

The life of the Swiss in Britain thirty years ago

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of years. He recalled that the Swiss marksmen had beaten the Surrey Club for the second year running after suffering a fifteen year spell of defeats. It had lost away against the Marylebone Pistol Club but got its own back at Bisley. The year had seen the usual eighth competitions and several new faces among the cup winners or runners up.

The distribution of prizes was organised by the Secretary, Captain Mathey. The array of boxes of chocolate, bottles of liquor and domestic utensils (one winner had an electric tin opener) was incredible for the relatively small membership of the Society. It reflected on the generosity of its members. Also of note were the finely made medals which practically all participants to the competitions collected. After the distribution of prizes came the Raffle, conducted by Mr. Armin Loetscher with the assistance of pretty Miss Christine Schmid, grand-daughter of the late Mr. A. Schmid of the Glendower, who picked the raffle tickets. There an equally impressive collection of prizes. Mr. Lucien Jobin won no less than three lots of kirsch and liquor. The raffle draw was followed by a merry bidding for a bottle of whisky won by a quest. A professional auctioneer, he suggested that his bottle should be put for auction a second time for the benefit of the Swiss Rifle Association. It fetched £20 after some close bidding and was carried away by a Mr. Callun Callun, a company director, who had come as a guest of Mr. Werner Trauffer. He immediately put it up for auction a third time. Bidding started again and stopped at £12.

Most members left shortly afterwards but a small party remained in the Glendower's dining room for more drinks and merriment until about 3 a.m.

(PMB)

ANGLO-SWISS SOCIETY

Our Ambassador Dr. Albert Weitnauer invited the members of the Anglo-Swiss Society to a reception on 13th December in the reception halls of the new Embassy, that model of interior design. A great many Swiss and British members turned up and a bustle of conversation lasted three hours beneath the vast Le Corbusier still-life that dominates the Residence Dining Room.

CITY SWISS CLUB CHRISTMAS DINNER

The Orchid Suite of the Dorchester had to replace the usual Stanhope Suite to accommodate all the members and guests of the City Swiss Club who attended the Christmas Dinner. The food was of rare quality. Dinner was enjoyed against a background of Swiss and Tyrolian music, played by a lone instrumentalist with a traditional costume. The toast to the Queen and Switzerland was followed a short while later by the screening of two films lent by the Swiss National Tourist Office. One was an informative description of Switzerland's advanced standard of living and technological expertise, the other

related the adventures of a tourist who grudgingly found himself compelled to learn the art of skiing. Both films were excellent. The second one was however of a rather weak humour but nonetheless produced strong laughter from the attendance.

NOUVELLE SOCIETE HELVETIQUE

The Common Room of the Swiss Hostel for Girls had very little room to spare on Thursday evening the 13th December, when a great many members and representatives from other societies turned up to enjoy a friendly get together and a harpsichord recital by the Swiss artist Gloria Vanoli. The programme included short and curt pieces by Bartok, preludes by Bach and works Couperin played with zest and a lively talent by a young and attractive artist. She was warmly applauded and congratulated by the President, Mrs. Mariann Meier, who promised her a present on behalf of the Society at the end of her performance. There followed a supper consisting of meat rolls and Swiss cookies, most of which had been prepared by the President. It was a particularly gay and successful NSH evening which lasted until 10.30.

