

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

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1948)

Heft: 1095

Rubrik: Schweizerbund

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SCHWEIZERBUND (SWISS CLUB.)

Swiss Evening with the Basler Jodler Gruppe
at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1.
on Saturday, July 31st, 1948.

The "Schweizerbund" (Swiss Club) entertained their members and friends to a "Swiss Evening"; on Saturday, July 31st, 1948, at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1.

This event was advertised as a "Gemütlicher Abend" and it certainly proved to be a genial and homely affair; well over 400 persons attended this gathering, which started and ended with a "swing". This Society, which only a few months ago, passed through a serious crisis, has made a remarkable recovery, and great credit is due, in the first instance, to its President, Mr. E. Siegrist, who by his energetic handling of the situation, has brought about a desired revival, and secondly to the members, for having faithfully stuck to the old "flag" and thus given their Society a new lease of life.

The principal attraction at this function proved to be the "Basler Jodler Gruppe", consisting of twenty-four members, who had travelled from Basle, on the invitation of the "Schweizerbund"; amongst other guests were: the Swiss Minister, Monsieur Henry de Torrenté, Dr. E. Bircher of the Swiss Legation, Herr Brechbühl, a member of the Government of the canton of Basle-Town, at present in London, Mr. A. Stauffer, Editor of the Swiss Observer, Mr. & Mrs. C. Berti, President of the Unione Ticinese, Mr. & Mrs. F. G. Sommer, President of Swiss Male Choir and Mr. & Mrs. Maeder.

Further visitors were, the members of the Rhenania Sports Club, Basle, who, after journeying 500 miles down the Rhine in their 60ft. long boat, had then rowed up the Thames from Tilbury to Charing Cross Pier, bringing with them the Olympic flag, which flew in Switzerland during the Winter Games, and a scroll from the City of Basle to the people of London. (The latter was presented in person to the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House) and a group of young boys and girls who were on holiday in the Isle of Wight under the auspices of the "Pro Juventute".

Punctually at 4 p.m. dancing started to the tune of the Regina Sextet Band, and half an hour later tea was served.

Now followed an hour of most enjoyable entertainment by the members of the "Basler Jodler Gruppe", it started with a tune "Salute to London" by the "Ländler Kapelle Bornbuebe", and then the choir sang with much feeling "O mein Heimatland" which was vigorously applauded. Mr. Willy Bolliger followed with an exhibition of "Fahnenschwingen", accompanied by the "Ländlerkapelle", this act, judging by the applause, seemed to be greatly appreciated by the audience.

Two more songs "Alti Fründe" by P. Müller and "Hochzyt ha" by R. Fellmann, rendered by the choir, proved that they are an *Ensemble* of first class singers and musicians, and their conductor, Mr. H. Hartmann, is heartily to be congratulated on his leadership. Dancing then continued until 6 p.m. when the "Grand Opening of the Bar" was announced, tea cups disappeared like lightning and a brisk exodus to the Bars could be witnessed.

Duly refreshed and fortified, everyone flocked back into the Banqueting Hall, where a cold supper was served, and what a supper it was! I hate to make the mouths of my readers water, but here are a few items of the Menu: Charcuterie Bernoise, Salami, Mortadella, Basler Klöpfer, Fleischkäs, Bündnerfleisch, Emmenthaler, Gruyère, Gorgonzola, Camembert, Schabzieger cheeses and biscuits and Basler Leckerli.

I understand that all these good things, which many of us have not tasted for years, were brought over by the "Jodlers", which was one reason more to endear them to the company; and what about the wine? Bottles of Sasella, Inferno, Neuchâtel, etc., etc., appeared, and with the coffee, Kirsch and Pflümliwasser was served, it was a feast fit for Kings.

These various beverages having cleared the throats of our singers, Friedel Nyffenegger and Emmy Braun, the two Swiss nightingales, sang a Jodel Duet very beautifully, and the "Jodler Gruppe" and "Ländler Kapelle" sang and played with admirable vivacity.

