

Anglo-Swiss Society

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ANGLO-SWISS SOCIETY

CORONATION BALL at the LONDONDERRY HOUSE, PARK LANE, W.I.,
on FRIDAY, 5th JUNE, 1953

On the 5th of June, the Anglo-Swiss Society, — which was founded in 1948 for the purpose of maintaining and developing the existing friendship between the British and Swiss people, to foster a close unity to the mutual advantage of the two nations, and to promote social and cultural relations between Great Britain and Switzerland, — held its Coronation Ball, at Londonderry House.

Amongst the many festivities which were held during Coronation time, this one was certainly not the least enjoyable one, and had many distinguished features.

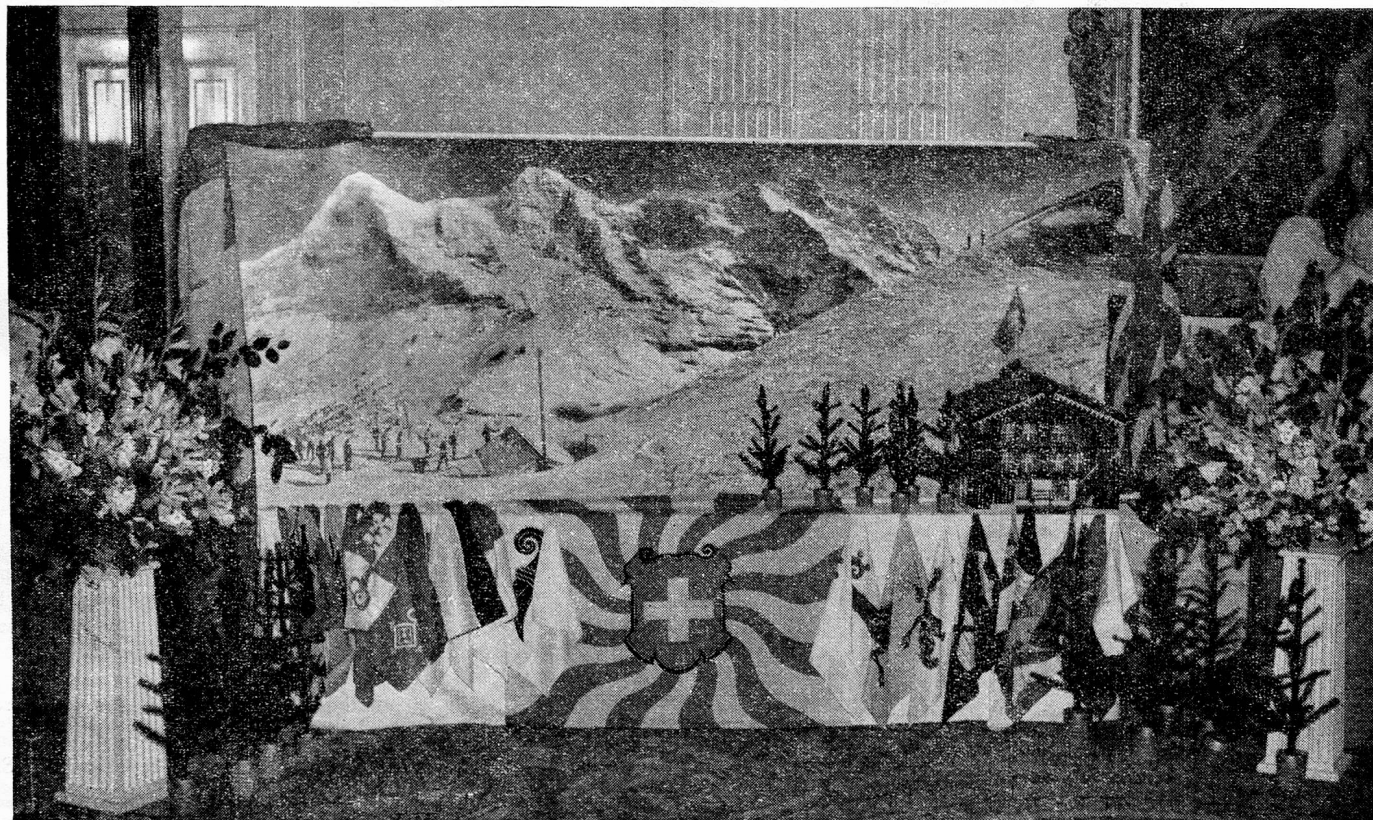
First of all Londonderry House with its lovely ball-room, containing a celebrated collection of portraits, its fine library, dining room, and imposing staircase was an ideal venue for such an entertainment; secondly the attendance, numbering nearly 400 persons, amongst them an appreciable number of our compatriots, and many young people, exceeded all expectations, and thirdly, for the first time, at an Anglo-Swiss Society function, decorations were worn, I need hardly say that this was exclusively reserved for British members, as it is well known, our country does not honour "services rendered" by bestowing decorations.

