

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK
Band: - (1972)
Heft: 1638

Rubrik: News from the colony

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

POETICAL ACTIVITY IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT

On Wednesday, 22nd March, a crowd of some 300 people converged on the Steephill Pleasure Gardens in Ventnor (Isle of Wight) to witness attempts by 37-year-old Mr. John Pavledis to get a home-made aeroplane flying by manpower alone.

Mr. Pavledis, of Belgrave Hotel, Belgrave Road, Ventnor, had designed the aircraft six years ago and taken three months to assemble the very simple contraption. Called the Air Hopper, it weighed 50lbs. It was made of bamboo covered in cloth painted with aircraft dope. It had a wing span of 21ft. and was 22ft. long. First time power was supposed to come from the large tail moving up and down. Mr. Pavledis, who weighs 9 stones, explained that he had planned to get the plane airborne by using his body to imitate the jerk action on a string as used to get a kite up. "If my idea works" he added, "I hope to carry on practising so that I can have a go at winning the £10,000 prize for the first person to do a one mile man-powered flight".

But unfortunately for Mr. Pavledis, the craft would not get off the ground. Having been given permission to use the Steephill Pleasure Gardens by the Ventnor Council subject to certain conditions, including public liability insurance of £100,000, he and his machine received a special police escort on the dawn journey to the site, where BBC and ITV camera crews, Radio Solent and many Press reporters were waiting for him.

Wearing a crash helmet and cheered by the crowd, Mr. Pavledis made five attempts at taking off. But his machine just ran down the banks and slowly tipped over on to a wing. A colleague, Mr. Rock, who weighs 11 stones, made two attempts himself. After the seven attempts between 1 p.m. and 1.30 p.m. there was a spontaneous clap and cheer for the intrepid aviator.

The following week, Mr. Pavledis wrote to the *Isle of Wight Mercury*: "May I thank my friends, the Council and others associated with my wild scheme? Reactions have varied; I get a teasing thump on the back or an embarrassed Hello! But many thousands of people mentioned Ventnor, and the newspapers and TV gave good publicity . . . Anyone want to buy an Air Hopper licence cheap?"

This delightful story was put in verse in the same edition of the *Mercury*. Under the large title of "AEROBATICS" the paper published a poem by our compatriot Mr. Walter

Zuber from Ventnor, glorifying the event. This is how it runs:

Near Steephill Cove some Sport was trying,

To do a little solo flying.

*A crowd of folks from nearby Ventnor,
Was there to see and cheer this*

venture.

*There were a hundred there or more,
With Press reporter chaps galore.*

*A unit from the B.B.C.,
Was there to witness and to see
The Birdman from the Isle of Wight,
Preparing for his maiden flight.*

*A push, and off with final cheer,
But would this flipper take the air?
This silver winged Skyway Hopper,
Turned out to be a blooming flopper.
This great display so well attended,
A day of aerobatics ended.*

*The moral is Simplicity,
For Ventnor some Publicity.*

Well, there's certainly a lot going on in the Isle of Wight and Switzerland is well represented in its local activities! I owe the record of Mr. Pavledis' attempt (which incidentally will be repeated with an improved model!) to Mr. Paul Büchler, equally of Ventnor. In his letter, he writes: "Bei dieser Gelegenheit möchten wir, Insulaner, allen unseren Landsleuten in Grossbritannien freundliche Grüsse und schöne Sommerferien wünschen".

Thank you, Mr. Buchler. May *The Swiss Observer* reciprocate your good wishes on behalf of all its readers on the "mainland".

(PMB)

YORKSHIRE SWISS CLUB: EARLY YEAR'S ACTIVITIES

Severe weather conditions and illness sometimes curtail our efforts, as it happened for our monthly meeting of the 1st February, 1972. So more so do we appreciate it when our functions are not exposed to such additional and unwanted risks and it was a great satisfaction to all of us, when on the 10th March, 1972 we could assemble in good number at the former headquarters of the dissolved Bradford Swiss Club at the Foreign Circle, 10 Eldon Place in Bradford. There we were able to follow the unfolding of a special film sent to us through the kindness of our Embassy in London, the title being: "La Suisse". It was a most interesting document and pictures, words and music conveyed to us a most lively impression of Swiss activities in its many cultural, technical and political aspects. At the beginning

of the meeting we were welcomed by our President who informed us also on various matters of interest to the Club. At the end of the show, refreshments were served by the Ladies of the Committeees and gradually we left quite satisfied with this friendly and interesting come-together.

A month later, on the 4th April, 1972, we met for our *Annual General Meeting* at the British Council House, St. Mark's Avenue, Leeds. Our President, after having welcomed members and friends, started the evening with a tape-recording he had obtained from Switzerland, known under the heading of "Forum Helvetique". The theme was: "Les Suisses et les Nations Unies" and we could follow, the few persons able to understand French, part of an expose given by prominent Swiss personalities, the pros and cons of the desirability of Switzerland entering the UNO, and various other aspects of this very important problem. A lively discussion followed and the opinion voiced that this type of broadcasting or communication, if meant for clubs and organisations established in Anglo-Saxon countries or spheres of influence, should be given in English.

Our Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Karl Kaegi, was then invited to give us the *Financial Report* covering the period from 1.4.1971 to 31.3.1972. Whilst there was a slight fall in the total of the club's assets, it was very gratifying to know that our various social events, which should be self-supporting, showed an increased credit-balance—a clear indication of their popularity and support given to them by members and friends. To put the club on a healthier financial position, it was agreed to increase our yearly subscriptions by 50%.

Mr. J. M. Lowe kindly accepted to act as an election-chairman and the following officers were elected:

President: Pr. J. P. Inebnit Vice-President: Mr. E. Berner; Hon. Treasurer: Mr. K. Kaegli; Hon. Secretary: Mrs. E. Lerch (members), Mrs. R. Leathly (general); Member: Mr. J. M. Lowe.

Our Vice-President moved a vote of thanks to Messrs. Sandoz Products Limited in Horsforth for their continuing generosity, time and money, in printing our circulars, mentioning also another one who is contributing regularly in a similar way. In particular, thanks were expressed to Mrs. Pauline Hill of Sandoz, who actually did all the work.

Our President then informed us about the progress of the Landsgemeinde scenic window display for the Kramgasse in Berne and how he kept a constant and close contact with the