

King George's flag of honour restored to the swiss community in Great Britain

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

SWISS CLUB MANCHESTER

On Thursday, 30th March, a large gathering of members and friends met at the Excelsior Hotel at Manchester Airport for the first monthly meeting of the Club arranged by its newly elected Committee consisting of Dr. K. Jaggi (President), Dr. H. R. Bolliger (Vice-President), Mr. J. Schweiwiller (Hon. Treasurer), Mr. B. Simon (Hon. Secretary), Mrs. L. Themans, Mr. J. Dürig, Mr. T. Lauber and Mr. H. Mettler.

The recently built hotel was chosen to test the popularity of the locality with Members as an experiment; the large attendance testified to the accuracy of the opinion of the Committee that the change of venue would be well received.

The fare provided for the evening was, however, no experiment as we met for the showing of two films obtained for us through the good offices of our Consul, Monsieur G. Brunner. The first film to be shown was Swiss Newsreel 1966, which also gave details of various Swiss inventions and achievements of absorbing interest. The second film took us on a journey through Eastern Switzerland; a film of a beautiful region to revive nostalgic memories to one who had visited most of the places shown.

These two films were of such interest and beauty that the main part of the evening passed very quickly, and the meeting was universally voted a great success.

The monthly meeting for April was held at the Midland Hotel on Thursday the 27th, on this occasion the purpose being a Jass match organised by Mr. Dürig who provided a prize of a silver ash-tray. There was a good attendance for an event of this kind, which included our Consul and our Past President and Mrs. E. Berner. It may be said, in passing, that any member who can play Jass and did not attend, missed a very pleasant evening and old friends met and new acquaintances were made before and after the game.

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BIRMINGHAM SWISS CLUB

The Club held its Annual General Meeting on 23rd April with 33 members and prospective members enjoying the traditional dinner of *Sauerkraut*, *Rippli* and *Schueblig*. The meeting marked the end of a successful Club Year with a good number of new members joining, which, in the words of the President "provides the essential element of continuity". A proposal to join the Federation of Swiss Clubs was accepted, subject to certain interests of the Club being safeguarded. Members then elected the following committee for the Club Year 1967/68:—

President: Mr. B. R. Flury, Vice-President: Mr. W. Brauchli, Hon. Treasurer: Mr. P. Brun, Relief Officer: Mr. J. F. Flury, Hon. Secretary: Mr. F. J. Niklaus (address: 8, Meaburn Close, Birmingham 29).

OBITUARY

We announce with deep regret the death of one of our young readers, Mr. Bernard Biner, of Bramois/Valais, who was killed in the air crash at Nicosia, serving as a purser.

KING GEORGE'S FLAG OF HONOUR RESTORED TO THE SWISS COMMUNITY IN GREAT BRITAIN

On the occasion of the uprising by BONNIE PRINCE CHARLIE against the Crown of England in 1745, the Swiss Community offered King George II a contingent of 500 men to assist fighting the revolution. In recognition of this offer of assistance, King George presented the Swiss Community with a FLAG OF HONOUR which was entrusted for safe keeping to the only Swiss Society in existence at that time, the Société des Suisses à Londres, which subsequently became La Société de Secours Mutuels des Suisses à Londres, founded in 1703.

The records show that the flag used to be proudly paraded in truly Swiss fashion once a year from the headquarters of the society to the Swiss Church where the members attended a special service. In 1903, the 200th anniversary of the society, a new flag — richly embroidered by hand was presented to the society by the ladies of the Colony. The old and very precious Flag of Honour was then placed in a glass case and displayed in the Swiss Consulate where it has remained ever since. As this flag was showing signs of deterioration, the former Ambassador, Monsieur Béat de Fischer, took it upon himself to have it restored. In this he met with untold difficulties. Eventually the ROYAL SCHOOL OF NEEDLEWORK under the personal patronage of H.R.H. Princess Alice accepted to proceed with the restoration which lasted several months. This work was completed, at considerable expense to Monsieur de Fischer, by December 1966.

As the Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom is now a well established institution, the Société de Secours Mutuels, feel that this famous Flag of Honour be transferred from the custody of the Society to that of the Federation of Swiss Societies.

The President of the Société de Secours Mutuels, Mr. A. Gandon, presented the flag to the Federation at their first meeting after the restoration had been completed. The delegates unanimously accepted the friendly and thoughtful gesture and agreed to a vote of thanks being passed to Monsieur de Fischer. They also consented to the two provisions, viz. that the flag be displayed at the "Forum of Switzerland" at the Swiss Centre, once it had become a reality, and that in the unlikely event of the Federation of Swiss Societies being dissolved, the flag would be returned to the Société de Secours Mutuels. The Swiss Ambassador kindly consented to house the flag in the meantime.

Thus, the Flag of Honour presented to the Swiss Community by King George II in 1745, has been restored to the Swiss in London 222 years later.

"SWISS OBSERVER" PUBLISHING DATES

The "Swiss Observer" is published every second and fourth Friday of the month. Our next issue will appear on 9th June. We shall be glad to receive articles and reports not later than Tuesday, 30th May. Short news items only can be accepted after that date.

The next issue but one will be published on Friday, 23rd June. Material for that issue should be to hand not later than Tuesday, 13th June.