

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: 1088

Nachruf: Paul Frederick Boehringer 1879-1948 †
Autor: [s.n.]

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Paul Frederick Boehringer

1879 — 1948

*Death has come gently to him,
as light winds, wandering through groves of bloom.*

On April 6th, shortly before sunset, Paul F. Boehringer, passed peacefully away at his home "Le Chalet," in Peacehaven, Sussex.

By divine mercy he was spared a long and agonizing death struggle and, in the presence of his life's companion, in whose tender care he was, during his long and courageously borne illness, he closed his eyes for ever as in sleep.

An eventful life, rich in achievement and accomplishments has thus come to a close.

Paul Boehringer was a fighter, with almost stubborn tenacity he stood up against odds, and many a cause which seemed to be almost lost, was retrieved at the last moment by his unwavering determination.

It is the world's way, that strong men meet at times with equally persistent opposition, and when strength of will is paired with out-spokenness — often merciless — clashes are bound to occur.

Whether one agreed with Paul Boehringer's opinion or was against it, none could deny that he fought fair and without malice, and many a heated argument was settled with a handshake.

Through all his life, he stood up for the small man, who, whether deservedly or undeservedly came to grief in the battle of life. To him, he tendered a helping hand and inspired him with new courage, and new hope, and many are indebted to him for having seen in the darkest hour of their lives a ray of sunshine and a glimmer of hope.

During the long years of his stay in this country, he remained faithful to his native land, he was a great patriot.

He loved his country, and his native town of Basle with all his might, for its glory and good name he worked incessantly, and with a deep sense of responsibility. Our country has lost in Paul Boehringer one of its most faithful sons.

Paul Frederick Boehringer was born on August 11th, 1879, in Basle, at the old rectory in the Kellergässli, the first son of Paul Boehringer and Marie Lang, pastor at the "Peterskirche" and Professor of Theology at the University of Basle.

When only two years old, he had the misfortune to lose his mother, who died under an operation. She was the daughter of the eminent preacher and spiritual leader of the "Reformrichtung," Heinrich Lang, then preacher at St. Peter in Zurich.

His father, whose time was fully occupied with the work at the Peterskirche, and as a lecturer of Church History at the University, found it advisable to give the young and intelligent boy a second mother, in the person of Ella, the eldest daughter of Pastor David Altherr of Lucerne.

From this second union of his father, two sons (twins) were born, Hans and Fritz, who grew up together with Paul, until, after an apprenticeship with the banking firm v. Speyr in Basle, he left, at an early age for England.

Paul Boehringer had spent a happy youth at the parental home; he was a gifted musician, and together with his two younger brothers they often played together (piano, violin and violincello) in the intimate circle of the family and at children's parties.

He was educated at the "Gymnasium" in Basle, and at the well-known Institute for Boys "Grünau" at Wabern, near Berne; where he showed much promise.

Paul Boehringer was confirmed at the Peterskirche in Basle by Pastor Herzog, a colleague of his father.

During his long stay in this country he kept in close touch with his relations in Switzerland, paying them regular visits. Previous to the first world war he had the pleasure of a visit of his parents and

later on of his remaining brother and sister-in-law, Pastor Hans Boehringer, of the "Heiligkreuz" church in St. Gall.

* * *

Shortly before the present century Paul Boehringer arrived in this country, which was to become his second home for over 50 years; he entered the banking firm of S. Japhet, but in 1904 he joined the late E. A. Scheidegger and the two together formed a company under the name of Polyglot Printing Co., Ltd., occupying premises at Garlick Hill, off Queen Victoria Street, E.C.2.

The partnership was dissolved after six years, and Paul Boehringer started on his own account under the name of The Frederick Printing Co., Ltd., at the same address and later on at 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2, of which firm he remained Managing Director until his death.

In spite of encountering at one time a difficult period, he built up a good business in which he was joined some years ago by his son.

Right from the beginning of his stay in London, he took a keen interest in the life of the Swiss Colony of which, in later years, he became an influential member.

He joined the Swiss Mercantile Society in 1898 of which he became President a few years later, and in 1917 this Society honoured him with an honorary membership for the many services he had rendered.

In 1905, he became a member of the City Swiss Club, of which he was twice President, namely in 1920 and again in 1936 and 1937.

Amongst other Societies in which he was active were the Swiss Rifle Club (Secretary); Swiss Club (Schweizerbund); Swiss Philatelic Society (President) and the Nouvelle Société Helvétique.

Perhaps the greatest service which he rendered to the Colony was the foundation in 1920, of a Swiss paper, called the "*Swiss Observer*."

To this paper, he devoted much of his time, and soon it became his favourite hobby in which he took an unflagging interest right to the end of his life.

Acting as Publisher, and at one time Editor, he was joined by a small number of enthusiastic collaborators, who, when other work claimed his attention, carried on the task.

