

The Swiss Mercantile Society

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THE SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY

The Society held its last meeting before the summer recess on Wednesday, 20th June, the members present being welcomed by the Chairman, Mr. R. Chappuis.

The membership roll received a welcome boost through the admission of four new members, viz., Messrs. W. G. Dittli, E. Gut, M. F. D. Paschoud and C. H. O. Senn.

It was decided that, as is customary, no meetings be held during July and August, and the next monthly meeting was fixed for Wednesday, 12th September, when members will be given an opportunity of relating their holiday reminiscences and showing their photographs, colour slides and films.

Following the official proceedings, Mr. H. Haerry, a member of the staff of Shell International Petroleum Co. Ltd., and a compatriot of ours, gave a talk on "The World Oil Industry".

Tracing the industry from its origin 100 years ago, when the first oil well was drilled in the U.S.A., the lecturer stated that it was today one of the world's foremost power suppliers, with an annual output of more than a milliard tons of crude oil. Its importance could be gauged from the fact that no less than one-third of the world's shipping tonnage consisted of oil-tankers and that half of all tonnage moved on the seas was oil and oil products.

Apart from fuel for cars and planes, etc., the industry produced fuel oils for industry and shipping, and more recently also for heating. It was closely allied to the chemical industry, providing many of its components and it was often difficult to realise where one began and the other ended.

The lecturer also referred to the long-term planning and financial risks involved. It needed from eight to ten years from the time of prospecting for oil until it finally flowed through the pipes. Drilling often took years and wells might reach a depth of 3,000 feet.

The financial aspects also were gigantic and, he said, it had been calculated here in London that the investment necessary for the oil industry, world-wide, up to 1975 amounted to approximately eighty thousand million pounds.

The address was interspersed with several films, which gave a graphic and vivid account of the industry. These included: "Shell Panorama" — Contribution of an Oil Company to world economic prosperity; "Introduction to Oil", a brief summary of the industry; and "The Golden Lands", portraying life in certain Far Eastern countries and the role oil plays in their economic progress.

All present had followed Mr. Haerry's address with keen interest, as evinced by the numerous questions put to him, which he answered authoritatively and in great detail.

Finally, Mr. O. Grob proposed a cordial vote of thanks to the lecturer for a most interesting and instructive talk, which was warmly supported by all present.

Family Outing

Favoured by excellent weather, a party of members and their families made Bodiam Castle, on the borders of Kent and Sussex, their rendezvous, on Sunday, 24th June.

This partially and excellently restored medieval fortress, with its grim battlements, is an eloquent relic of feudal power in Britain and makes a striking picture in a

lovely setting. After strolling round the lilled moat, the party ascended to the ramparts and viewed the surrounding countryside with its hop-fields and oasthouses (containing hop-drying kilns), the leaning roofs and revolving cowls of which always attract the visitor's attention. Very impressed by what we had seen, we then all sauntered back to the car park.

A column of twelve cars, with some 46 passengers, led by the Society's Vice-President, Mr. L. W. Krucker, from whose car the Swiss flag was gaily fluttering, began to wend its way towards the coast and into the Cinque Port town of Rye. After some of the party had had an excellent luncheon at the famous Mermaid Hotel, and others at the equally picturesque Flushing Inn, we re-assembled and made our way through the quaint cobbled streets to the Ypres Gate, where a fine view of the estuary and the far-reaching sands could be had. A visit was paid to the lovely Church of St. Mary, built in the twelfth century, in Norman and early English style. Of particular interest were the exquisite stained-glass windows and the pendulum of the great clock, which swings inside the nave of the church.

From Rye we proceeded to Winchelsea Beach, where some ventured into a rather rough sea, and later continued to Fairlight, the highest point in Sussex, where a fine view of the sea and the downs could be enjoyed.

On return to Winchelsea, also once a port fortified against the risk of French marauders and now left high and dry by the receding coast line, a large Swiss flag directed us to the beautiful home of Mr. Krucker, who had very kindly invited us all to tea. In the pleasant sunshine on an immaculate lawn, we all sat down to a real Swiss "Zvieri" and the fully laden tables would have made anyone's mouth water. We even indulged in a dance and some of the younger members of the party gave us an exhibition of the "Twist" to the tune of the latest pop songs. It was altogether a most pleasant afternoon, and the President, Mr. R. Chappuis, expressed the thanks of all present to our host, Mr. Krucker, for his generous hospitality and most cordial welcome to his Winchelsea home. Happy and contented, we all took leave and on our several ways home reflected on a memorable day, which will long be remembered by those taking part.

W.B.

PERSONAL

We regret to have to announce that Mr. Florian René Schmid, of 19 Marlowe Close, Banbury, died on 17th June, two days after his 77th birthday. He came to England at the age of 17 and was a skilled confectioner. We extend our deep sympathy to his wife and daughter.

We regret to inform readers of the sudden death of Mr. Edward Albert Gisiger, of 168 Ember Lane, Esher, Surrey. He was born and brought up at Selzach (SO), and came to England in 1925. He was a member of the City Swiss Club, which he joined in 1943. We extend our deep sympathy to his wife and family.

We deeply regret the death of Mr. A. Finger, of 237 Junction Road, N.19. An obituary will appear in our next issue.

It is with deep regret that we announce the death of Mr. Willy Deutsch of 38 Langside Crescent, N.14. An obituary will appear in our next issue.