

Swiss Club Manchester

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bassy. Welcomed were, too, the Ministers of the Swiss Church and their wives and the Chaplain of the Swiss Catholic Mission, Mrs. Stauffer, widow of the late Honorary Vice-President of the Club and former Editor of the "Swiss Observer", as well as the present Editor of the "S.O.", Mrs. Mariann Meier, whose late husband had also been a stalwart supporter of the Club for many years.

According to the aforesaid, the President's speech could have been smooth and not at all out of the ordinary, but as it happened, it was one of the most unorthodox speeches ever uttered at such a gathering. For Mr. Bonvin could not refrain from bringing in some extremely personal matters which could have been mightily embarrassing, had it not been for the humour and charm with which he presented these "frills". It was said elsewhere recently that the British should teach the Swiss to laugh at themselves. Edgar Bonvin has been in this country long enough to have learnt this, and that may well be the reason why his outspoken remarks cannot be taken badly. He not only laughs at his own jokes but also frequently and frankly at himself, and he bears no rancour to anyone who retaliates with interest. Thus his speech was accepted with good grace and warm applause.

Monsieur de Fischer then delivered his address. Once again, he proved himself the historian, telling us about one of the best-known personalities during the reign of George II, his Master of the Revels, John James Heidegger from Zurich, humorously styled *Le surintendant des plaisirs d'Angleterre*. (The interesting historic account will be published at some later date. Ed.)

The Right Honourable The Earl of Selkirk, G.C.M.G., G.B.E., A.F.C., President of the Anglo-Swiss Society and of the Commonwealth Winter Sports Games (St. Moritz), Honorary Secretary of the Anglo-Swiss Inter-Parliamentary Group, then replied for the guests. He opened his address with some words in German, much appreciated by the audience, and then expressed his feelings for Switzerland in a few sincere and well-chosen words. He thanked the Club for their invitation to himself and his wife. Lady Selkirk, incidentally, is herself a great skier and a past Ladies' Ski Champion of Great Britain.

Lord Selkirk's advice in the words of Burns "On with the dance, let joy be unconfined" was accepted forthwith. The happy atmosphere never flagged, and not many left before "Auld Lang Syne". We meant it, when we sang "For they are jolly good fellows". Francine and Edgar Bonvin may have been the two figures in the centre of the brilliant ballroom, but with the time-honoured words, the City Swiss Club as a whole was sped on its way into the 111th year.

MM

BIRTHDAYS

We have just heard that the following subscribers to the "S.O." have celebrated their birthdays recently: Mr. M. Ehrsam (70) on 14th December, Mrs. Emily Delaloye (79) and Mr. J. L. Guggenheim (87) on 15th December. Other old friends who will be celebrating their birthdays within the next few weeks are: Mr. W. Renz (68) on 2nd January, Mrs. E. P. Locher (73) on 4th and Mr. A. Baenziger (72) on 7th January.

We wish them and any other readers whose birthdays will fall within the next few weeks, many happy returns of the day.

SWISS CLUB MANCHESTER

Annual Banquet and Ball 12th November 1966



For many years now, our compatriots of the North and their many friends look forward with great expectation to the unique occasion in the year when they are able to meet in large numbers, in brilliant and exciting surroundings, and through their own individuality and imagination give the evening the festive look and congenial and warm atmosphere we all so much like and appreciate.

For the third year in succession, we were honoured by the presence of our Ambassador and Madame de Fischer who were able to meet quite a number of old acquaintances, club members of Manchester and their friends, and including a representation from Yorkshire. Amongst the guests were also the Vice-President of the Manchester Rifle Club, Mr. Ewart and his good Lady, and our Consul and Madame Brunner.

After the serving of the aperitifs, our Ambassador and Madame de Fischer and the President and Madame Berner, both Ladies having been presented with lovely bouquets, received the members and guests, quite an imposing number, after which we moved to the well-known dining-hall, a lovely and imposing sight, as usual well-decorated with a large and colourful array of flowers. The Club's flag, once so well described in the "Swiss Observer", was again in the background of the presidential chair and for many Swiss, especially of the older age group, it awakened memories of past years, of people long since gone but still very much alive within us.

The dinner over, the President rose to propose the loyal toast after which followed the toast to Switzerland, very ably and with friendly humour given by our good friend and associate member Mr. D. Fisher. He had to do this at a moment's notice, and the warm applause which followed his words was reward enough for his gallantry.

The President then welcomed the Ambassador and Madame de Fischer and expressed to both of them the satisfaction and gladness of the Swiss of the North to have had the opportunity of seeing them three times in succession at our Annual Banquet and Ball. Their untiring interest in our activities, their warm feelings for our families have endeared them greatly to all of us. We all felt very strongly that their presence with us brought us

nearer to our homeland. Our President expressed the sincere wish that they would leave us only with good and happy memories and our pledge to keep their name always alive.

