

City Swis Club

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

CITY SWISS CLUB

97th ANNUAL BANQUET AND BALL

In conjunction with

THE SWISS ECONOMIC COUNCIL

on Friday, 16th November at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1

For this year's — the 97th — Annual Banquet and Ball of the City Swiss Club, which was held in collaboration with the Swiss Economic Council, the committee of the Club launched a special appeal to its older members asking them to take part in this annual festival at the Dorchester Hotel. It is with much pleasure, and appreciation, that we can report that this appeal has been nobly answered, just over two hundred and fifty members, friends and guests being present.

Many an old and familiar face which had not been seen for a long time was recognised, and although some of the veterans' "locks" had turned to silver, they hardly looked the worse for wear and tear.

The younger generation was substantially represented and fitted well into the *ensemble*. This year — we believe for the first time — black tie was *de rigueur*, which perhaps robbed the occasion a little of its former splendour, but what was lacking in the gentlemen's attire was more than made up for by the attractive and colourful *toilettes* of the ladies.

The evening started with a reception by His Excellency the Swiss Ambassador, in the capacity of Honorary President of the City Swiss Club, accompanied by Madame Daeniker. The Ambassador was assisted by Mr. Th. von Speyr, President of the City Swiss Club, and Mr. J. P. Christen, President of the Swiss Economic Council, with their Ladies, who carried lovely bouquets of roses which had been presented to them by the members of the respective societies.

During cocktails, which were served in one of the ante-rooms, one had a welcome opportunity of shaking hands with many old friends and acquaintances; amongst them one noticed two of the former presidents of the City Swiss Club, Mr. Adrian Rueff and Mr. X. Speckert, as well as Messrs. M. Wiesendanger and Mr. G. E. Suter, former presidents of the Swiss Economic Council; in addition a number of other prominent personalities of the Swiss Colony were to be seen. Many admiring glances were cast at the beautiful dresses of the ladies, indeed the *foyer* presented a most colourful picture. In due course the red-coated toast-master was heard announcing, "Your Excellency, My Lord, Ladies and Gentlemen, dinner will be served". To the accompaniment of a lively march played by the orchestra, the company filed into the richly decorated Banqueting Hall to take their places at their allotted tables, which were adorned with heavy silver candle-sticks, bearing lighted red candles. The principal top tables were covered with a mass of flowers, presenting a picture of great beauty. Immediately over the President's table the Union Jack and the Swiss Flag were prominently displayed.

The toast-master then announced that the Rev. P. K. Wipf, of the Schweizerkirche, would say Grace, after which the company sat down to an excellent dinner, prepared under

the supervision of the famous head chef of the Dorchester Hotel, Mr. E. Käufeler, a compatriot of ours and a member of the City Swiss Club. The fare consisted of *La Queue de Bœuf à l'Ancienne*, *Les Pâquettes Dorées*, *Le Gratin de Scampi Maison*, *Le Suprême de Volaille Princesse*, *Les Pommes Parisienne*, *Les Petits Pois Fermière*, *Le Soufflé Arlequin*, *La Sauce Suchard*, *Les Friandises*, *Le Café*. A good dinner without wine can be compared to roast-beef without dripping; therefore, amongst others, some of our country's famous vintages, like Johannisberg, Fendant, Neuchâtel, Dôle de Sion, etc., were served and much enjoyed. During dinner the orchestra played appropriate "Tafelmusik". Whilst *café* was served the Toasts to Sa Majesté la Reine and La Suisse were proposed by the president of the City Swiss Club, Mr. Th. von Speyr, the company being upstanding whilst the respective National Anthems were played. (Again, as last year, instead of "Rufst du mein Vaterland", which in the past had shared its tune with the British National Anthem, the new Anthem, "Trittst im Morgenrot daher", which is to be given a trial for three years, was played.) It was, however, noticed that a good many of our compatriots were hardly familiar with the words.

