

# George Forrer

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## NEWS FROM THE COLONY.

## THE SOCIAL SEASON

In accordance with the still difficult times, the Swiss Societies in London, have curtailed their social functions to a minimum. Apart from the most successful Annual Banquet of the City Swiss Club, at the Grosvenor House, last November, where a record attendance was registered, no large Banquet has been held since. Various Societies had their, Cinderella or Fancy Dress Dances, Annual Concerts, etc., which were, on the whole fairly well attended.

The next important function in the Colony, will be the Annual Banquet and Ball of the Swiss Mercantile Society, which will take place on Saturday, February 3rd, at the Midland Grand Hotel. Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, the Swiss Minister will be in the Chair.

The Swiss Mercantile Society needs hardly any introduction, during the last few years they have gone from success to success; they have built up an organisation which can claim the admiration of everyone of our compatriots in this hospitable island, and one does not exaggerate, when one speaks of their work and achievements, as of national importance.

It is all the more to be regretted, that so many of the members, especially the older ones, show but little interest in the working of this institution. The Meetings are badly attended, and the same is to be said about the very interesting lectures, given by well-known lecturers. The Society is spending large amounts on procuring first class men to lecture on various subjects of general interest, and their laudable endeavours surely deserve a better reward.

Whatever the justifications are, for not attending the meetings or lectures, there should be none whatever in attending the Annual Banquet of this Society. The various committees, throughout the years have been working hard, and giving their services and work freely, and it is only right that they should get an acknowledgment for their services rendered.

This can best be done by attending their Annual Banquet, by doing so they will feel that their work is appreciated, and that they have still the support of the large masses of the Colony. We feel sure that such a spontaneous support will be greatly appreciated by all those who, throughout the year, are so generously and unselfishly working in the interest of the Society.

Furthermore the coming Annual Banquet is a splendid opportunity to re-unite once again old friends and members, and I would like to make a passionate appeal to some of my one-time co-workers in the Society, to come along and spend a few happy hours amongst the younger elite.

I feel sure that in doing so, they would pass a most enjoyable evening, and old and dear remembrances could be exchanged, old friendships could be cemented and new ones made. I have been informed from competent quarters, that the speech making will take but little time (the dancing is to start at 9.30) and therefore this excuse for not attending, which is so often used, will not hold good.

Let us hope then, that this event will also register a record attendance, the Society and their leaders fully deserve this support.

They ask you for it, and I feel confident that you are not going to let them down. The invitation to take part in this Annual event is extended to all friends, whether members or not, in the Swiss Colony. Therefore "Auf Wiedersehen" at the Midland Hotel!

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## RECEPTION AT THE LEGATION.

Last Friday evening, the Swiss Minister and Madame Paravicini gave a reception to the Members of the Swiss Colony, at Bryanston Square, W.

## CITY SWISS CLUB.

The January Meeting of the City Swiss Club was marked by the cordiality with which the members wished each other a happy and prosperous New Year, and the calm and peaceful atmosphere in which the business on the Agenda was dispatched.

No resignations, no admissions, nothing. Where are the days when discussions were long and heated and the Reporter's job an easy one? Nowadays there is little for him to do except to gaze at the picture of the late King Edward which hangs in the room in which we meet, and admire once again the rich colour of the King's tunic. Alas, these are degenerate days and artists no longer paint as once they did.

I do not know if it was the result of New Year Resolutions on the part of Mr. Pagani, but the dinner was exceptionally good, and we were even honoured with the presence of Mr. C. Meschini himself who watched over us. I had a conversation with Mr. Meschini who prides himself on being 100% Ticinese, although one of our

eminent members ventured the opinion that he was only 99.99%, but Mr. Meschini stoutly rebutted so base an insinuation.

He must be one of London's youngest and most active Restaurateurs. I gather that he is simply filled with ideas to make Mr. Pagani's Restaurant the big noise north of Oxford Street, but, like every wise administrator, he refused to divulge his great ideas, so I can only surmise that perhaps, among other surprises we may be given a Cabaret with "Les Debs Suisses."

