

Swiss Catholics in London

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people and au pair girls? In that case, Mr. Berti suggested that one could entirely do away with the patriotic and ceremonial half of the evening and devote it entirely to band music and dancing. This would naturally not be acceptable to residents, who would no longer attend. It was agreed that a compromise had to be found between the wishes of the young (mainly dancing) and of the elder residents (presumably to take part in a specifically Swiss gathering). One member suggested that the 1st August Celebration be abandoned in favour of a reception for the Colony in the Embassy. However, a member of the Embassy present said that this was quite unfeasible. Various possibilities, such as changing the venue and doing away with the reading of the Pact were suggested as a means of attracting more people, but it was eventually decided not to change venues and keep to the traditional programme. Whether or not the Federal Pact will be read in one of the national languages will be decided at a future 1st August Committee meeting. A film will probably be included in next year's programme.

The conclusion of the meeting was that it is premature to talk of abandoning the way our National Day has been celebrated in London for so many years. This traditional event, despite this year's disappointing attendance, should be given another chance by getting more and better publicity. Thus the 1st August 1973 Celebration in Wimbledon will be backed by energetic advertising, carried out not only by the Swiss Observer and the posters at the Swiss Centre and the Swiss Mercantile Society, but also by the Swiss societies towards their members. The 1st August Committee will see what kind of response will be obtained from more propaganda. It is essential to have more entries, as this is the source of nearly half the income. The Committee cannot afford to make such a heavy loss next year.

(PMB)

CITY SWISS CLUB ANNUAL DINNER AND DANCE

An exceptionally successful evening: such is the consensus of those who attended the 1972 City Swiss Club Dinner and Ball. About 210 persons were present. As usual, this turnout was largely composed of guests. The attendance was slightly smaller than last year and this was due to the absence of one or two prominent and regular members of the club who usually reserve whole tables.

Efforts had been made to concentrate on enjoyment and reduce the formality always associated with such functions to a minimum. Thus Mr. Walter Bion, the President, made a short welcome address to the gathering and our Ambassador, Dr. Albert Weitnauer, delivered a speech mingling

humour with politics. Dr. Frank Ellis, a specialist who had spoken to the City Swiss Club last year on "spare parts surgery" was invited to speak on behalf of the guests. This he did in a most entertaining way.

Another innovation was the recourse to a new and younger band as a substitute to the Arthur Salisbury Band, the standing Dorchester Hotel Orchestra, which had performed at this annual function for many years. Unlike previous functions, no entertainer was invited and this helped to keep costs down. Tickets, in fact, remained at the same level as last year. The band had a vocalist which dispensed with the need for a solo vocalist anyway.

The food was, by general agreement, excellent. The attendance greatly appreciated the shortness of the speeches and the lively but still conventional tempo of the orchestra. As usual, a Tombola was organised with three days for two in a five-star hotel in Amsterdam as first prize. It was won by Mr. Armin Loescher, who had never come to the Annual Dinner and Dance before. The money raised was equivalent to the value of the prizes. Net proceeds amounted to just under £500 and will be entirely given to the Swiss Benevolent Society and the Swiss Churches of London. This will make the forthcoming AGM of the club somewhat less tumultuous . . .

(PMB)

COMMITTEE OF SWISS CATHOLICS IN LONDON BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

Many of our compatriots and friends have been kind enough in the past to support our Christmas Draw for the benefit of our Chaplain and the welfare of our young Swiss.

On account of the increased cost of postage, the printing of the Draw tickets and the decrease in the sale of these, we have come to the conclusion that the net profit of a Draw conducted through the postal service does not warrant the outlay and the enormous amount of time involved in running a Christmas Draw.

Our Chaplain, the Rev. Paul Bossard, in close co-operation with the Ministers of the Swiss Protestant Church has built up a new centre for the young Swiss at the John Southworth Community and Youth Centre at 48 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 2HA.

Up till now we have had an average attendance of 150 to 250 people every Sunday, many come to Sunday Mass, which is celebrated in the dance hall. The Protestants have their service in the Conference Room. Afterwards a simple supper is served in the Tea Room, a bar dispenses drinks, even Swiss beer can be obtained. A very modern and well equipped disco-

theque provides dance music. In the Conference Room there are discussions, talks and bible studies, so everybody can find something of interest.