After the toast-master had announced "Your Excellency, My Lord, Ladies and Gentlemen may smoke", the company sat down patiently to the ordeal of listening to the unavoidable speeches. "Ordeal", on this occasion at least, is perhaps not the right word, because the speeches, numbering three in all, were short, interesting and humorous, and a pleasure to listen to. In times gone by, there used to be additional Toasts, namely, "The Ladies" and "La Charité". Owing to continuous complaints by members that speeches were too long and took up too much time it was decided to omit these. I will now make good one omission involved, by saying that the pleasure of the evening would have been greatly curtailed had it not been for the presence of the many charming ladies, who, by their beauty and grace added sparkle to the Ball. As to the Toast "La Charité", the president referred in his address to the collection to be made for the benefit of the Swiss Benevolent Society, the result of which was satisfactory.

Once again the toast-master went into action, announcing the Toast of "Nos Invités", given by the president of the City Swiss Club, who on rising was loudly cheered. He said:

Your Excellency, My Lord, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my great privilege and pleasure to introduce to you this evening our guests of honour.

May I say how honoured we are to number amongst them His Excellency the Swiss Ambassador and Madame Daeniker. I should like to say, also on behalf of my committee, how very much we appreciate the fact that once again they have found time to be with us this evening

despite the numerous demands made upon them. I am also very pleased to welcome Lord Balniel, M.P. The brilliant and witty talk which he gave us some little time ago is still fresh in our memory. We had hoped to be honoured with the presence of Lady Balniel but unfortunately, owing to an important engagement involving Lord Balniel's Parliamentary duties, they felt that one of them should attend it. We are all the more grateful to Lord Balniel for coming here this evening deprived of Lady Balniel's company. I was particularly anxious for all of you to meet Lady Balniel in person as you may remember that her portrait was reproduced some years ago on an issue of Swiss stamps. The pleasure of refreshing our memory will, in the circumstances, have to be postponed but I do hope that in the not too distant future our Club will have the honour and pleasure of welcoming as their guests both Lord and Lady Balniel. I am also very happy to welcome Professor Finch, M.B.E., D.S.C., F.R.S., of the Alpine Club, and his lady, as well as Mr. Richards, President of the Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club and his lady, and to say to them how delighted we are that they were able to accept our invitation. I should like to give a special welcome to Monsieur de Stoutz, First Counsellor of the Swiss Embassy, accompanied by Madame de Stoutz, who play such a lively part in all the activities of the Swiss Colony. I am also glad to number amongst us the representatives of the Swiss Church: Father Scherrer, Reverend and Mrs. Wipf and Reverend and Mrs. Nicole, as well as the President of the Assembly of Presidents of Swiss Societies in Great Britain, Mr. Berti. In conclusion I am very happy to welcome Mrs. Meier, who, as you know, took over the editorship of "The Swiss Observer" earlier this year from our good friend Mr. Stauffer, and this gives me an opportunity to pay tribute to the excellent work she is doing in her new post.

You will notice that this year's Annual Banquet and Ball is in conjunction with the Swiss Economic Council and I should like to thank their President, Mr. Christen, and his charming wife for joining with me in greeting you all when you arrived this evening.

The older Swiss amongst us here this evening have been conscious for many years of the diminishing numbers in the Swiss Colony and have been particularly anxious that more of the young Swiss resident or temporarily resident here in London should take part in the various activities of the Colony. With this in mind, the Swiss Economic Council and the City Swiss Club have taken the opportunity to invite a number of young Swiss people here this evening. We welcome them very heartily and hope that we shall also have the pleasure of seeing them participate in many of the other Swiss activities which take place regularly in this great city. Later on we shall ask our Swiss friends — and may I emphasise, Swiss friends — to make the customary contribution to the Swiss Benevolent Society and some of our ladies will wait upon you for this purpose.

Now I should like to call upon the members of the Swiss Economic Council and the City Swiss Club to be up-standing and join me in drinking to the health of our guests. (Applause.)

The second Toast, "Réponse" to the president's address, was given by H.E. Monsieur Armin Daeniker, Ambassadeur de la Confédération Suisse, près de la Cour de St. James. The Ambassador received a cordial ovation on rising; he said:

Mr. Chairman, dear compatriots and friends:

It is with great pleasure that I have taken the chair to preside over this party and first of all I should like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for having invited my wife and me and also for the kind words you have addressed to us.