Many distinguished personalities honoured the Society by their presence, namely the Swiss Minister, and Madame de Torrenté, accompanied by many of the Minister's collaborators at the Legation, with their Ladies, Lord Nathan, Lord Schuster, Sir Patrick Abercrombie, Sir David Kelly, Sir Eugen Millington Drake, etc. etc. and a large number of well-known members of the Swiss Colony; in fact representatives from all walks of life, Diplomats, politicians, soldiers, scientists, bankers and industrialists — could be seen.

* * *

At 9 o'clock, the guests were received by the President of the Anglo-Swiss Society, the Rt. Hon. Philip Noel-Baker, P.C., M.P. and Mrs. Noel-Baker. (The Swiss Minister arrived later in the evening after the Prime Minister's dinner).

In the Entrance Hall was exhibited a large sized tableau depicting Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau, a Swiss Chalet, and some of the cantonal flags. This compliment paid to the Swiss members of the Society was greatly appreciated, and I am sure that this was the first time in the history of Londonderry House, where so many famous people used to gather at one time, that a picture of our ice clad mountains was shown.



A Swiss touch at the Anglo-Swiss Coronation Ball. Tableau by courtesy of the Swiss Tourist Office.



Left to right: Lt. Colonel Stuart Townend, Director of the Anglo-Swiss Society. The Rt. Hon. Philip Noel-Baker, P.C., M.P., President of the Anglo-Swiss Society.

A considerable number of visitors watched the arrival of the guests from the balcony; beautiful women were seen ascending the staircase leading to the ball-room, accompanied by Gentlemen wearing high decorations, and how delightful it was to see amongst the Swiss contingency so many pretty young girls, some in national costume, thus showing that they can well compete, as far as looks are concerned, with their English sisters.

Dancing started almost immediately after the reception, the dance music being supplied by the Arthur Salisbury Band, which was at times relieved by the Swiss Accordion Group, dressed in Swiss costumes, under the always efficient conductorship of our old friend A. Gandon.

Almost without interruption, the two bands played until 2 a.m., and hardly enough room was available to accommodate all the happy revellers, it was indeed an orgy of happiness and gaiety, and not a dull moment occurred. Those, whose "dancing times" were over no less enjoyed watching this galaxy of youth and beauty.

A running buffet supplied the visitors with all sorts of delicacies, and various bars, where, strangely enough, I met most of my compatriots, looked after the thirst of the "exhausted" dancers.

At 2 a.m. the band played "God Save the Queen", and this happy evening, where both British and Swiss

met to honour the ruler of this great Empire, and to spend a few hours in congenial company, came to its close.

Whilst at purely Swiss functions, which are held in the Colony, parties are formed, and remain at their respective tables, this time no tables were reserved, and one was thus obliged to freely mix with the company, which, of course, is the idea of an Anglo-Swiss function, and which gave it a special *cachet*.

The untiring organisers of this enjoyable evening, Lt. Colonel Stuart Townend, O.B.E., F.R.S.A., and Mrs. Townend deserve the heartiest thanks for the efforts they made to make this Coronation Ball a real success.

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SWISS GLACIERS EXHIBITION.

We direct the attention of our readers to the Swiss Glacier Exhibition at the Geological Museum, Exhibition Road, South Kensington (opposite Victoria and Albert Museum) (see advertisement), arranged by the Swiss National Tourist Office.

The exhibition will be open from May 29th — August 29th, 1953, admission is free. Visiting hours: Weekdays: 10 a.m. — 6 p.m. Sundays: 2.30 p.m. — 6 p.m.



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