It was a great pleasure for us all to receive again Mr. and Mrs. Ewart, Vice-President of the Manchester Rifle Club, with whom we have been in close relationship for many years, and the mutual contacts now extend also to Switzerland. Hope was expressed that many more of our younger men would visit the club's rifle ranges and through greater interest and enthusiasm uphold a sport which after all has such a great tradition in our own country.

A warm welcome was also extended to our Consul and Madame Brunner, both very faithful supporters of our club-life. Mr. Brunner has our interests very much at heart, and gladly extends his helping hand to the needy and less privileged compatriots. Our president emphasized the point that much useful and selfless work was done by Mr. Brunner and his staff of which many people were unaware.

Our President found particularly warm words for our British friends, some of them contributing most actively to the good work of our Societies, within or outside our Committees, enjoying our friendship and maintaining ties of great affection with Switzerland. He also tried to explain our own feeling towards our host-country as follows: "... on old Swiss, his work done and finished, might find it difficult to decide ... stay here or go back? Even if this were possible he might still choose to finish his life here, in the midst of his friends, of his memories. What greater tribute could be paid to you, dear British friends, than to think of that old gentleman who found it so difficult to detach himself from you ..."

We remembered our compatriot Dr. H. W. Egli, first President of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the U.K. and our Ambassador was asked to forward to him our good wishes and that this Federation of which our two Manchester Societies are now members, may go from strength to strength.

We regretted very much the absence of Mrs. Mariann Meier, the able Editor of our "Swiss Observer", who on many occasions here and in Switzerland broke a lance for us. We do hope most sincerely to see her next year.

"Dolce in Fondo", by that our President meant the Ladies. How easy it was for him to find the appropriate words to express to them our very warm feelings, our pleasure, our thankfulness for what they are doing day after day, within our families, their social activities, the support and help they are giving to our club. It is on a note of well-meant humour that he concluded this part of the address.

Our President was not specially impressed by the two-third majority in the vote of the "Fifth Switzerland", he had expected much more from his compatriots in Switzerland. He hates the idea of various brands of Swiss and felt that even before, nobody would have ever challenged his status as "Swiss tout court". He felt that in spite of the fact that already the fourth generation of his family was residing abroad, and the slight ensuing "Auslaender-tint", they would still accept him in Switzerland as a fully fledged citizen, strong of the close ties of kinship and interest, moral and material with the land of his fathers. In his opinion this new constitutional article has only confirmed, now quite officially, what in a practical way has always existed, and that for this "de facto" situation he has always been thankful to our homeland,

to its diplomatic and consular organisation, who so ably stood beside their compatriots abroad, in good and bad times.

He then very shortly explained some of the club's outstanding activities such as the "Landsgemeinde" and the "1st August" and appealed earnestly to all the club members to show greater interest, to support their committee's work with greater understanding, with their active presence and collaboration, and thus avoid the danger that one day we may be nicknamed the "Altersheim". In this connection our President appealed to them with great force: "... your committee, year after year, untiringly, without complaining and let me say it, sometimes with bitterness in their heart, carry the heavy and responsible burden. We are not an "Altersheim" we do not wish to become one, and it is up to you, only you, to do the necessary".

He thanked with a few heartfelt words all his committee members for the hard work they have put in, also in the last twelve months, and how happy he felt for the daily help, support and encouragement he receives from them. He remembered two members who passed away, a young compatriot taken away in the midst of his activities, from his family and his friends.

Our Ambassador, also in the name of Madame de Fischer, expressed to us their great satisfaction and their sincere pleasure to be once more amongst us, but informed us also of his impending retirement and return to Berne. Although we must always be prepared for some movements in the higher posts of our Country's diplomatic service, this news filled us with sadness and regret. Monsieur de Fischer will certainly be remembered by us all as "The Ambassador" who in spite of the tremendous load of work and responsibility, did find the time to visit us again and again. Two books were presented to him, "History of Manchester" and "English furniture and decoration", to mark the third visit to our community, and may they help to keep his interest in us alive for the years to come.

The words of our Ambassador were warmly applauded, after which Madame de Fischer presented the Swiss Challenge Cup and the Swissair Cup to two of the most stalwart members of our rifle section, Dr. H. R. Bolliger and Mr. J. Scheiwiller.

Before dancing started, the tombola provided a welcome interlude, well stocked with nice and desirable prizes, thanks to the usual generosity of our members and friends. Tickets were sold in no time and our President wished everyone success in this friendly game of luck. Proceeds which were quite substantial will go towards our Social Fund.

The latter part of the evening was devoted to dancing, well directed by an excellent band, a lively and warm atmosphere surrounding us to the last. "Trittst im Morgenrot daher" and "God Save the Queen" concluded another happy and successful chapter in the history of our Club, and the numbers gradually thinning out, we wished each other a safe journey home and "Au revoir".

E. B.

IN MEMORIAM

In loving memory of my beloved husband Frank Seiz who died on 26th December 1964. Never out of my thoughts.

His wife Kathleen.