THE LIFE OF THE SWISS IN BRITAIN THIRTY YEARS AGO

as read in the Swiss Observer from July to December 1942

CERCLE GENEVOIS

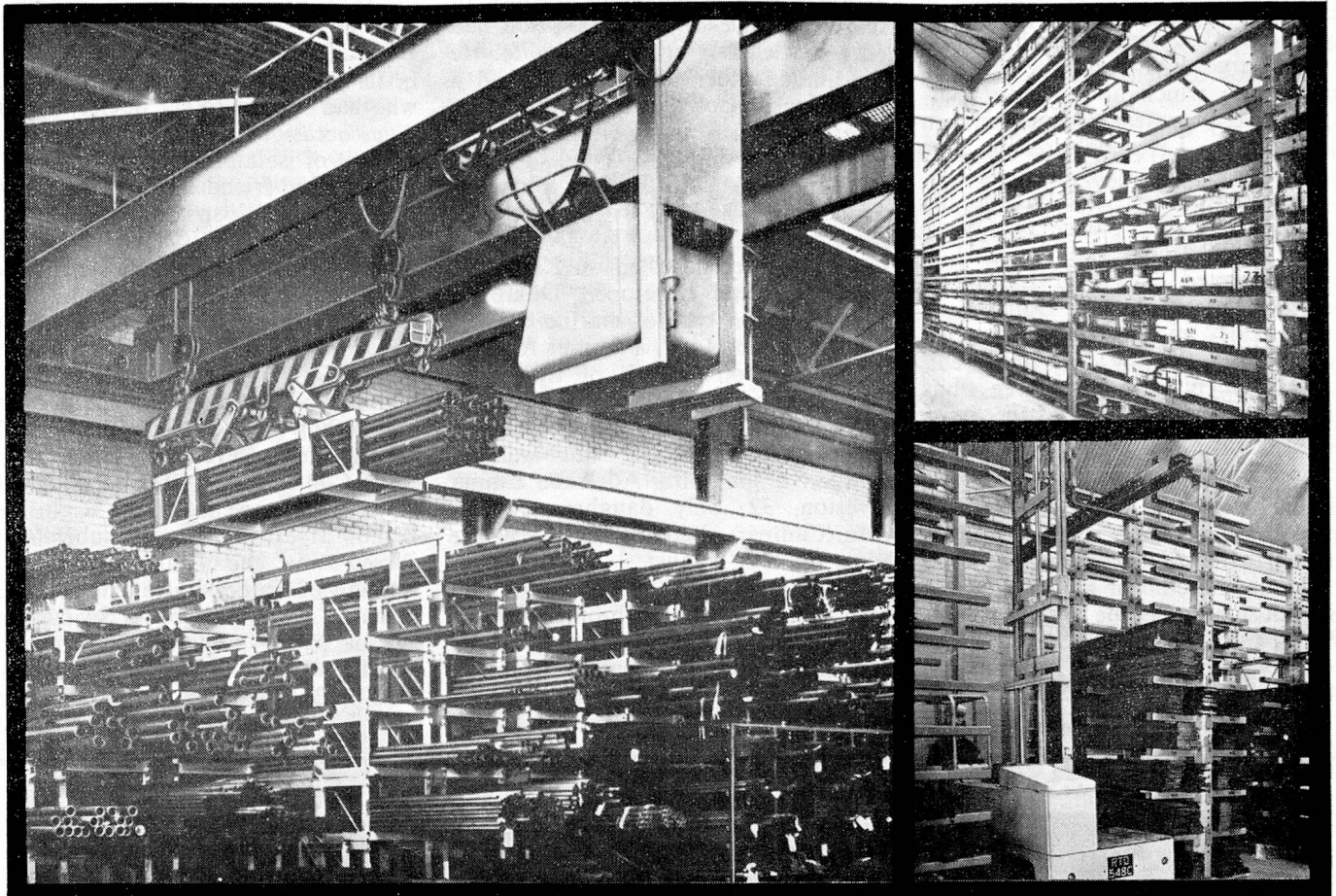
About twenty Swiss and British residents with kinship or affective ties with Geneva gathered on 12th December at the home of Mrs. Hugh Overton-Binet to celebrate the traditional Escalade. The chocolate cauldron had not withstood the journey from Geneva and was badly cracked for the fist smashing ritual, which I understand was accompanied by the words: "Let the enemies of the Republic thus be broken." The event was particularly friendly and intimate and enlivened by the drinks which many in the party had supplied. The Embassy was represented by Mr. Serex and Mr. Nordmann, who had made a special point of leaving the City Swiss Club Christmas Dinner, held on the same evening, before it had ended to join the Cercle Genevois.