As we shall miss the income derived in the past from our Christmas Draw (last year £240, the year before £333) we are more than ever dependent on the goodwill of our friends.

May I ask you kindly to consider helping our cause by sending a donation to me at 60 Seafield Road, London N11 1AS. Your generosity will be greatly appreciated.

Oscar Grob, Chairman.

Solidarity Fund

The Solidarity Fund of the Swiss Abroad has changed premises and has moved from the Schosshaldenstrasse to the Gutenbergstrasse in Berne. Their new address is at Gutenbergstrasse 6, 3011 Berne. Telephone: 031 25 04 94.

Swiss Credit Bank

The Swiss Credit Bank in London has a new manager. *Mr. Henry Griffith Fry* has been appointed manager of the Austin Friars new premises. *Mr. George I. Williamson* remains International Representative for the bank and London adviser to the General Management.

The President of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad in London

On Thursday, 16th November, the London Group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique held their Open Meeting at the Swiss Embassy. Nearly 100 members and friends came to listen to Councillor of States Dr. Louis Guisan. In view of the importance of the speaker, the NSH had again invited other Swiss societies in London, and quite a number of presidents, officers and members accepted the invitation.

The President, Mrs. Mariann Meier, welcomed the Swiss Ambassador, Dr. Albert Weitnauer, and introduced the speaker. Dr. Guisan gave a most interesting address in excellent English on "the activities of a Swiss Member of Parliament". He delivered his talk in three parts, the work of Parliament as such, how to become an M.P. and what specific work and duties fall to a National Councillor and to a Councillor of States.

The talk was followed by questions which went on for 1½ hours. But the standard was very high indeed, and the whole evening was one of great interest and lively spirit.

The Nouvelle Société Helvétique was glad to have an opportunity of thanking the President of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, and Dr.

Guisan in turn has expressed great satisfaction at having been given the chance of meeting members of the NSH in particular and Swiss in London in general.

CORRECTION

In the issue of 27th October, page 16, under "Another Departure from London", it was stated that Mr. Burkhalter was also Hon. Auditor to the Swiss Mercantile Society in 1958. This is, of course, an error due to the omission of a line, and the sentence should read: "*Gordon was also Hon. Auditor to the Swiss Benevolent Society and the Swiss Welfare Office. He joined the Swiss Mercantile Society in 1958*". Our apologies!

ANNUAL DINNER DANCE OF THE MANCHESTER SWISS CLUB

On Saturday, 11th November, 1972, members and friends met for this most important yearly function at the Excelsior Hotel at Ringway Airport, Manchester, and the exceptionally large number of people attending—of which a good proportion belonged to the younger generation—was again proof enough of the great popularity of such an event, bridging time, space and distances.

As in the past few years, we were honoured by the presence of his Excellency Dr. J. Iselin and his wife (personal friends and guests of our President) who represented our Ambassador in London, who was unable to attend. From Yorkshire we welcomed Mr. and Mrs. Paul Lerch, two columns of the Club beyond the Pennines who had taken residence in the hotel, as well as their Vice-President. A couple attended from the Liverpool Swiss Club, so that our Northern Colony was well represented. Major Nicholson and his wife were also present and so of course our Consul General and Madame Born, very much liked and loved by their northern flock, whose well-being is so much at their hearts. Many more prominent members and friends could be mentioned but the list would become a very long one.

Contrary to previous years, we met immediately in the banquetting hall which was very richly and tastefully decorated with flowers, ribbons supplied by a committee member, in the colours of red and white, and on the table also were small flags. Brilliance, festivity and expectation were heightened by the superb show of our traditional tombola with its rich display of objects in a great variety and quality, which later on must have given much satisfaction to the lucky winners. For the organising committee and Mrs. Martha Themans, the driving force behind, this meant a wel-

come addition to the club's finances. The aperitifs served to us created very quickly an atmosphere of friendliness, comfort and well-being, so essential for the happy continuation of the evening, making us forget all the worries of this world.