This undertaking had brought no riches to him and to those who shared his labours; in fact considerable financial sacrifices had to be made by all of them, and if this paper has been able to make its appearance up to this day, it is principally due to Paul Boehringer's indomitable optimism, his generosity and the strong will to carry out a task which he set himself, nearly 30 years ago, and which he considered to be a patriotic duty.

The "*Swiss Observer*" will at all times be a shining memorial to him, and an achievement of no mean importance, and the greatest tribute to his life's work would be, to be able to carry on in his

spirit, with the same courage, and the same determination.

Besides his many other activities he was an ardent Freemason; he was the oldest member of the "L'Entente Cordiale" Lodge which he joined in 1904; being considered one of the pillars of this Lodge, he was elected into the chair on two occasions, once in 1910 and again in 1942.

In 1912, he entered the Chapitre La France, where he occupied the chair in 1922.

With regard to Freemasonry, it must be stated that he was one of the three Swiss who conceived the idea of the only Swiss Lodge under the English Constitution, which culminated in 1927, when with twenty-one of his compatriots, the Helvetica Lodge was founded, of which he was the second Master, and the Treasurer at the time of his death. He was twice honoured by the Grand Lodge of England, once in 1916 with the appointment of London Grand Rank, and in 1940 he was raised to the dignity of Grand Lodge Officer with the rank of P.G.St.B.

Besides the Craft and Royal Arch, Paul Boehringer extended his masonry also into the Secret Monitor and into Mark masonry and the Royal Ark Mariners degree. In the Craft and Royal Arch, he obtained Grand Honours, a distinction so far only few Swiss have reached. In the order of the Secret Monitor in which he was inducted in 1928 he was, as far as is known to his friends, the first Swiss obtaining Grand rank in 1944. In the Royal Ark Mariners Degree, he occupied the highest position in 1940.

In 1913, Paul Boehringer was married to Elsie, Martha Grey, who presented him with a son, and many of his friends will remember happy hours spent at their homes in Chiswick and Peacehaven.

* * *

A full and active life has now come to an end, a life which was well worth living, and as one who has known Paul Boehringer for over thirty years, and worked with him in close collaboration, for nearly twenty of them, the parting is a sad one; we have been friends together in sunshine and in shade, fare-well dear friend, may God in his infinite Mercy grant you Peace.

To his widow and son goes out the sympathy of his numerous friends who have loved and respected him.

In our dark hours, to know that our lost friend is still living, still loving us, still ours, in the highest and best sense, must be unspeakably consoling.

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A funeral service was held at the West Chapel, Golders Green Crematorium, on Monday, April 12th, at 2.30 p.m.

The Chapel was filled to capacity. The Rev. H. Blum conducted the service, during which he described the career of Paul Boehringer, and M. Louis Chapuis, on behalf of the friends of the departed, spoke touching words of farewell.

THE Editor and the Publishers of the "*Swiss Observer*" wish to acknowledge the receipt of the numerous letters of condolence on the occasion of the passing away of Mr. P. F. Boehringer, Founder, Publisher and for several years Editor of our paper.

These proofs of sympathy in the great loss we have sustained have deeply touched us, and we wish to express our heartfelt thanks to all those who have so kindly written to us.

Amongst the many letters received, were the following:—

WALTER DE BOURG,
Chargé d'Affaires, Dublin.

Dublin, April 12th, 1948.

The Editor,
Swiss Observer,
London.

Sir,

It is with consternation that the Legation has heard of the death of your Publisher and Founder, Mr. Paul Frederick Boehringer.

The services "*The Swiss Observer*" and Mr. Boehringer have rendered to the Swiss cause and in particular to the Swiss Colony in Great Britain, and we can say to our Colonies in the British Commonwealth, are inestimable.

I, myself, who have known Mr. Boehringer personally for many years during my appointment in London, have always found in him great understanding and assistance in any questions or problems of which his opinion was sought relating to the Swiss Colony and its members.

The Legation and I, personally, wish to express our deep sympathy to the Editor and to the Publishers of "*The Swiss Observer*" in this great loss.

Yours sincerely,

W. de Bourg.

* * *

E. HOFSTETTER,
Swiss Consular Agent, Balloch.

Balloch, April 14th, 1948.

The Editor,
Swiss Observer,
London.

Dear Sir,

With deep regret I learned from your letter of 7th April of the passing away of your Founder and at one time Editor, Mr. Paul Frederick Boehringer.

I extend to you, and to the late Mr. Boehringer's relations, my sincere sympathy. There is no doubt that all the Swiss in this country should be grateful to Mr. Boehringer for founding "*The Swiss Observer*," which gives us such valuable information, and which was and is still a friend to every Swiss in this country.

The trying war years particularly made this paper so invaluable, and Mr. Boehringer's passing away is a great loss both to "*The Swiss Observer*" and to the Swiss here.

Yours faithfully,

E. Hofstetter.

A. RENOU,
Hon. Secretary,
Council for the Study of Swiss Problems, London.

London, April 14th, 1948.