I also had a long talk with another of our most eminent members who told me about his experiences as a distributor of Christmas gifts among the poor Swiss of South London. I gather that although he did not disguise himself as a traditional Santa Claus and disport himself on a sleigh drawn by reindeer — I should love to see reindeer struggling with traffic control lights — he did cover 47.5 miles in his car through the streets. And he was only one of several employed on a similar errand.

I was much impressed by what he told me, of the gratitude with which the gifts were received, of the manifest joy which they brought to many homes and of the magnitude of the task which is undertaken each year in order to insure the distribution of presents to all those entitled to receive them.

The first Cinderella of the season took place at the Mayfair Hotel on Saturday, January 13th. It was attended by some 80 members and guests and although, at first, things were inclined to be a trifle solemn, thanks to the efforts of Carlo the Great, the evening was a great success.

The room was still artistically attired as a technicolour garden and so I may not describe it again. The dinner was as good as the Mayfair dinners ever are, and the band was human and willingly played any tunes requested, and even greeted Carlo when he took the floor to announce the special dances with, "Who's afraid of the Big Black Wolf?"

This Cinderella came to an end as usual, at midnight, and I can only condole with those who, by the absence, missed a most enjoyable evening and trust that many more will be present at the next one, the date of which will be duly announced in the columns of this paper.

ck.

## THE FOYER SUISSE.

It was decided at a recent meeting of the Council of Management of "The Foyer Suisse," to accept an offer of the "Schweizer Verband Volksdienst," to entrust this Social Organisation, which is well-known in Switzerland, with the management of the "Hotel."

All who attended a lecture given at the end of last November by Frau E. Züblin-Spiller, must have been struck by the efficient manner in which this Organisation have tackled the important problem of social welfare in Switzerland and the valuable services they are rendering.

The management of the Hotel part of "The Foyer Suisse" will be handed over to the "Schweizer Verband Volksdienst" as from the beginning of February and the Council of Management will follow up this notice in due course with a fuller statement of this reorganisation.

## AN INTERESTING LECTURE.

Our readers will no doubt be interested to hear, that the *Swiss Mercantile Society* has succeeded in getting Mr. A. F. Tschiffeli, the eminent author of the famous book "Southern Cross to Pole Star," to lecture on his perilous journey. Mr. Tschiffeli, who is a compatriot of ours, rode on horse back from Buenos Aires to New York, a journey which took him 2½ years to complete.

The lecture will take place on, Friday, January 26th, at 8 o'clock at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.1, and the Swiss Mercantile Society is extending a cordial invitation to the members and their friends to attend this lecture, which will be illustrated by lantern slides. (Admittance free).

## SWISS OBSERVER — TEN YEARS AGO.

The literary page of January 19th, 1924, reproduces the first of a series of articles by Dr Paul Lang, dealing with the "Tell" legend. Most of us familiar only with the classical version by Schiller, and have probably never heard that our national hero has been the subject of a number of dramatic plays and ballads ever since the middle of the 15th century.

The first steps in the establishment of the "Schweizerkirche" are contained in an invitation by the "Consistoire" to all those in favour of a Sunday morning service in German, to sign the initiatory lists being circulated for that purpose.

An amusing feat is reported from Oron (Vaud) where three sportsmen — a printer, a chasseur and a motorist — had made a bet as to

who would be the first one to reach Palézieux on the Berne-Lausanne road. We give the official report:

Le pignon et le dragon prenaient la voie la plus courte à travers près et champs recouverts de 30 centimètres de neige, traversant deux ruisseaux et sautant quelques clôtures de fil de fer barbelé, trajet de près de 2000 mètres, tandis que l'auto suivait la route, distance: 3 kilomètres. Le pignon était en tenue de gymnaste et sans souliers; il a gagné le pari en 9 minutes. le cavalier arriva ensuite à quelques secondes près et l'automobile en dernier lieu. Pour l'honneur de la cavalerie vaudoise, il faut ajouter que le succès pédestre est dû à deux chutes de cheval.

The make of the automobile was not given nor was it stated that the driver hailed from Berne.

## GEORGE FORRER.

As mentioned in our last issue, Mr. George Forrer has celebrated his 90th birthday anniversary, on Thursday, January 18th.