Special events

On Wednesday, 15th July, a party of volunteers from the City Swiss Club set out for "Westfield", the Hatfield home of the Swiss Benevolent Society, to clear timber that had recently been felled. They were answering the call of their President Mr. Louis Chapuis. An article signed by "Gallus" in the 24th July, 1942 issue of the Swiss Observer contains a picture of Messrs. E. Ulmann, A. Tall, L. Jobin, W. Deutsch, E. Suter, J. H. Berger, P. Moehr, W. Bachmann and W. Flory progressing in the grounds of "Westfield" armed with saws and pickaxes. Another picture shows them resting on a log, their tools on their knees and a bottle of beer at hand. On Saturday, 18th July, a second City Swiss Club party left for "Westfield" with Mr. Fer. Among those present were Messrs. Glauser, Guggenheim and Oltramare.

The Swiss National Day Celebration was held at Kingsway Hall, Kingsway, London W.C.2. on Saturday, 1st August. Coming after the 1941 Celebration, which had marked the 650th Anniversary of the Confederation and had been held at Central Hall, Westminster, the 1942 function was described by the Editor as something of an anti-climax. Apparently, there were flaws in the programme. The singing was not at its usual standard and the film "Landammann Stauffacher" was a disappointment. The soundtrack was cut for over an hour as a wire which had accidentally been severed was repaired. The screen was too small and the projector of insufficient power. But Mr. A. Stauffer stressed that the occasion was successful because of the splendid spirit of friendship and patriotism which had ruled over it. Mr. Pradervand, of the Eglise Suisse, had made a moving pat-

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riotic address. Minister Walter Thurnheer and Mrs. Thurnheer were both present at the gathering. The Swiss of Manchester celebrated the National Day on Sunday, 2nd August, with an outing in the lakes of Derbyshire. A few families met at Chinley Station and set out for an excursion towards Coom's Lake under the guidance of Mr. Kuebler, President of the Manchester Swiss. At Dublin, the National Day was marked by a reception given by the Chargé d'Affaires and Madame Benzinger at which about forty compatriots were present. About sixteen Swiss from the Liverpool area met for a sing-song and a walk at Prestatyn. A congregation of 300 filled the Catholic Church at Palace St., Westminster, on National Day for a High Mass celebrated by Father Lafranchi. The entire Swiss Colony of Dumferline, or very nearly, met on 1st August and heard a short talk by their President, Mr. F. Gualeni, and saw three films lent by the London Office of the Swiss Federal Railways.

The London Swiss Philatelic Society was founded in November and applications for membership advertised in the 27th November issue. The need for a philatelic club or association had been felt for sometime by the philatelists of the Colony. The Society's first meeting was to be held on 2nd January, 1943.

Deaths

We now recall the deaths that occurred in the Colony between July and December 1942 in the order in which they were reported in the Swiss Observer.

Mr. Ernst Leutenegger had died suddenly on 29th April, at the age of 56. He had been managing director of Suarez & Co. Ltd. in London and had led a particularly adventurous life. He had among other things established a plantation in Bolivia and recorded his experiences in a book entitled "Menschen in Urwald."

Mr. Karl Otto Keller, a marine engineer who had led the development department of Messrs. W. Doxford & Sons in Sunderland died on 22nd July at 65. He had developed Doxford's opposed-piston type of marine diesel.

Mr. Leon Rueff, a former founder of the London branch of the Swiss Bank Corporation and partner of Seligman Bros. died on 18th September. He came from Basle but was of Alsatian origin. Mrs. Adrienne Emma Liverton, 32, only daughter of Mr. Cesar Campart, died accidentally at her home on 29th August.

