

City Swiss Club

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

CITY SWISS CLUB

101st ANNUAL BANQUET AND BALL

In conjunction with

THE SWISS ECONOMIC COUNCIL

18th November 1966



The President, Madame de Fischer, Lady Selkirk, the Swiss Ambassador, Madame Spuehler, Mrs. Bonvin, Lord Selkirk, Mrs. Knuchel and Dr. Knuchel.

To read of the City Swiss Club's 101st Annual Banquet and Ball may be quite misleading, and in fact even in one of the speeches at the top table mention was made of the Club's first year in the second century. This is, of course, not correct. The Club was founded in 1856, and its Centenary Banquet and Ball was celebrated in a magnificent manner on 16th November 1956. Therefore, with the 101st Banquet the Club also reached the venerable age of 110 years, two wars having prevented social gatherings of such a kind for a number of years.

Over 400 people attended this year's function at the Dorchester Hotel. But my guess is that they had come neither to celebrate the 110th anniversary of the Club nor the first banquet in the second century, but simply to support the President and Committee and reward them for their efforts or, the majority, purely to have a good time. And that they did have. The atmosphere was friendly and happy right from the reception by the dignitaries, during cocktails (even though we were packed like the proverbial sardines), and throughout dinner (of which the excellent *Pâté de Faisan* and the superbe *Doyen de Comice Nélusko* deserve mention), even during the speeches (of which more later) and most emphatically during dancing to Maestro Arthur Salisbury's Band and Swissair's energetic *Ländlerkapelle*, until "carriages called" at 2 a.m. Strange, how some things cling from the past — not many nowadays enjoy the privilege of being collected by carriage-

and-pair. On the other hand, the organisers have, to my regret, banned white ties and tails which takes away some of the glamour of former occasions. The ladies — here I speak entirely as a neutral press reporter — looked as beautifully gowned and decorative as they did when I attended the Club's Banquet and Ball for the first time 34 years ago.

Another striking feature was the tombola which resulted in over £400. Years ago, a collection used to be made in aid of the Swiss Benevolent Society. This custom has now been discarded and a tombola put in its place, which benefits all charitable work in the London Swiss Colony. There were twenty-five substantial prizes, and the benefiting charities and the lucky winners are no doubt grateful to the generous donors.

The President, Mr. Edgar Bonvin, alluded to this in his Chairman's welcome. He also thanked the three young men who had done much organising to make the event a success, viz. Messrs. H. Jauslin, L. Jobin and E. Tobler. But first and foremost, he welcomed the Guests of Honour, the Swiss Ambassador and Madame de Fischer, Madame Spuehler, wife of the Swiss Foreign Minister, and the Earl and Countess of Selkirk. Mr. Bonvin also bid welcome to the Chairman of the Swiss Economic Council and Mrs. H. B. Knuchel from Manchester, the First Counsellor of Embassy and Madame Grandjean, Consul and Madame Tosio as well as a number of other members of the Em-

bassy. Welcomed were, too, the Ministers of the Swiss Church and their wives and the Chaplain of the Swiss Catholic Mission, Mrs. Stauffer, widow of the late Honorary Vice-President of the Club and former Editor of the "Swiss Observer", as well as the present Editor of the "S.O.", Mrs. Mariann Meier, whose late husband had also been a stalwart supporter of the Club for many years.

According to the aforesaid, the President's speech could have been smooth and not at all out of the ordinary, but as it happened, it was one of the most unorthodox speeches ever uttered at such a gathering. For Mr. Bonvin could not refrain from bringing in some extremely personal matters which could have been mightily embarrassing, had it not been for the humour and charm with which he presented these "frills". It was said elsewhere recently that the British should teach the Swiss to laugh at themselves. Edgar Bonvin has been in this country long enough to have learnt this, and that may well be the reason why his outspoken remarks cannot be taken badly. He not only laughs at his own jokes but also frequently and frankly at himself, and he bears no rancour to anyone who retaliates with interest. Thus his speech was accepted with good grace and warm applause.

Monsieur de Fischer then delivered his address. Once again, he proved himself the historian, telling us about one of the best-known personalities during the reign of George II, his Master of the Revels, John James Heidegger from Zurich, humorously styled *Le surintendant des plaisirs d'Angleterre*. (The interesting historic account will be published at some later date. Ed.)