Soon the time arrived to take seats at the tables which were placed around the central dancing floor, and prepared in such a way to allow the grouping of small and congenial parties within the larger framework. On the top table we could see beside our President Dr. Hans Rudi Bolliger and his wife Trudi, Dr. Iselin and Madame, our Consul-General and Mrs. Born, Major Nicholson and his wife, and what mystified some of us there were also present Mr. and Mrs. Themans and Mr. and Mrs. Berner. Lying on the table were four lovely bouquets of flowers, not quite squaring with the number of ladies present. We were just wondering how our President would extricate himself from such a position, but in the course of the evening this "charade" was eventually most brilliantly resolved.

Having gone through a well-chosen and served menu, accompanied by an excellent choice of wines, our President invited us to drink the toast to Her Majesty the Queen, followed by Major Nicholson (who with some happy, chosen words, also mentioned the creation under his wings, many years ago, of the Swiss Rifle Club) proposed the toast to Switzerland. When coffee and liquers were served, our President stood up to welcome the many guests and friends, extending also his warm feelings to everyone present. During his short address he was able to convey to Dr. Iselin and his wife (who was presented with the first bouquet of flowers) the feelings of us all, wishing them a happy stay amongst us. Nobody was forgotten by him but, alas, he brought us also the sad news of the early departure of our immediate past President, Mr. Bernard Simon and his family to London, where he has to take up an important position in his company. It will be a great loss for our Colony because we all got to know him for his great drive and all the life he put into our club's affairs. Dr. Iselin very rightly observed that our loss will be London's gain, but this can only be a small consolation for us and we can only hope that in future he shall find a way to be with us sometime. Good luck to him and God bless. Madame Simon was presented with the second bouquet of flowers. Half of the "charade" was solved.

The words of our President were warmly received and acknowledged in the usual way, after which he invited Dr. Iselin to address us. He brought us the greetings and best wishes from our Ambassador and told us how happy he felt to be again in Manchester—the third time in succession

—a town which for a Swiss is a symbol of industrial power, prosperity, progressive thinking and free enterprise.

He dwelled at some length on some aspects of the last Assembly of the Swiss Abroad and how our President, showing his "Zivilcourage" approached the problem of political rights for Swiss Abroad and how it may be desirable not to be involved in matters of voting at home, but hold on to the "status quo". Otherwise it could well happen that special classes of Swiss are created, based on distances and varying financial means. In this he must have been supported by many of us. Dr. Iselin then had some kind words for our Consul General and the important and hard work he does so well, ably assisted by his staff. He also expressed his satisfaction to be soon able to welcome Mr. Bernard Simon in London.

Continuing, he touched on some aspects in the political, economical and financial fields with special reference to the future of EFTA without Great Britain and some other member states and how this could affect Switzerland and her future participation in the larger community which would come into being as from 1st January, 1973. Concluding, and with special reference to our Ladies, he expressed his hope that we made the most of the opportunities which were offered to us by this festive event. He was most warmly applauded for his clear exposé and kind expressions but before we could follow his recommendation, a surprise was sprung on us—at least for two victims amongst us!

Our Vice-President, Mr. Peter Senn, son of our late Centenary-President, stood up to make a few announcements and he did this in the following order: He reminded us of the good services rendered to his compatriots by Mr. Ermanno Berner during the last 35 years of stay in this country, when on and off he acted seven years as Vice-President and six years as President of the club, and living in Yorkshire he now helps Prof. Inebnit for over six years as Vice-President of that club beyond the Pennines. He has presided over the Swiss Relief Society for the last ten years. The committee felt that all this made him a possible candidate for honorary membership—a decision carried by acclamation. For the recipient, all this came so suddenly and unexpectedly that he hardly found the appropriate words to thank for this honour and his wife being presented with the third bouquet of flowers was certainly also emotionally involved, having all these years so well and successfully supported her husband.

It was now the turn of Mrs. Martha Themans, our Martha, to be informed of a similar decision and how much she deserved this honorary membership. Much of the club's his-