Mr. S. W. Wetter, 82, who had been active in the embroidery trade. He had been a staunch supporter of the Schweizer bund. He hailed from St. Gall and died on 11th November. Other

deaths: Mr. A. L. Despond, 52, active member of the City Swiss Club; Mr. Ulrich Hohl, 82, of Appenzell, an embroiderer.

Society events

The Swiss Mercantile Society heard a specialist in current affairs, Dr. G. P. Gooch, Companion of Honour, speak about "World Outlook" in its September meeting. Dr. Gooch, who had spoken to the Society on previous occasions, centered his expose on the end of isolationism in America, the newly found friendship between Russia and the English-speaking people, and the emergence of China as a great power. The Swiss Catholics held their AGM on the 20th September. Mr. J. Eusebio was in the Chair, the President, Colonel Anton Bon, being absent because of illness. Letters from Minister Walter Thurnbeier and the Cardinal and Bishop of Chur were read and telegrams sent to President Etter of the Swiss Confederation. The meeting took place in the presence of the Right Rev. Bishop Myers. Among the subjects discussed was the continuing stay in London of Father Lafranchi, who had given up a teaching job in Switzerland. A "tea party" gathering 350 members and friends of the City Swiss Club was held on 3rd October, at the Dorchester



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Hotel. This event fell on the 86th Anniversary of the founding of the Club. The Legation was represented by Minister Thurnheer, Mr. Preiswerk and Mr. Giradet and their wives. The attendances were entertained by a performance of both light and classical music by members of the Colony. Instead of an Annual Banquet and Ball, the Swiss Mercantile Society held an "austerity luncheon" at Brown's Hotel prior to a lecture at Swiss House by Major L. H. Cripps, C.B.E., well known industrialist, ship owner and social reformer.

The Swiss Choral Society held a wartime General Meeting to discuss the situation resulting from the absence of its President, who had been away abroad for a long time, and to set up a strong working Committee. The meeting was held at Swiss House on 30th October. Mr. F. G. Sommer was asked to take the Chair. The new Committee was elected and the following members of the Society were asked to serve: President: Mr. F. G. Sommer; Vice-President: Mr. J. H. Berger; Hon. Treasurer: Mr. E. Ritzmann; Hon. Secretary: Mr. E. O. Dick; Hon. Librarian: Mr. C. Sykora. It was decided to elect a Music Commission consisting of the Conductor and four members to make sure the choice of songs would no longer be the subject of criticism. The Commission was to study Mr. Tall's suggestion to revive English songs and Mr. Mathez's suggestion to sing more French songs so as to attract more French-speaking Swiss to join the Choir. Fr. Lafranchi was made Honorary Member of the Society. Despite the war, the Swiss Choir had met regularly during the previous eighteen months.

An exceptional attendance turned up for the S.M.S. December Meeting which had a programme of films on the British Army and Navy supplied from the Ministry of Information by Mr. Gottfried Keller, President of the Foreign Press Association, and two films on Switzerland. The meeting was presided by Mr. J. J. Boos, who welcomed the following six new members: Messrs. W. Bachmann, A. de Westenholtz, W. Flory, J. J. Keller, A. Kern and E. Ulmann, which brought the total of admissions for the year to 23.

Anglo-Swiss affairs

The Editor reported on a point raised during Question Time in the Commons on 4th August regarding the payment of income tax by two Swiss citizens resident in Switzerland and deriving income from a British company. Sir Herbert Williams had asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Kingsley Wood why the Bank of England had first required to be satisfied that the funds in London standing on the credit of the two citizens concerned and on which they would have drawn for their income tax payments,

were available for transfer to Switzerland. He was told that, according to the Defence (Finance) Regulations, a resident living outside the Sterling area had to pay his taxes in foreign currency or in funds readily available for transfer. It was therefore not possible for a resident in Britain to pay debts on behalf of foreign residents.