On this auspicious occasion, our Minister, Monsieur, C. R. Paravicini, has presented, in the name of the Swiss Colony, an illuminated address to Mr. Forrer. This document was artistically executed by our well-known compatriot M. Pierre Savoie, and the text reads as follows:

A Monsieur Georges Forrer,  
Président d'Honneur de la Société de Secours Mutuels des Suisses à Londres.  
Vice-Président d'Honneur du Fonds de Secours pour les Suisses Pauvres.  
Ancien Président de la Société de Secours Mutuels des Suisses à Londres.  
Ancien Trésorier du Fonds de Secours pour les Suisses Pauvres.  
Ancien Vice-Consul de Suisse à Londres.  
Doyen de la Colonie Suisse de Londres,  
Etc., Etc., Etc.

Cher Compatriote,

Les pensées affectueuses de tous les Suisses, Membres de notre Colonie, vont à Vous, leur vénérable et vénéré Doyen, en ce jour où il Vous est donné, par la Grâce divine, d'accomplir votre quatre-vingt-dixième année.

Ils tiennent à Vous envoyer par ce message, du fond de leur cœur, leurs félicitations et les vœux qu'ils forment pour Votre bonheur et Votre bien-être dans les années à venir.

Pendant plus d'un demi-siècle, Vous Vous êtes inlassablement dévoué pour le bien de la Colonie. Le souvenir de Votre activité, de Votre dévouement et de Votre patriotisme est aujourd'hui plus vivant que jamais et c'est avec émotion que nous venons Vous offrir l'hommage de notre profonde gratitude. Vous voudrez bien l'accepter comme un témoignage de respectueuse affection.

Qu'il nous soit permis de Vous dire que Vous représentez pour nous le modèle du Suisse qui, par sa mentalité, son sens du devoir et sa charité, fait honneur à son pays. Venant de Winterthur, cette vieille cité laborieuse, Vous avez vaillamment maintenu les traditions d'une ancienne famille qui a donné, au cours des siècles, à sa ville et à son pays des hommes de valeur et de bons citoyens.

Au nom des Présidents et Consistoires des Eglises Suisses de Londres, des Présidents, Comités et Membres des Sociétés Suisses, ainsi qu'en celui de toute la Colonie, je Vous adresse, cher Compatriote, en ce jour mémorable de Votre anniversaire, notre salut patriotique.

Londres, le 18 janvier 1934.

(s) C. R. Paravicini,

Ministre de Suisse.

The town Council of Winterthur, (Mr. Forrer is a citizen of the town of Winterthur) has sent the following letter of congratulations to our eminent compatriot:

Sehr Geehrter Herr!

Es ist Ihnen beschieden, am 18. Januar 1934 die Vollendung Ihres 90. Lebensjahres zu feiern.

Nur wenigen Menschen ist es vergönnt, bis in dieses hohe Alter hinein für sich und seine Mitmenschen zu wirken. Mit Freude dürfen solche Menschen auf ihr Leben zurückblicken, namentlich dann, wenn sie, wie das bei Ihnen in so hervorragendem Masse der Fall ist, ihre Lebenskraft nicht nur den eigenen Zwecken dienstbar gemacht, sondern auch in den Dienst des allgemeinen Wohles und der Fürsorge gestellt haben. Mit Stolz erfüllt es uns zu wissen, dass Sie, als Bürger von Winterthur, in unablässlichem Bemühen in leitenden Stellen von Hilfsvereinen in London für das Wohl von Schweizerbürgern in England gesorgt haben.

Der Stadtrat von Winterthur freut sich daher, Ihnen als einem verdienstvollen Mitbürger zu Ihrem 90. Geburtstag die herzlichsten Glückwünsche zu entbieten. Er verbindet damit auch aufrichtige Wünsche für Ihre weiteren Lebensjahre, die Ihnen noch in einer schönen Zahl bei ungestörter Gesundheit beschieden sein mögen.

Mit vollkommener Hochachtung,  
Winterthur, den 15. Januar 1934.

Im Namen des Stadtrates.

Der Stadtpräsident:  
Der Stadtschreiber: