLE BANKNOTES.

A remarkable process for making banknotes which, it is claimed, cannot be worn out, torn or ignited, has recently been perfected by a distinguished Swiss scientist, M. C. Schoop, of Zurich.

The process consists of coating paper pulp with tin. The metal is fused at a suitable temperature, then applied to the pulp by means of a special atomiser, which breaks it up into minute particles. All previous efforts to metallise paper have injured its fibre, but this problem, it is claimed, has been overcome by the new process. Other metals, such as copper and aluminium, can also be applied to paper.

The metallised paper plates, which despite their hardness are elastic, will find, it is stated, wide employment in telephone and radio technique, but the inventor's primary object has been to produce a banknote that cannot be worn out or easily damaged. By use of definite alloys for metallising the note paper, the counterfeiting of such banknotes can, it is asserted, be made impossible. World's Paper Trade Review.

TIPS.

From a letter to the Times:

During each of the last six summers I have spent five of six weeks in Switzerland at hotels where the 10 per cent. system is now in force. We have stayed at Hotel A six years in succession; at Hotel B five years out of six; at Hotel C three years in succession. We give no tips beyond the 10 per cent., and have always been made welcome on return visits. I infer that the system works perfectly well if only the visitors will play the game. I have discussed the matter with the proprietor of Hotel A, a modest establishment, where 10 per cent. means a comparatively small sum. He said:—"Ten per cent. is ample, and I wish my guests would leave it at that. If they give an extra five francs to some individual member of the staff, the others come to me and complain that they do not get their share of it. Extra gifts are not merely unnecessary, they cause trouble." Where a party is large or a long stay is made, I suggest that 8 per cent. is often enough.—Mr. F. REXFIELD, 10, Old-square, Lincoln's Inn, W.C.2.

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Doings in Our Colony.

SWISS SPORTS.

On Thursday, February 20th, a Meeting of Delegates was held at the Swiss Club, 74, Charlotte Street, W.1. Mr. C. A. Barbezat, President, was in the Chair.

The list of events for the Meeting to be held at Herne Hill on Saturday May 24th was agreed to. Only two alterations were made in last year's programme, namely a Cigarette Race and a Blindfold Race will take the place of the Thread and Needle Race and the Wheelbarrow Race.

It was agreed that the Swiss Gymnastic Society organize a Gymnastic Competition and that the Prizes be distributed at Herne Hill. Also that the Wrestling Preliminaries should form part of this Competition and that only the Finals in each Category should take place at Herne Hill. The Shooting Competition organized by the Swiss Rifle Association and the Skittle Competition organized by the A.1. Skittle Club will also be held as usual with Prize distribution at Herne Hill.

Thursday May 8th was fixed as the last date for receiving entry forms. The next Delegates Meeting was fixed for Thursday May 15th at the Swiss Club, 74, Charlotte Street, W.1. P.D.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

The life of a Press Reporter is not an easy one (is it, ck.?), but the life of a Press Reporter ad interim is a —, no, I won't say it, I won't even think it and so trust to avoid further trouble for the Editor through his mailbag! When you have the honour of an appointment ad int. and your chief still present, you naturally believe your task has not yet begun. The mighty chief however thinks different and drops his pen with such alacrity as to constitute a grand omen for the success of that venture in America which is the cause of his temporary eclipse. You, gentle Reader (if any), reaped the full benefit of this confusion:—There was no report!

But the tragedy of it is that, whereas the February Meeting was full of interesting items, things of such tremendous importance as can only be fully visualised by the more regular attendants at C.S.C. monthly meetings, March came like Mary's proverbial little lamb. (This is another Mary!). Whether it was due to the absence of the "big noise" on the Left or due to the members being somewhat overawed by the formidable array of Committee-Members, complete with President in snug and close-fitting morning-coat, white spats (I am not quite sure on that latter point, finding it rather embarrassing to pursue my researches in too doggish a manner), or whatever may have been the cause, nothing, really nothing happened. Or, is it due to the quiet and unobtrusive manner in which our Committee, like the "silent Swiss Navy" performs such wonders? Yes, that's it! It transpired that the Club had great pleasure in making good certain deficits on our last two social functions. Now this should be important, for at last we have an answer here to those pertinent or impertinent (take your choice, Gentlemen) questions: "What do I get for my subscription?" Evidently those members attending at the May Fair at long last got something for their fees, got something for nothing. And let me remind you "en passant," there is another Dinner and Dance on March 22nd, again at the May Fair Hotel, where once more every member attending will get a similar reward, but you cannot take it away with you!