Dear Mr. Stauffer,

I have learned with great regrets of the death of your friend and the founder of "*The Swiss Observer*," Mr. P. F. Boehringer.

You must feel the loss very much indeed after all these years of collaboration. He was a man of vision and courage who will never quite be replaced in our Colony which is the poorer for his departure.

Will you please convey to your friends at the "*Swiss Observer*" my sincere sympathy in their sorrow.

Yours sincerely,

A. Renou.

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SWISS CLUB DUNFERMLINE,
Dunfermline.

Dunfermline, April 12th, 1948.

The Editor,
Swiss Observer,
London.

Dear Sir,

The Swiss Colony of Dunfermline learned with deep regret of the passing of your esteemed Publisher and Founder, Mr. Paul F. Boehringer.

We are fully aware of the very great loss sustained by your organisation and in fact, by the Swiss community in general. His untiring work for "*The Swiss Observer*" will long be remembered by all of us.

Please accept herewith, our deepest sympathy.

The Swiss Club, Dunfermline,
A. Burgisser,
Vice-President.

* * *

GOTTFRIED KELLER,
London Correspondent Agence Télégr. Suisse
and Basler Nachrichten

London, April 14th, 1948.

The Editor,
Swiss Observer,
London.

Dear Sir,

It is with very great and real regret that I have just learnt of the passing away of Mr. Paul F. Boehringer.

It will be for others to say what a great and lasting service Mr. Boehringer has rendered to the Swiss Colony in Great Britain by founding "*The Swiss Observer*" and by guiding it through difficult times.

Nevertheless I would like you and Mr. Boehringer, junior, to accept my sincere condolences on this sad occasion.

An outstanding member of the Swiss Colony in this country has gone, whose memory will live long with those who have known him.

Yours very sincerely,

Gottfried Keller.

AGENCE TELEGRAPHIQUE SUISSE, S.A.,
Berne.

Berne, April 12th, 1948.

The Publishers,
Swiss Observer,
London.

Dear Sirs,

It is with deep sorrow that we received your communication of the 7th April, announcing the death of your highly esteemed Publisher and Founder, Mr. Paul F. Boehringer.

We have always appreciated the work done by Mr. Boehringer, and we wish to assure you that we are fully conscious of the loss that his passing away means to a broad public in general and to the Swiss Colony in particular.

Yours faithfully,
Swiss Telegraph Agency,
on behalf of the Director, absent
from Berne,
Dr. A. Gossin,
A Vice-Director.

* * *

UNIONE TICINESE,
London.

London, April 14th, 1948.

The Editor,
Swiss Observer,
London.

Dear Sir,

It is with great regret that we learnt of the death of Mr. P. F. Boehringer, the founder of "*The Swiss Observer*."

On behalf of the committee and members of the Unione Ticinese, I wish to express to you our most heartfelt sympathies.

We will always remember Mr. Boehringer as a true patriot and a staunch friend of our Society, and we shall always be grateful to him, for the hospitality we found in the columns of his paper.

Yours sincerely,

P. de Maria,
Hon. Secretary.

UNIONE TICINESE — SEZIONE FEMMINILE,
London.

London, April 14th, 1948.

The Publishers,
Swiss Observer,
London.

Dear Sirs,

The Sezione Femminile remembering the many kindnesses received from "*The Swiss Observer*" conveys to you their sympathy in your sorrow occasioned by the death of your Founder, Mr. Paul Frederick Boehringer, and feels for you in your deep sense of loss, having too lost their Foundress, Mrs. Teresa Lunghi.

Yours sincerely,
Lucia M. Bonetti,
Hon. Secretary.

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DR. A. LATT,
At one time President of the "Auslandschweizer Kommission" and First Editor of the "Swiss Observer."
Zurich, April 12th, 1948.

A. Stauffer, Esq.,
Editor,
Swiss Observer,
London.

Dear Mr. Stauffer,

Though the news of the death of Mr. Boehringer did not come as a shock after his long illness, it is a moment to remember how much we all owe to his initiative, his fidelity and his belief in the Swiss Colony in London.

Through "*The Swiss Observer*" he has given us a most valuable organ for the exchange of opinion and the preparation of common actions.

I hope you will be able to carry on "*The Swiss Observer*" which was certainly one of the deceased's own wishes.

I can feel what the parting must mean to you, and so let me shake hands with you in memory of your great friend.

Yours sincerely,
A. Lätt.

TO P. F. BOEHRINGER †.
Founder of THE SWISS OBSERVER.

In you, dear Friend, we've lost a friend indeed,
One of the stalwarts of this Colony,
Whose open hand and helpful sympathy
Were always there for any one in need.

All worthy causes found you in the lead,
Love of the homeland matched your charity;
You steered the "S.O." to its destiny
Like a true Swiss, in outlook, faith and creed.

Now lies that great heart still, beating no more,
That active brain for ever in repose,
That great soul wing'd into eternity.

We, who are left upon this earthly shore,
Will truly honour him as one of those,
Who will live on — cherished — in memory.

GALLUS.