

# Swiss Welfare Office

Objekttyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): **- (1969)**

Heft 1566

PDF erstellt am: **29.04.2024**

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# NEWS FROM THE COLONY

## YORKSHIRE SWISS CLUB

A few years ago the Bradford Club combined with the much younger Yorkshire Swiss Club and, under the inspiring leadership of Prof. J. P. Inebnit, has become a united group creating a new and vital body which can look forward with confidence to a bright future. It is thanks to him and his long-standing and friendly contacts in the educational field, that our Society has found a good and pleasant home in the British Council House near the University in Leeds and an occasional but welcome *pied-à-terre* in the Bradford Foreign Circle, which allows us to maintain close connections with members and friends in this neighbouring city.

May I be allowed to say a few words about Bradford itself, an agglomeration of over 300,000 inhabitants, looking back on a thousand years of history. In the early beginning it was a well-known market centre, the fairs being known to last five days at a time. The manufacture of woollens left an indelible mark on the city's life and was, after a period of hundreds of years, substituted by the manufacture of worsteds; at one time over 300 mills could be counted within its boundaries. The great specialities were fabrics made of alpaca and mohair and even today many foreign consumers and producers look to Bradford for their supplies. One famous name was that of S. C. Lister, later to become Lord Masham, who introduced silk and velvet and created a great industrial firm, still very active in the town to this day. Bradford is the chief wool-buying centre in this country, and its connections with South America and Australia are very important. The town was almost entirely built of local freestone which, under the influence of the smoke produced by thousands of chimneys, private and industrial, has given it a somewhat gloomy appearance and has certainly not helped to embellish it.

It was therefore with a great sense of relief that we entered the premises of the "Foreign Circle" leaving cold and gloom behind us. It was on Friday, 7th March that we met in a warm and cosy room at Eldon Place for the traditional yearly Film-Show. The President being absent in Switzerland, it fell to the Vice-President to conduct the proceedings for that evening. It was indeed a refreshing and strengthening sight to see such a good number of members and friends, over 50 of them, of all age groups, some coming long distances, just to be able to be amongst us.

We are much indebted to the "Secrétariat des Suisses à l'Etranger" in Berne who, through the kind offices of the Swiss Embassy in London, provided us with two films, "Selection 1968", in German (black and white) and "Berne, the town in the heart of Europe" in English (colour). Both were greatly applauded by the audience and we can compliment our Committee for having made such a good choice and our authorities for having put at our disposal a documentary of true culture, with artistic value and technical perfection, and giving us the image we like to have of our homeland.

During the interval, refreshments were served and we were given the opportunity to have a friendly chat and make new acquaintances and discuss matters of interest to the Club and ourselves. A nice variation in the programme was the showing of a personal film of our President, taken in 1950 in the Pestalozzi Childrens Village near Trogen and the arrival of the first English children. We

were particularly moved to see the great happiness in the young faces. What a tremendous debt of gratitude is due to the founder of this great humanitarian work; the name of Dr. Walter Robert Corti will be remembered in deep thankfulness by thousands of people all over the world.

It was a successful and pleasant evening, well supported by the whole Club; an encouragement to our Committee to persevere in their efforts to create continuous and increasing interest in the work we are doing in a worthwhile cause.

E.B.

## SWISS WELFARE OFFICE

At the end of this year, the Welfare Office for Swiss Girls in Great Britain will be celebrating its 20th anniversary. The work done during the past two decades is of no mean proportions, and it will be given its due praise at the jubilee.

At the Annual General Meeting on 17th March, the past year was reviewed. Steady progress was reported and satisfactory activities, helping girls and women in need, both by giving information and by practical help and personal assistance. The organisation consider themselves fortunate in having an excellent Welfare Officer in Mrs. Kind. First-class relations with the Swiss Embassy, the Swiss Benevolent Society, etc., and several organisations in Switzerland, as well as with a number of British bodies, not least the Home Office and the Police, are also a great asset and much appreciated.

The meeting, which was chaired by Mrs. M. H. Ellis, M.B.E., was attended by the Honorary President, Madame R. Keller. In the Committee's report, the departure of Monsieur F. Ansermoz was regretted. It was also said that the Committee had not relaxed their efforts in persuading the Council of Europe to include a measure in the "Au Pair Charter" whereby *au pair* girls should be compelled to register with the respective Embassy on arrival in a foreign country.

The financial support given to the Welfare Office by the Swiss Benevolent Society in London, by Confederation and Cantons and three women's organisations in Switzerland ("Amies de la Jeune Fille", "Pro Filia" and "Evangelische Frauenhilfe") allows the work to be carried on, but it could not be done without the devotion of Welfare Worker and officers. "Welfare Office for Swiss Girls in Great Britain" is a long name, yet hardly implies that the lofty room at the Swiss Hostel for Girls in Hampstead is the ever-available centre where many a girl in need and distress has found succour and a haven of peace.

MM

## "SWISS OBSERVER" PUBLICATION DATES

The "Swiss Observer" is published every second and fourth Friday of the month. Our next issue will appear on 11th April. We shall be glad to receive articles and reports not later than Tuesday, 1st April. Short news items only can be accepted after that date.

Our next issue but one will be published on Friday, 25th April. All contributions for that number should be to hand not later than Tuesday, 15th April.