

Mrs. E. M. Bircher †

Autor(en): **V. U.**

Objektyp: **Obituary**

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

Band (Jahr): - **(1952)**

Heft 1186

PDF erstellt am: **10.07.2024**

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LONDON SWISS PHILATELIC SOCIETY.

The London Swiss Philatelic Society met on June 27th, when there was a good muster to enjoy the displays of five members. Mr. Jack Beken, among other things showed "Schiffspost" cancellations of Lake Constance, Mr. Fredericks a fine lot of Liberian Air Mails, Mr. Atkinson varieties of modern Swiss, Mr. Gotz the so-called Kocher stamps of Switzerland of which he gave some interesting historical details, and finally Col. de Watteville showed some pages from his collection of Baden notable especially for their superb condition. It was generally agreed that this was one of the most successful meetings so far held this year.

OUR NEXT ISSUE.

Our next issue will be published on Friday, August 15th, 1952.

We take this opportunity of thanking the following subscribers for their kind and most helpful donations over and above their subscription: E. M. Hamilton, S. Franconi, G. Bruscheiler, Miss M. Paly, C. Schorno, J. Stettler, H. Koch, J. Born, Anonymous, Mrs. A. R. Berry, Adolf Schmid, J. W. E. Norman.

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(To be continued.)

MRS. E. M. BIRCHER. †

The Swiss colony has learnt with deep regret of the sudden death of Mrs. E. M. Bircher, wife of Dr. E. M. Bircher, 1st Secretary at the Swiss Legation, which occurred on Monday, 14th July. Mrs. Bircher had been in hospital since the end of June, and, when everybody was expecting a turn for the better, the sad news of her death came as a shock to all her many friends.

Constance Bircher was a very charming lady, whose only ambition in life consisted in helping others. She was born in 1899 in Winnipeg, and was the second of Sir Augustus and Lady Nanton's three daughters. With her two sisters and three brothers she spent a very happy childhood in her parent's hospitable house. Her father, Sir Augustus, then a director of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company and chairman of the Hudson Bay Company in Canada, took his daughters very often to the Continent, and especially to London. Owing to the first world war, Constance Nanton, could however not attend a finishing school in England as her sisters did and as she herself would have wished. Instead she went from Winnipeg, to a school in New York. On their European trips, Sir Augustus, a keen sportsman, encouraged his daughters to go with him to Switzerland for winter sports. It was during one of these stays, that Constance Nanton met her future husband, Dr. Ernest Bircher, at Pontresina. They were married in 1927, and have ever since lived in London, where Mr. Bircher first practised as a barrister, until, in 1939, he joined the Swiss Legation. Her two sisters, also married in London, where one of them, Mrs. Cameron, still lives.

Mrs. Bircher found complete happiness and satisfaction in her family life with her husband and her four children. She belonged to the few whose face invariably radiates peace and repose. About a year ago she had to undergo a serious and painful eye operation, but even in times when her health was failing and she had to bear hard sufferings she accepted all that with an admirable quietness and calmness of mind.

The death of Mrs. Bircher, whose life was devoted to love and charity, has made us all very sad. Already as a girl of 16, she had joined the Voluntary Aid Division for Wounded Soldiers in Winnipeg, which her father created. It was this kindness of heart which more than anything else endeared her to all who had the pleasure of meeting her. Mrs. Bircher died almost to the day when her silver wedding anniversary was to be celebrated. She could have looked back on these 25 years with pride, as she had indeed been a good mother to a family in which the two sons and the two daughters were a constant source of joy to their parents.

A large congregation attended the funeral service on Friday, July 18th, at the Golders Green Crematorium, which was conducted by Pastor H. Spörri of the "Schweizerkirche" assisted by the Rev. Halsey.

We offer our deepest sympathy to Mr. E. Bircher and his four children, as well as to Mrs. Cameron.

V.U.

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