The Right Honourable The Earl of Selkirk, G.C.M.G., G.B.E., A.F.C., President of the Anglo-Swiss Society and of the Commonwealth Winter Sports Games (St. Moritz), Honorary Secretary of the Anglo-Swiss Inter-Parliamentary Group, then replied for the guests. He opened his address with some words in German, much appreciated by the audience, and then expressed his feelings for Switzerland in a few sincere and well-chosen words. He thanked the Club for their invitation to himself and his wife. Lady Selkirk, incidentally, is herself a great skier and a past Ladies' Ski Champion of Great Britain.

Lord Selkirk's advice in the words of Burns "On with the dance, let joy be unconfined" was accepted forthwith. The happy atmosphere never flagged, and not many left before "Auld Lang Syne". We meant it, when we sang "For they are jolly good fellows". Francine and Edgar Bonvin may have been the two figures in the centre of the brilliant ballroom, but with the time-honoured words, the City Swiss Club as a whole was sped on its way into the 111th year.

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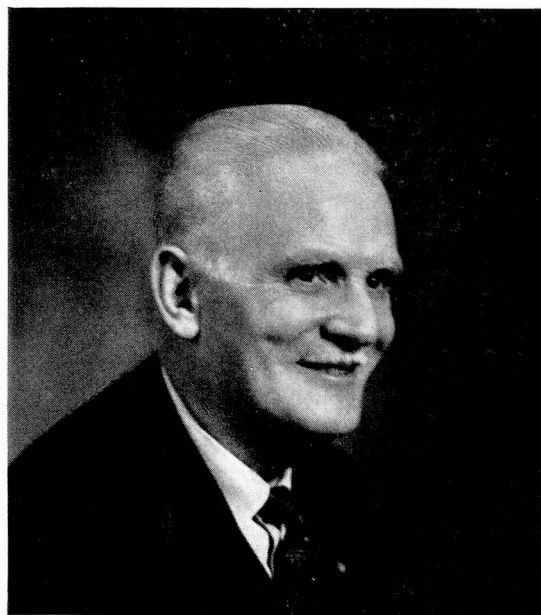
BIRTHDAYS

We have just heard that the following subscribers to the "S.O." have celebrated their birthdays recently: Mr. M. Ehrsam (70) on 14th December, Mrs. Emily Delaloye (79) and Mr. J. L. Guggenheim (87) on 15th December. Other old friends who will be celebrating their birthdays within the next few weeks are: Mr. W. Renz (68) on 2nd January, Mrs. E. P. Locher (73) on 4th and Mr. A. Baenziger (72) on 7th January.

We wish them and any other readers whose birthdays will fall within the next few weeks, many happy returns of the day.

SWISS CLUB MANCHESTER

Annual Banquet and Ball 12th November 1966



For many years now, our compatriots of the North and their many friends look forward with great expectation to the unique occasion in the year when they are able to meet in large numbers, in brilliant and exciting surroundings, and through their own individuality and imagination give the evening the festive look and congenial and warm atmosphere we all so much like and appreciate.

For the third year in succession, we were honoured by the presence of our Ambassador and Madame de Fischer who were able to meet quite a number of old acquaintances, club members of Manchester and their friends, and including a representation from Yorkshire. Amongst the guests were also the Vice-President of the Manchester Rifle Club, Mr. Ewart and his good Lady, and our Consul and Madame Brunner.

After the serving of the aperitifs, our Ambassador and Madame de Fischer and the President and Madame Berner, both Ladies having been presented with lovely bouquets, received the members and guests, quite an imposing number, after which we moved to the well-known dining-hall, a lovely and imposing sight, as usual well-decorated with a large and colourful array of flowers. The Club's flag, once so well described in the "Swiss Observer", was again in the background of the presidential chair and for many Swiss, especially of the older age group, it awakened memories of past years, of people long since gone but still very much alive within us.

The dinner over, the President rose to propose the loyal toast after which followed the toast to Switzerland, very ably and with friendly humour given by our good friend and associate member Mr. D. Fisher. He had to do this at a moment's notice, and the warm applause which followed his words was reward enough for his gallantry.

The President then welcomed the Ambassador and Madame de Fischer and expressed to both of them the satisfaction and gladness of the Swiss of the North to have had the opportunity of seeing them three times in succession at our Annual Banquet and Ball. Their untiring interest in our activities, their warm feelings for our families have endeared them greatly to all of us. We all felt very strongly that their presence with us brought us