If the fine vintages served encouraged our singers in their endeavours, it also loosened the tongues of the various speakers, who now went into action. I am not altogether convinced whether this "lubrication" was a good thing; my humble opinion is, that, with a few commendable exceptions, the speeches were far too long, especially as most of them were given in different languages, with which not everybody was conversant.

The first speaker was the President of the "Schweizerbund", Mr. E. Siegrist, who in English, welcomed the Swiss Minister, the official guests and the entire company. He gave a *résumé* of the history of the Club, its endeavours and aspirations, and expressed warm thanks to the "Basler Jodler Gruppe" for their visit and for having so pleasantly enriched the evening by their beautiful singing and playing.

Mr. Siegrist, extended special thanks to Messrs. Ch. Strubin, G. Bruschweiler, Adolf Schmid and G. Wyss for the financial help they had given him, so that this function could be held. On resuming his seat, Mr. Siegrist was heartily cheered.

Monsieur Henry de Torrenté, the Swiss Minister, very briefly, in French, thanked the President and the members of the "Schweizerbund" for having given him an opportunity to spend an evening in the midst of the Club.

He congratulated the Society on their "renaissance" and wished them a prosperous future; he also thanked the Jodlers for their visit which had given so much pleasure and satisfaction. (Loud applause).



The following speakers then addressed the gathering: Sig. C. Berti, President of the Unione Ticinese, in Italian, Sig. J. Gallo, in Romansch and Herr Werner Bossert, President of the "Basler Jodler Gruppe" in Baseldütsch.

During the dancing which followed the oratorial outburst, a tombola was held and the very attractive prizes, amongst them a Ladies gold wrist watch, bottles of Whiskey, Kirsch, Campari, Grappa, Pflümli, Salami, Brissago's, Stumpen, boxes of chocolates and cheeses, etc., etc., were displayed in front of the band stand and many an envious glance was directed on this elaborate exhibition.

Through the courtesy of the Tobler Chocolate A.G. in Berne, the participants received each a médailon of chocolate, depicting the "Bäregrabe" on one side and on the other side the Swiss Houses of Parliament.

Mr. Fritz Siegrist, from Basle, brother of the President, then, amidst cheering presented, on behalf of the "Basler Jodler Gruppe" a string of cow-bells and a decorated granite rock to the Club, as a memento of their visit, which goes to prove, that they are not only fine singers, but equally generous people. These gifts were suitably acknowledged by the President.

This jolly and enjoyable afternoon and evening came to a close shortly before 11 p.m. and everyone left the Dorchester Hotel with the feeling of having spent happy hours amongst genial company.

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We have received a list of the winning numbers of the Tombola, here they are: No's: 128, 194, 196, 211, 369, 527, 741, 811, 958, 1007, 1276, 1406, 1449, 1472, 1482, 1490, 1623, 1798, 1865, 2059, 2087, 2128, 2245, 2245, 2324, 4526, 4661, 2347, 2362, 2371, 2398, 2422, 2437, 2454, 2665, 2736, 2894, 2926, 3066, 3081, 3424, 3425, 3684, 3860, 3866, 3889, 3894, 4012, 4031, 4033, 4284, 4416, 4543, 4686 4701.

Those who have a winning ticket, should send same to the Hon. Secretary, "Schweizerbund", 74, Charlotte Street, W.1, the prize will then be posted on to them.

PHOTOGRAPHS

of the SWISS EVENING at the DORCHESTER and 1st of August Festival at the Coliseum, of the Jodlers, Fahnenchwinger, Swiss Male Choir, the Minister on the stage, Ticinese play, audience, groups, etc., obtainable from:

Schweizerbund, 74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

We take this opportunity to thank all those present at the Dorchester for their support, especially in respect of the Tombola. For winning tickets see above.

So that we may learn for future occasions, any criticism or suggestions are welcome.

The Basle Jodlers also asked us to express their thanks to the Swiss Colony, since they have never had a more attentive audience.

The Committee.