I welcome as a happy innovation the excellent idea of organizing this dinner as a joint function of the City Swiss Club and the Swiss Economic Council, and of asking a number of young people to be with us this evening. There are so many social functions in our Colony, and this, in my opinion, is a good example of the way in which they could be rationalized and the members of the different societies brought together. Instead of carrying out extensive inquiries or formulating academic plans for the rejuvenation of the Colony, it is certainly better to make a pragmatic approach to the problem of letting the younger generation share with their elders in social events like this. We know by now only too well the underlying causes of the shrinkage of our Colony abroad. With the general urge for security and the continuous prosperity at home, people are less inclined to consider a career in a foreign country. Have we not lately read that, for the first time in history, even the Pope has found it necessary to advertise in the paper for recruits to replenish the ranks of the Swiss Guard?

I must now ask for your forbearance because I am carrying in my bag some appeals which I shall have to bring to your attention. It puts me in a particularly awkward position, as this year the Colony has already made such a magnificent and generous response to various appeals.

But first of all, I have to echo the words spoken by the President of the Organising Committee of the Swiss National Exhibition 1964, M. Despland, on the 1st of October. Telling a distinguished gathering in this same hotel about the great effort our country will be making during the next eighteen months, he declared that this Exhibition will not only hold a mirror before our nation to show its achievements during the last 25 years, and its present way of life. It will be more than a vehicle for publicity or a stimulus to the Swiss economy. It is also to be a profession of faith in our future. Its main purpose will be to dwell upon the rights and duties of the individual and the need to safeguard human dignity, and to proclaim Switzerland's solidarity with Europe and the rest of the world.

M. Despland asked me then to deliver to the Swiss societies in Britain, as a symbolic act, copies of the Exhibition's charter, which I had already presented to Lord Dundee of the Foreign office. I now have pleasure in handing these two over to the Presidents of the City Swiss Club and the Swiss Economic Council.

You will remember that the last Exhibition took place in 1939, at a critical moment in world history. The clouds of an impending conflagration were already gathering over Europe; so the Exhibition enabled us to manifest the unity underlying our diversity and to stress our will to defend our liberties. These coming months are no less fateful, albeit in a different way, in their implications for the future of our country. Our people will be faced with vital decisions on Switzerland's position on the Continent in the heart of which they live. Such integration as we are willing to accept must not mean the abandonment of the traditional values which we consider essential for the preservation of our national identity. We need not only the wisdom and leadership of our politicians, but above all the unity of the nation, to find the right solution to this great problem.

In the meantime, we shall once more have the pleasure of welcoming in Switzerland the Lord Mayor of the City of London. Only a month ago a British Week was held in Geneva and was a remarkable success. "Bobbies" came over from London and did their best to bring order and discipline to Geneva's wild traffic. A similar event will be held in Zurich in September, but on a much larger scale and in conjunction with a British industrial fair. It will be visited by Sir Ralph Perring, the Lord Mayor, who is a great friend of our country. He will parade in state through the streets of Zurich in the same way as he did last Saturday in the City, and thus, so to speak, extend his export drive to Switzerland. I wonder whether you heard him speak on T.V. last Friday, when he said how happy he felt to be visiting, during his term of office, his second homeland, Switzerland. May I assure our English guests that we heartily welcome this opportunity for a renewed manifestation of the goodwill and friendship which have at all times formed a solid rock on which the relations between our two countries are based.

Forgive me if, without encroaching on the traditional collection made for the Swiss Benevolent Society, I have to mention the campaign which our Embassy is going to launch, at the instance of the Government, to increase the membership of the Solidarity Fund of the Swiss Abroad. Only a few days ago the President of the Fund, Dr. Froelich, came to London to explain to us the principles underlying this institution. "The Swiss Observer", under the vigorous editorship of Mrs. Meier, has given a full account of its growth. Its principles are very simple and lucid indeed. They are: to collect deposits whose capital will be refunded in full, while the interest is used to pay compensation to compatriots who, through no fault of their own, have lost their livelihood. The compensation will be a hundred times the value of the claimant's contribution. In this way, five depositors who renounce their interest will be able to help a sixth who has been deprived of his material means. The unanimous support of the Federal Parliament in guaranteeing to meet any deficiency of the Fund for such compensation payments has been of great assistance. So far, the guarantee has not been needed. Such help is only additional, and has been given on the assumption that the Fund will be a working concern in itself. To achieve this it will have to rely on the support of the greatest possible number of contributing members, particularly in those countries which are not suffering from the effects of social unrest, war or natural disasters.