Oh yes, there was the usual surprise item! The genial Founder of the Swiss Observer completed his twenty-fifth year of membership of the C.S.C. and the meeting sang with gusto and moreover, meant it: "For he is a jolly good fellow!" Luckily no reminiscences were inflicted upon us, our gallant friend not having had due "notice" of the question. But he promptly proceeded to prove to some unfortunate victims that 25 years in the C.S.C. make a finished Bridge-Player of you. My dear partner, therein lies our hope! M. G.

Soirée Dansante Du City Swiss Club.

Comme suite à l'article paru dans le dernier numéro du "Swiss Observer," le Comité a le plaisir d'annoncer qu'à la demande générale, la Soirée Dansante du 22 mars aura lieu au May Fair Hotel.

NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE.

In reviewing the activities of the London Group of the N.S.H., I am pleased to see that these have provided further proof of the fact that this society has its uses in time of peace as well as during the difficult years of the war. We do not claim to have done anything of outstanding import, but we can say that we have honestly endeavoured to promote the aims and objects of our society, as in former years. It is encouraging and gratifying to note that very few resignations have taken place, and these mostly because of final departure from England. With the present membership of 163, we have actually 7

members more than last year. A very particular pleasure has been the enrolment as members of the Ladies and Gentlemen of the Legation Staff.

The Council met nine times during the year, on the evening of the third Wednesday in every month, with the exception of the three holiday months of July, August and September. The practice of disposing of all business matters in full Council, thereby abolishing Committee meetings separately, and which had been established in 1928, has been continued with success.

The lending of books from our library has been increased, but Members are reminded again that, although part of the library has been dispersed on moving into the present quarters, we still possess a large number of interesting books available on loan. Grateful thanks are expressed to various associations and public bodies, both here and in Switzerland, for publications and printed matter sent to us.

I again deplore the fact that our monthly meetings are not better attended. These meetings are invariably full of interest, and we have been given a series of most excellent causeries; some of these have, in fact, been more of the nature of a considered and prepared lecture, imparting a wealth of information and pleasure, and they were evidently highly appreciated by the S.M.S. students and our own members present. The following is a list of these causeries:—

March 28th.—The Rev. Hoffmann-de Visme: "La Suisse et les Services Etrangers."

April 17th.—Mr. W. de Bourg, First Secretary of Legation: "La Peinture Suisse depuis la Renaissance."

May 15th.—Mr. Robert Schiess: "Life in the Swiss Papal Guard in Rome."

June 19th.—Dr. Lancel, of the French Hospital: "Dr. Tronchin, famous physician of Geneva."

Dec. 18th.—Dr. Charles Ferrière: "The Swiss National Park."

As a rule, no special invitations to the causeries are issued, but their dates are always announced in the Swiss Observer well in advance.

After a good deal of difficulty, we were fortunate in being able to arrange a show of the famous N.S.H. film "A travers la Suisse," in three performances at the King George's Hall, Tottenham Court Road, London. Our Minister very kindly gave proof of his interest in the undertaking by opening one of the performances with a happy speech. It has been estimated that close on 1,800 members of the London Colony witnessed this magnificent film featuring the natural beauty, the spirit of enterprise and progress and the important industries of Switzerland. The Council has been so heartened by the success of this first film-show, that it has been decided to develop along this line and show more Swiss films in the course of this year. Such arrangements are now being made and will be fully advertised in the Swiss Observer.

A host of minor matters have been attended to by the Council during the session, but among these mention must be made of an effort to establish, in conjunction with the Mother Society and the "Pro Juventute" Association, a holiday colony in Switzerland for English born Swiss children, for whom it would otherwise be impossible to get to know the land of their fathers. I regret to say that we have failed in this first attempt, but we shall persevere with the proposition until the ideal becomes an established fact.

It is with keen pleasure that I can speak of the unbroken cordiality of our relations with the Swiss Legation and the various societies and bodies of our own nationality in London. From the first named, we have, as always, received the greatest possible help and encouragement, and among the latter, we would specially mention the Swiss Mercantile Society, under whose hospitable roof we are flourishing in peace and comfort. We tender our special thanks to the societies who have invited your president to their annual banquets and dinners which I, as your representative, have particular reason and pleasure to express. Of these banquets, the finest and most inspiring was the one given by the City Swiss Club in honour of Mr. Giuseppe Motta, Federal Councillor, at the May Fair Hotel.

Our relations with our Mother Society at home, as well as the Sister Groups abroad, have become closer and more intimate during the year under review. The latter, in particular, have greatly appreciated the New Year's greetings which we sent to all of them for the first time. Their answers show how keenly alive they are to a still closer knitting of the bonds which hold us together, no matter how far apart we may be geographically.

Helvetica dignitate ac securitate.

A. FRED. SUTER.

