

# City Swiss Club

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the dwindling Swiss Colony could afford.

£400,000 seems a very high figure for fitting out premises for which the groundwork has already been done. Yet it must be remembered that the Swiss Forum had to be fitted out in specialised ways, since it was to serve a variety of purposes, ranging from a Colony gathering centre to a commercial exhibition hall. Swiss Centre Ltd. had offered to let the empty shell of the future Swiss Forum to the authorities concerned in Berne for a token rent, but has in fact never received a penny for the premises. The negotia-

tions for the now defunct Forum involved innumerable trips to Berne by the persons directly concerned with the project. They went to the highest level and discussed the Forum with members of the Federal Council. Mr. Willy Spuhler, former President of the Confederation, eventually became President of the Forum of Switzerland Foundation.

Swiss Fair Ltd. is a separate entity with a lease on the basement of the Swiss Centre, enclosing a vast and highly successful restaurant, and on the area on the ground floor housing a number of shops offering quality Swiss

products. The company's capital is £1,146,592. The main shareholders are the Swiss Bank Corporation (69.77 per cent) and the Zug-based "Swiss Fair in Gross Britanien" (28.46 per cent). Other companies with a stake in Swiss Fair Ltd. are: Ciba-Geigy (1.45 per cent), Omega (0.15 per cent) and Watches of Switzerland (0.17 per cent).

The Swiss Centre Restaurant is doubtless the most familiar side of the Swiss Centre to the public at large. We hope to give details of its remarkable success in a future issue.

(PMB)

## NEWS FROM THE COLONY

### THE CITY SWISS CLUB ANNUAL DINNER AND DANCE

The 115-year-old City Swiss Club held its 106th Annual Dinner and Dance on November 19th. The event took place as usual in the ballroom of the Dorchester Hotel. Members and the many guests enjoyed a five-course menu that was resplendant by its exquisite *contrefilet Dôle du Château*. There appeared to be fewer participants than the year before, which according to actual count included only 12 members. This year one had the impression that there were more members but fewer guests. All in all, we counted about 140 participants. The sharply increased cost (rising from £3.25 to £3.50 to £4.15

in two years) must have had an influence. Also, the wine had gone up to £3. Prices are shooting up and the Swiss business community are not necessarily keeping up with inflation.

Mr. Walter Bion, President of the City Swiss Club, welcomed the gathering and particularly the ladies. He welcomed Dr. A. Weitnauer, our Ambassador and Hon. President of the City Swiss Club. His other distinguished guests were the Turkish Ambassador and his Lady, Mr. and Mrs. Zeki Kunalp, Mr. and Mrs. Otto Rohn, who were representing Mr. and Mrs. R. Suess, unable to attend, and two distinguished guests from Switzerland, Mr. and Mrs. C. Frei. Mr. Bion ended his welcome address by urging us to

"dip deeply in our pockets" in making the Tombola a success. Its proceeds were to be devoted, as usual, to Swiss charities.

Dr. A. Weitnauer rose to address the gathering and said that he remembered many of the members present from his earlier short posting in London as Economic Counsellor in the early 50s. He said that he had never lost touch with the Swiss community in London (thanks to the Swiss Observer) and reiterated his attachment for this great city. He paid tribute to his neighbour Mr. Kunalp, who had spent much of his youth in Switzerland. Dr. Weitnauer told his audience that Mr. Kunalp had a remarkable mastery of Bernese, in fact he was fluent in the

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"Queen's Bernese". His colleague, he added, "was the epitome of intelligence, conscience and good manners". Dr. Weitnauer ended his address by stressing the role of the Swiss community in Great Britain in the creating of a united Europe. It was his deep conviction that the British Isles belonged fundamentally to Europe and he expressed the wish that the spirit of EFTA and of working together should prevail.

Mr. Zeki Kuneralp, Turkish Ambassador to London, whose name betrays an undeniable Germanic strain, said that the explanation to his presence among a Swiss gathering lay in his long experience of Swiss life. He had gone to a "public school" (which he stressed were more "public" in Switzerland than they were in England) in the small village of Gümligen. Commenting on the belief that the Bernese were "slow", he said that the Turks had the same reputation and added that this statement was far from exhausting the whole truth. The Bernese were slow, be it as it may, but once they had understood something "they never forgot it". He proved his point by an historical example: In 1529, when the Turks invaded Vienna, Christendom lay at their mercy. All the churches of the old continent rang their bells and the people prayed to God that Vienna should be saved. The Turks addressed the opposite requests to the Almighty, which, reflected Mr. Kuneralp, must have put him in an embarrassing situation. He appeared, however, to solve this quandary as the Turkish General decided to lift the siege, to the displeasure of his Sultan and was later to incur his wrath.