The British Press reacted very strongly against the refusal by the Vichy authorities to grant transit visas to a group of nine Swiss journalists who had been invited to visit Britain for the purpose of study and information. The S.O. reproduced a long article on this matter by "Time and Tide."

The "Financial Times" of 7th September reported at length on the financial difficulties of Switzerland accruing from the British blockade, which had limited more and more supplies of foodstuffs and raw materials. It reported on the heavy defence expenditure of the Government (which had reached 2.9 billion francs by the end of 1941) and the recourse to the capital market to meet these military commitments.

An article on Swiss neutrality was picked from the "Tablet" of 24th October. Its author, Margeret Leiper,

had been the London correspondent of the "Courrier de Genève." In the same December issue of the Swiss Observer, a news item on the sentencing to death of two Swiss officers was gleaned from the "Times." Lieutenant Charles Reimann, of Basle, and Lieutenant Peter Kulli, of Olten, were sentenced to be shot for handing military secrets over to a foreign power. Less than a month earlier, Private E. Philipp, of Basle, and Sergeant J. Schweger, of Hergiswil, had also been sentenced to death on similar charges.

The 1942 Volume of the Swiss Observer ends with the following message by the Swiss Minister, Mr. W. Thurnbeier: "The end of 1942 finds Switzerland and its people more united than ever and inflexibly decided to maintain the traditions of liberty and freedom which are part of our common heritage. Although circumstances have not always permitted the close contact which it is my desire to have with the Swiss Colony enjoying this great country's hospitality, I am particularly glad of this opportunity of greeting all my compatriots and sending them my sincere wishes for Christmas and the New Year."

CHRISTMAS TIME IN MANCHESTER

The Swiss Club of Manchester arranged for the traditional Christmas Tree Party to be held at the Midland Hotel in Manchester on Saturday, 9th December, 1972. The support of our children and young ones was even better than for the previous year, although it was felt that a better attendance from members in general would have been forthcoming, more so that nowadays any such occasion should be welcomed to meet old friends and make new acquaintances and by this strengthen and foster friendliness within our own ranks.

As in the past we were again honoured by the presence of our Consul General and Madame Born who later, however, had to leave us for an important engagement in Liverpool. We were also able to welcome our Vice Consul, Mr. Leuenberger. We were also most happily surprised to shake hands with Mrs. Banderet, who was on a short visit in England and we think that she felt very happy amongst us. In the absence of our President, Dr. H. R. Bolliger, our Vice President Mr. Peter Senn, directed the proceedings of the evening and he must have been quite reassured by the smooth and happy development of the evening, whose success depends so much on the hard work of our committee in general and of Mrs. M. Themans in particular.

The beginning of the Party was fixed for 3 o'clock, everybody met in the lovely Rotonda and sat down to

the special "Midland high tea" consisting in the main of an assortment of sandwiches and followed, for the children's sake, by cakes, pastries, jellies, ices and sweets, concluding it with some rounds of crackers which obviously helped towards the general merriment and shortening somewhat the time for Father Christmas.

After this, each one armed himself or herself with a chair or two, moving to the little ballroom where a lovely lighted tree welcomed us, set in the midst of an imposing hill formed by parcels large and small, immediately attracting the attention of our youngsters. The musical side was quite ably taken over by a young lady and everybody joined in the singing of our beloved Christmas carols, soon afterwards to be interrupted by a knock at the door. Sure enough, there he stood, old and tired but evidently happy to have arrived at all and to be able to warm himself at the many little candle fires of the tree. He was introduced to us by some of the Committee members, being greeted by a long and well meant applause. This must have put him in a very good mood, showing in the way he chatted with old and young who had formed a large ring around the tree.

Much merriment and happiness came to all of us by the children's solos and recitations, much appreciated by Father Christmas, who distributed to all of them—also to those who had awakened our sympathy by their mutisme or shall we say shyness—quite lovely colourful bags containing sweets, chocolate and other goodies. The per-