

Forthcoming events

Objekttyp: **Group**

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

Band (Jahr): **- (1970)**

Heft 1584

PDF erstellt am: **01.05.2024**

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Every Thursday, from 6 to 7.30 p.m. — Discussion Circle in English — Young men specially invited. Tea from 6 to 6.15 p.m. Swiss Y.M.C.A., London Central Y.M.C.A. Building, Great Russell Street, W.C.1.

JANUARY

Thursday 15th. 7.45 p.m. Swiss Hostel for Girls, 9-11 Belsize Grove, N.W.3. Nouvelle Société Helvétique. OPEN FILM EVENING. "Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe". See special announcement "Double Bill".

Wednesday 14th. Swiss Mercantile Society. Monthly Meeting. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 20th. Royal Festival Hall 8 p.m. Nikita Magaloff plays Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 2.

Saturday 24th. Swiss Mercantile Society. Annual Banquet and Ball. Dorchester Hotel. (Not in February!)

Tuesday 27th. Swiss Club Edinburgh. 8 p.m. 187 Canongate Fondue Party.

Tuesday 27th. City Swiss Club. Card Evening.

Thursday 29th. 7.45 p.m. Swiss Hostel for Girls, 9-11 Belsize Grove, N.W.3. Nouvelle Société Helvétique. OPEN MEETING. Films on Swiss Mountaineering Schools and Talk in English by Mr. Denis Bertholet. See special announcement "Double Bill".

OBITUARY

It is with deep regret that we announce the death of Mr. J. A. F. Regamey, of 2 Elm Court, Elm Grove, Berkhamsted, Herts. He came to this country before the first world war, and his friends will wish to join us in expressing sympathy to Mrs. Regamey and the family in their sad bereavement.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We wish to thank the following subscribers for adding donations to their subscriptions or Christmas Greetings, and/or for taking out or renewing gift subscriptions for friends or old-age pensioners:

Mrs. H. A. Clarke, Mrs. E. D. Crack, Mrs. S. E. Degerland, Mrs. D. Huber, Miss H. Knobel (Bienne), Mrs. W. Meier, Miss O. Meuwly, Mrs. Ph. Walker, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur P.-H. Aubaret (New York), Monsieur le Consul E. Ribi (Casablanca), and Messrs. V. Abate, K. V. Arnold, H. Baeumler (Aesch Birmensdorf, Zurich), A. P. Berti, P. Bessire, W. E. Bion, E. M. Bircher (Bissone, Ticino), O. F. Boehringer, H. R. Bolliger, F. P. Bovet, O. Braga (Sigrino, Ticino), W. Diener (Nyeri), L. A. Durnat, R. Duruz, E. C. Enz, A. Faes (Zurich), F. G. Ferrari, H. Furger (Zurich), C. Giuliani, R. D. Hallam, H. Jeanmaire (Montana/Vermala), E. Laechler, N. H. Leuzinger, W. Preiswerk (Basle), E. Ritzmann (Arlesheim, Baselland), W. Schlappfer, R. de Watteville.

We are most grateful for their kind and welcome support.

OSEC NEWS

Didacta: World Fair for Educational Equipment

The circle of exhibitors who will be taking part in the 10th Didacta, in Basle, from May 28th to June 1st, 1970, is even wider and more international than at the last fair in Hanover in 1968. The number of exhibitors registered so far totals 480, the countries represented 24, and the area covered by the stands 280,000 sq. ft. In addition to almost all the countries of Western Europe, Eastern Europe will be represented by Hungary, Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, and overseas countries by Argentina, Australia, Canada, the United States of America, Israel and Japan, certain countries joining forces to put on joint displays. The field of audio-visual techniques and self-training methods will be of increasing importance in the future; the new techniques will be of direct interest not only to schools and educational establishments at all levels, but also to circles responsible for training of adults, industrial and commercial personnel and new recruits.

A new banking service: the Swiss Cheque

With a view to developing payments trade without resorting to cash, Swiss banks have proceeded with the creation of a standard credit card known as the Swiss Cheque. The new credit card is both proof of identity and a guarantee; possession of one signifies that the bank guarantees the payment of cheques (made out on the official bank forms) up to a maximum of Fr. 300 (US \$ 69.70). Such cheques will be honoured without any enquiries having to be made. This means of replacing cash is not limited to Switzerland. In fact, the banks of certain European countries, like Germany, Austria, the Benelux and Italy, have also introduced the credit-card system and set up a joint organization known as the Eurocheque system, which places the credit card on a European scale; the Swiss Cheque also forms part of this scheme.

A new betatron for medical purposes

It is over 20 years since the Swiss firm of Brown, Boveri & Co. launched out into the production of high power betatrons. Today there are nearly 60 plants for medical purposes in operation. After the installation in 1951 of the first betatron developing 31-MeV (million electron-volts) in Zurich hospital, Brown, Boveri & Co. created in 1959 the first mobile 35-MeV betatron for medical purposes, known under the name of "Asklepitron 35", of which there are 36 in operation today. For several years now medical circles have been pressing for a machine capable of developing even higher power. Today this is an accomplished fact. Taking

advantage of its great experience in this field, BBC has just produced a 45-MeV plant. The improvements made in the machine at present make it the most modern of its kind in the world today.

Swiss cereals to aid the developing countries

Under the International Convention of Food Aid, Switzerland has agreed to supply 32,000 tons of wheat annually to the developing countries in need of it, or to pay them the equivalent. This is an annual obligation representing a sum of about 12 million francs (US \$ 2.79 million). The Federal Council recently came to a decision regarding the allocation of this aid for the agricultural year 1969-1970. The FAO world food programme will receive half of the Swiss contribution, i.e. 16,000 tons of wheat, part of which will be delivered in the form of flour. The balance of 16,000 tons will be divided among several beneficiaries, including the International Red Cross Committee and the United Nations Relief and Work Aid Scheme (UNRWA) for refugees in Palestine.

Complementary Credits for Swiss Technical Cooperation

The Swiss Federal Council has just granted an additional loan of 4 million Swiss francs (US \$ 0.93 million) for the financing—not provided for when the budget for 1969 was made out—of important Swiss Technical Cooperation schemes in the developing countries. The government has also released a sum of 1.2 million Swiss francs (US \$ 0.28 million) for the creation in the Chad of three new rural apprenticeship centres, which will raise the number of such centres to five. The execution of these projects has been put in the hands of three Swiss experts who will each be assisted by a Chad specialist. In addition, the Federal Council has fixed Switzerland's contribution to the United Nations Development Scheme for 1970 at 3.1 million dollars.

Beer consumption in Switzerland

On an average, 74.9 litres of beer were consumed per head of the population in Switzerland in 1969, that is to say 1.2 litres more than the previous year. Generally speaking, beer consumption in Switzerland is lower than that in other European countries. For the period 1968-1969, which came to an end in September, the breweries broached 4,607 million hectolitres of beer, i.e. 2.95% more than during the period 1967-1968. This slight increase is insufficient to make up for the falling off noted at the end of the previous period. Imports amounted to 99,270 hectolitres, exports to 20,233 hectolitres. In 1968 the tax on beer produced for the Swiss Confederation the sum of 62.5 million francs (U.S. \$14.53 million), the increase compared with 1967 being 2.4 million francs (U.S. \$558,000).