At the news of Vienna's liberation, all the church bells of Europe rang in praise to God. The Bernese, who had never taken part in the fighting against the Ottoman, somehow learnt of the plight of Vienna and rang their bells too. The years passed on and gradually the steeples of most of the churches of the old continent became silent. But the churches of Berne continued to chime at noon until this very day. This explains why the sky of the capital hums with joyous jingle at noon: the Bernese have not forgotten that in 1529 Vienna and the last bastion of Christendom was freed from the Turks. To these historic clarifications Mr. Kuneralp added the opinion that the recent gift of the right of vote to women in Switzerland was not their own victory but the result of the rebellion of the men. The reason was as follows: Although the men had to take the trouble of going to the polls on Sundays, it was the women who voted really. The men finally voted for what their wives, daughters, aunties and grandmothers wanted them to. But the men revolted against this ill-treatment and managed to inflict on their women that they should themselves take the trouble of voting. To conclude, Mr.

Kuneralp quoted Victor Hugo and said: "La Suisse aura toujours le dernier mot".

These humorous reflections quickly gave way to the Dance which was opened by Mr. and Mrs. Bion. Very quickly the assembly flocked on the floor and evolved to the tunes of the Arthur Salisbury Orchestra.

The second interval was followed by a Cabaret. A minor television star, Kenneth Evans, entertained us for a little too long with his washy songs. As crooners went, he was all right, but a lady said indignantly: "Must we have an Andy Williams show at the City Swiss Club?" Opinions conflicted as to whether the performer of last year, certainly more vivacious and swinging than the present one but rather crude for some people, was better. The artist jaunted around the dance

floor and asked patrons to sing with him in his microphone. He elicited rather inhibited participation in community singing and clapping from the audience. He had much trouble in finding three lady volunteers to jangle rumba shakers while he was singing a Latin American song.

Dancing was resumed after his effort. The four Swiss National Tourist Office lassies sold all their Tombola tickets. There was an abundance of prizes: Gift vouchers, champagne bottles, hand bags, savings certificates. They were offered by the Swiss companies in the U.K. The first prize was a week's journey for two to Switzerland, offered by Bally. The Ballroom at the Dorchester was still pretty well full when the 106th City Swiss Club Annual Dance was officially closed.

(PMB)

## ANNUAL DINNER DANCE OF THE MANCHESTER SWISS

"Plus cela change et plus c'est le meme chose". For the one with little imagination this may be so but I am glad to say, and many may be of my opinion, that not a year passes by without leaving some special mark on the activities in general and this function in particular. This year it was our new Ambassador to the Court of St. James, Dr. Albert Weitnauer, who gave our annual social a special meaning, adding greatly to the interest and enjoyment of such an occasion. It started all on a cold Saturday afternoon, at the Piccadilly Station in Manchester, where a reception committee consisting of our Consul, Mr. Rolf Born, Mrs. Born and our Vice-President Mr. Peter Senn was waiting. Very soon the first warm contacts were established but almost immediately the whole party was hustled away to the Town Hall where the Lord Mayor, Alderman Douglas J. Edwards received them.

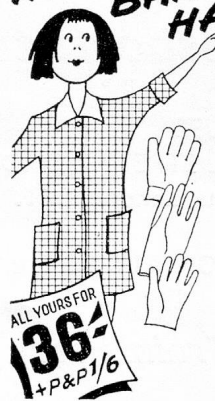
Many of us, Swiss and English friends, met Dr. Weitnauer at a Cocktail Party, given in his honour by our

Consul, Mr. Rolf Born, who had invited all the members of the Committee of the Swiss Societies in Manchester, Yorkshire and Liverpool, in his new and lovely home, and our particular thanks went fully and wholeheartedly towards his wife, Mrs. Born, who ensured that the evening in her house would be a lovely and interesting one, and certainly her warm hospitality was appreciated by everybody present, amongst whom we could see a good representation from the Yorkshire Swiss Club and some friends from Liverpool. For many of us it was the first opportunity to meet our new Ambassador and we all wish him a happy, interesting and foremost of all, a long stay in London, so that in the course of time we may know him better and better.

### The order at table

Everything had been organised according to a strict time-table and soon we had to leave the Excelsior Airport

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