

Birthdays

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BIRTHDAYS

The Editor regrets that she is not aware of any special birthdays or anniversaries for the next fortnight. But she has discovered that on the day the late President Kennedy would have been 50 on 29th May, a good friend of the Swiss in London, the former Vice-Consul Fritz Brugunder, now in Los Angeles, will reach *his* half-century. Many happy returns to him and any other readers whose birthdays take place in the near future.

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Mrs. E. Haydock, Mrs. H. Woodham, Messrs. V. Hendel, H. Kriesi, J. Oertli, G. Poglia, R. Schmid.

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THE "SWISS OBSERVER" THIRTY YEARS AGO

In the first issue in April 1937, we read that Sir Samuel Hoare, First Lord of the Admiralty, had consulted the famous oculist Prof. Vogt in Zurich. — Lausanne University was 400 years old. — Dr. H. P. Zschokke, President of the New Helvetic Society in Switzerland, had given a fascinating lecture to the London Group of the N.S.H. The subject was "Swiss Self-Defence — Spiritual and Economic", and the lecturer dealt with the great danger facing democratic freedom at that time. The spiritual defence, he said, depended on a clear realisation of the necessary elements of Swiss democratic existence: tolerance, impartial justice, freedom of mind and expression, and individuality.

On 10th April, we learned that Federal Councillor Motta, President of the Confederation, had been invited to a banquet by the Swiss Club in Cairo; 300 people attended. — Thirty master watchmakers and their families emigrated to Samara on the Volga to help establish the largest watch factory in Europe (10,000 hands). — Dr. Georges Clar from Basle was entrusted with the catering arrangements at the Paris International Exhibition; he was to be assisted by Hans Badrutt from St. Moritz. — There was a report on the Helvetica Lodge Ladies' Festival under the chairmanship of Mr. Louis Chapuis. — The City Swiss Club had held its A.G.M. under Mr. P. F. Boehringer. It is sad to think that of the thirteen members of the Committee — not one of them is still with us.

The next issue carried a long article, mainly historic, in German on "Warum baute Frankreich die Maginot Linie und verstärkt sie heute? Warum befestigt die Schweiz den Rhein?" — Oscar Gambazzi had presided over the Unione Ticinese's Annual Banquet and Ball at Pagani's.

Another Annual Banquet and Ball no longer organised today was reported on in the issue of 24th April 1937, that of the Swiss Club in Birmingham. President: Mr. P.

Brun. — That day, the paper also carried a full page (twice today's size) of reporting and large photos of a visit of the Swiss Minister with members of the Swiss Colony to the Daily Mail Ideal Home Exhibition. Old friends are easily recognised apart from Monsieur Paravicini and Monsieur Rezzonico, Mr. and Mrs. Binggueli, Messrs. G. Marchand, Louis Chapuis, C. Campart and J. J. Schneider.

"To Switzerland in 3 hours by Swissair" said an advertisement: *Fastest Service, Stewardess on Board, Luxurious Liner, you land fresh and happy.* That was on 1st May. The second part of a report on Edward Shackleton's talk at the Swiss Mercantile Society on "Exploring in the Unknown Arctic" appeared in the same issue, as did a write-up of the Annual Banquet and Ball of the Swiss Club in Charlotte Street under Mr. F. Hediger's chairmanship. — Another report informed readers of a Swiss Exhibition at the Union House in Lower Regent Street, London; the photographs showed a Bernese woman putting plants in the Alpine Rock Garden on show, and the Swiss Minister pointing out Segantini's masterpiece "Spring Pastures".

In the following issue, there was an item that the "Graf Zeppelin" had flown over part of Switzerland during army manoeuvres — with no explanation given by the Germans. — "Zunehmende Auswanderung" and "Open-Air Parliaments" were two of the articles reproduced on the same day. — The Swiss Accordion Club had given a concert at the Swiss Club.

On 15th May, it was the 18th Anniversary Number that was sent out to readers. The centre page is missing, and then comes a long report about Swissair's activities and several illustrated pages on "Sicherheit im Luftverkehr". — Our old friend A. Tall contributed a short article in Romansh.

On 22nd May, there was a report on the funeral of Walter Mittelholzer whose death had been reported in the previous issue. The great pioneer of aviation had lost his life on a mountaineering expedition in Austria. The Editor devoted a full page to the memory of a great man.

The last issue of May 1937 carried the astonishing news that African sand had been carried to Switzerland in a gale. — A letter from the Home Secretary was reproduced, expressing Their Majesties' appreciation of the congratulatory message sent to them by the Swiss Colony on the occasion of their Coronation. — An interview with the wife of the Consul-General in Dublin, Madame Benziger, made light reading. — Two English ladies contributed articles on Switzerland, one on "Legendary in Stone at Zurich" and the other "Summering in the Realm of the Matterhorn".

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