

# Swiss Mercantile Society

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ness of the show contrasted sadly with the distinction of the gathering and the importance of the occasion. Several guests felt an urge to escape from the darkness of hall no. 2 of the National Film Theatre and would have done so within the first twenty minutes in other circumstances.

The audience was first treated to a short silent film portraying an excruciatingly Swiss family. In fact, this was the work of a gifted amateur whose shots and sets vividly conveyed the boredom and orderliness of an elderly family living as many Swiss people still do today. The director does little more than to show us a white-haired pensioner, his spouse and their old-maid daughter sitting in the garden. The man looks on while a soft breeze ruffles his thinning hair and the women knit with concentration. The

family then takes the car to pick mushrooms in the forest. The camera aptly shows the old weekend-driver holding crisply to the wheel of his old Peugeot as the car cruises slowly through a silent countryside. The film was boring but efficient.

The main film, *Les Arpenteurs*, by Michel Soutter, had won a prize for cinematography. The programme described it as a "meditation on friendship and the difficulties of human relationships". We are then told that this "well-known theme from earlier films by Soutter is given lively form with superb dialogue constantly formulating the unexpected". This is perhaps the best hyperbola of the season. The film's dialogue is by all standards feeble-minded and the rather plump humour which drew a few smiles in *La Salamandre* tends to sadden the viewer by its ineptitude. The two leading actors, Jean-Luc Bideau and Jacques Denis, are in fact the same as those of Tanner's *La Salamandre*, which closely resembles *Les Arpenteurs*. The two film "stars" bear such likeness that anyone who hasn't read the cast would probably think the two works to be by the same man. It is true that many "unexpected" kinks crop up in the film that it is gratuitous and has nothing to do with the inventive genius of Jean-Luc Godard, another Swiss who has chosen to build his career in France. As for

the "meditation on friendship and the difficulties of human relationships", one can only say that Soutter's meditative process is rather tortuous. The film is partly allegorical and this explains why many people left the hall wondering what they had seen. We shan't try to wrap up the plot as this would be an intellectually trying task. Let us say that whatever plot there was verged on the inane and that this absence of a valid story was not redeemed by a truthful picture of life or solid technical qualities. It seems that Soutter would have done a greater service to Swiss cinema by producing an unpretentious thriller. Not everyone is a born Bunuel or Visconti.

P. M. B.

#### CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS OF THE SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY

It was in Lucerne, City of Lights, situated at the cradle of the Swiss Confederation, that the "Schweizerischer Kaufmännischer Verein", popularly known as S.K.V., was founded 100 years ago.

Comprising originally 19 societies with 1,431 members, the S.K.V. has since grown into one of Switzerland's strongest professional associations, embracing 111 societies with a total membership of 63,515.

It was fitting that Lucerne was

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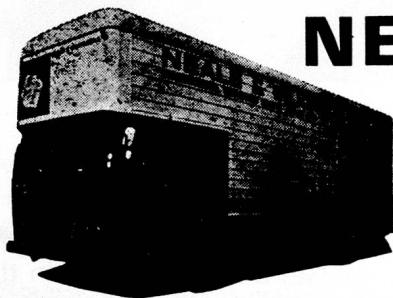
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***Please Take Note!***

**THE SWISS NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION  
AND DANCE**

*will take place on*

**WEDNESDAY, 1st AUGUST AT 19.30 SHARP**

(Doors open at 19.00)

**AT THE WIMBLEDON TOWN HALL, WIMBLEDON**

**PROGRAMME**

The programme, as usual, includes items of a patriotic nature as well as a Film Show

*The main address will be given by:*

**H. E. The Swiss Ambassador, Monsieur Albert Weitnauer**

The colourful "Corale" of the "Unione Ticinese" will provide folklore entertainment

**REFRESHMENTS**

*TICKETS* at 40p available at the door or in advance  
at 30p at the Swiss Mercantile College, 35 Fitzroy Square, London W.1.

**CHILDREN FREE**

chosen as the venue for this year's meeting of delegates to commemorate the centenary of the S.K.V.

The city was in festive mood, gaily bedecked and bathed in glorious sunshine when the London contingent, consisting of Messrs. A. Jaccard, President, R. Chappuis and O. Grob, Hon. Members and former Presidents, and W. Burren, Secretary, together with their wives, and Mrs. M. Meier, as guest of the Central Society, arrived there on Thursday afternoon, 24th May.

At a dinner held in the evening, they were the guests of the Central Committee, who had been in session earlier in the day.

To mark the occasion, Mr. Jaccard presented the association with three old colour prints of London, depicting Chelsea, Scotland Yard and Queen's Walk,\* as a token of friendship and esteem from the London section, which has formed part of the association ever since its foundation in 1888.

He further presented Mr. Hans Ryffel, President of the Lucerne section, with a book of stately homes in England. Finally, he informed the assembly that the Swiss Mercantile Society in London

had elected Mr. Richard Maier-Neff, Central President and General Secretary of the S.K.V., an honorary member at their last meeting, in recognition of valued services rendered to the Society and the College. This gesture was warmly applauded by all present.

The whole of the following day, 25th May, was devoted to deliberations and the passing of resolutions at the spacious Kunsthaus. In the afternoon, the ladies accompanying the delegates were taken on a steamer trip on the Lake of Lucerne to the Bürgenstock, favoured by excellent weather and immensely enjoyed by the participants.

The evening was devoted to a special performance of Mozart's opera "The Magic Flute" at the Stadttheater, to the delight of all music lovers.

The celebrations reached their climax on Saturday at the Stadttheater, opening with Richard Wagner's Overture to the Mastersingers of Nuremberg, rendered by the Orchestra of the Allgemeine Musikgesellschaft Lucerne.

The opening address on "We Swiss and Our Economy" was given by Federal Councillor Ernst Brugger, a fine piece of oratory and profound thinking.

This was followed by speeches on the subject of "The Commercial Em-

ployees of Today and Tomorrow" by Mr. Richard Maier-Neff, Central President, Mr. Robert Moser, Vice-President S.K.V. (in french) and three other speakers. Finally, greetings to the assembly were conveyed by Councillor Dr. Walter Gut on behalf of the Cantonal authorities and by Dr. Hans Rudolf Meyer, President, on behalf of the town of Lucerne.

The festive occasion terminated with the Leonora Overture No 3 by Ludwig van Beethoven, rendered by the Lucerne Orchestra.

The celebrations came to an end with a banquet on Saturday afternoon, at which Dr. Fritz Leitwiler, General Manager of the Swiss National Bank, handed a cheque for 535,500 francs, being the proceeds of a collection among Swiss banks, trade and industry in connection with the purchase and rebuilding of Swiss House, to the Central President. Mr. Jaccard expressed grateful thanks on behalf of the London Section for this magnificent gift.

Thus came to a close a memorable occasion, splendidly organised, from which those who attended it will have carried away happy recollections to all corners of Switzerland and beyond.

W.B.

\* in Green Park

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