The Fund is a shining example of our cherished motto "One for all and all for one", which we like to repeat on festive occasions but which we should also practise.

It may be funny that the author of a recent booklet writes that mutual dislike, contempt and detestation of one another is the real and firm foundation of Swiss democracy. Funny, yes, it may be, to comment in this way on antipathies and rivalries between neighbouring cantons. If there is any truth in it, we have, at least, long ago found the magic formula for peaceful co-existence. But I believe it to be as false as when the same author observes that the taste shown by the Swiss for soup is based on the large infusion of Kirsch which we allow to be added to our soups. ...

Mr. Chairman, the younger generation are here to enjoy themselves and not to listen to lengthy speeches. In conclusion, I should like to congratulate you on the very successful arrangement of this evening party and to thank you for making such a valuable effort to strengthen the bonds of friendship and solidarity within the Swiss community. I raise my glass to drink to the prosperity of your Club and the Economic Council.

The Ambassador's excellent speech was acknowledged by great applause.

To the Right Hon. the Lord Balniel, M.P., was given the task of replying on behalf of the guests. In his humorous address he referred to the geographical and cultural similarities of his native Scotland and our country, saying that, in fact, Scotland had, centuries ago, civilised our country by sending us Saint Gall. "We in Scotland", he said, "have our lochs and mountains, and our whisky, you too have beautiful mountains, lovely lakes and delicious wines. We have our bagpipes, whilst you blow the Alpbhorn. In one way, however, Switzerland lags behind my country, by still depriving her women of the vote." In conclusion, Lord Balniel expressed thanks on behalf of the guests for the generous hospitality extended to them. The speaker was loudly cheered on resuming his seat.

The official part of the evening thus came to its conclusion, and the banqueting hall was made ready for dancing to Arthur Salisbury's orchestra. One noticed with pleasure, that apart from the younger generation, who were much in evidence, quite a number of the "less young" took to the floor with remarkable energy and endurance. During a short interval, George Martin, the well-known sound-radio and television comedian, gave an enjoyable entertainment full of wit and humour.

At 2 a.m. this enjoyable evening came to its close, an evening which recalled to many of the participants happy memories of former banquets.

One feature which greatly added to the success of this 1962 banquet was that so many of the "old guard", by their attendance, testified their loyalty to the Club.

The collaboration of the Swiss Economic Council — of which practically all members belong to the City Swiss Club — was helpful in making the evening a memorable one.

Press Reporter, City Swiss Club.
A. STAUFFER,

TWO SWISS ARTISTS AT THE WIGMORE HALL

Andrej Lueschg (violin) and Evelyne Dubourg (piano) gave a recital at the Wigmore Hall on 20th November. From the first it was obvious that they were accomplished artists. One did not get the impression that it was a violinist accompanied by a pianist — it was a true "ensemble", a partnership which even improved as the evening went on. The programme included the G major Sonata by Brahms and the Mozart A major (K.526) as well as Bartok's second sonata. I am never moved by Bartok and this time found the artists' rendering of Mozart too light, almost flippant — if such a word may at all be used. But Prokofiev's first sonata was played with masterly touch and in it the two artists were in complete harmony and on equal terms. It was an experience not easily forgotten.

Mariann.

Nouvelle Société Helvétique OPEN MEETING

on Tuesday, December 18th, at 7.45 p.m.
at the Swiss Hostel for Girls, 9 Belsize Grove, N.W.3

Prof. R. E. KELLER
of Manchester University
will talk in English on

"Zürich Dialect Writing Today"

and read a story by Traugott Vogel

All Swiss welcome.

Refreshments as usual.