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SWISS CLUB MANCHESTER.

Annual Banquet and Ball, Midland Hotel, Manchester.

President: Mr. Ermano Berner.

On Saturday, 10th November, the Manchester Swiss Club celebrated its annual "Grütlifeier" by a Banquet and Ball. As usual, a reception with cocktail bar was the start of the proceedings and by the time the "Maitre d'Hotel" announced that dinner was served, the gathering was already in good spirit. The ladies, in evening dresses of many hues, lent a particularly warm and colourful touch. The management and staff of the hotel must be congratulated for the table arrangements and floral decoration of Red and White carnations, and the excellent and plentiful fare.

The toast to the King was given by our President, whilst the toast to Switzerland was very eloquently proposed by our Consul M. Oscar Schneider. Messages from absent members, notably our Vice-President, Mr. E. R. Cottet, and Mr. A. J. Guggisberg were read by Mr. Berner, and a message from our Minister, M. Henry de Torrenté, was read by our Consul. Then Mr. Berner rose for his eagerly awaited presidential address. Mr. Berner said :

"Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends and Com-patriots,

I am very conscious of the fact that our lives are guided to a great extent by three controlling influences: Our pastors and vicars care for our spiritual wellbeing; our doctors try to understand and meet our physical needs, whilst our material affairs are watched over by our Government, and in times of political and economic strain this requires a competent and courageous leadership. Here in Manchester our Government is represented by our Consul, Mr. Oscar Schneider, who honours us with his presence on this his first banquet with us; he is our friendly helper and counsellor, but I want also to warn you that he is a most dangerous Jass player.

May I express the great pleasure it gives me to welcome here to-night so many members of our club. We are also very grateful for the support we are getting from our many good English friends and I may also extend to them our most hearty welcome and perhaps just add that while we very much appreciate them as tourists visiting our homeland, we value them even more as true and lasting friends, belonging to a country which gives us work and protection and whose democratic way of life is so very near to our own.



A specially flowery and bright touch is given to this evening by our ladies, who at times have expressed their anxiety that we might use too much time in speeches and perhaps forget that a dance will close to-night's proceedings. I understand their feelings and I am in full sympathy with them. I shall consult my watch and be brief indeed.

To-night we remember that just over 660 years ago a few courageous men of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden, men not rich in worldly goods, but honest in mind and strong in will, laid the foundation of a free and independent Switzerland, alien to any foreign intervention or domination. The most remarkable fact is that no time limit was set to this treaty and God was invoked to witness the firm resolve of these men. Indeed, we, the descendants of these men, are still feeling as they must have felt, and as long as honesty, piety and courage dwell amongst the people of those sunny and fertile valleys or in the shadows of the snow and ice covered peaks of our homeland, there will always be a Switzerland.

It is fitting that we remember to-night all the members who willingly, selflessly and diligently gave or are still giving their services to our club and I can assure you that such services are rendered without any thought of flattery or personal gain but are a continuous source of worry and sometimes even of some disappointment. Our official paper, the *Swiss Observer*, some time ago very rightly wrote that our obligation to brotherhood can best be served if we attend and lend a fraternal interest to our organisation and its administration.

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Dr. Jack Schedler, we all remember, served us as President and in various other capacities for over 20 years; Mr. Henri Monney, still in the prime of his manifold capacities, 19 years; Mr. Fritz Meyer, 14 years; Mr. Ernest Kuebler, 13 years; Mr. Fritz Heinrich, 7 years. But there are still many more. To them all, known and anonymous, our thanks.

We are a club old in years, having celebrated our centenary last year, but still young in spirit . . . It will be of some interest to you to know that, historically, one of the first of our countrymen to set foot on these Islands was Bishop Armenfredus of Sion, strangely enough the town of our much respected Minister at the Court of St. James's, Monsieur de Torrenté, unfortunately unable to be with us to-night. This Armenfredus came in the year 1070, in the time of William the Conqueror, to Winchester, as legate of the Pope, to settle the election of a local bishop.

We must look at our Swiss Club, not just as a gathering of people of many classes, activities and interests . . . No, this club is much more. It represents our greater family whose acts and whole life are continuously inspired by a constant thought of our homeland. In keeping together and helping our club, we help our country to assert her name and her fame abroad. And how much easier it is for us Swiss abroad to love our country unreservedly when such sentiments are not divided by party strife and internal quarrels.

From official records it appears that our membership in 1896 was 65, increased between the golden years of 1903 and 1909 to 91, decreasing after the two world wars to about 51. Now we are over 70. Time is short and I do not wish to enter in more details about our past history, because last year our Centenary-President, Mr. Gustav Senn, so fittingly and at the same time so amusing allowed us some glimpses in some very old minute books. I want, however, to mention some of the activities of the last 12 months, each of which bearing witness to harmonious and tireless work, achieved by good teamwork and unrestricted and wholehearted support of our members.

Thanks to the initiative of some of our young people, we have created a Manchester Swiss Rifle Association, now affiliated to the Manchester Rifle Club. I would like to mention their President and Honorary Secretary, Mr. A. Stensby-Pickford, who steered us through the initial difficulties, and I must say that we met quite a happy crowd and that we feel now very much at home amongst them. I say to our younger

members: keep it up and help also to further our club in its other activities.

We want to remember once more our Centenary celebration with banquet and ball, on 11th November, 1950. Addresses by the President, Mr. Gustav Senn, the Swiss Minister, M. Henry de Torrenté, Mr. Dupraz, the President of the City Swiss Club, London, followed by a wireless message of the President of the Swiss Confederation, Monsieur Max Petitpierre.

On December 16th, 1950, we had our traditional Xmas party attended by about 160 persons. In this connection we should not forget the very active help from our Ladies in ensuring the full success of such a function and particularly I would like to mention the Ladies' section of our club, the "Swiss Ladies' Social Club" which helps and advises the many young Swiss girls flocking yearly to these parts and who perhaps stay only for short periods.

On January 6th, 1951, New Year's Lunch followed by a social with dance. On the 2nd of March, a lecture by M. René Keller, on "Anglo-Swiss Trade Relations." On March 24th our official Easter Ramble to Edale and Castleton and visit of the Blue John Mine. On April 14th a Lantern-lecture by our member, Mr. Richard Mueller, dealing with the "Shape of mountain valleys", followed by a much enjoyed social. On May 5th a film-show arranged with the help of the Consulate, one of the films being "Etre fort pour rester libre". On June 5th a lecture by M. Jacques Bourquin, on "De la liberté de la presse à la liberté de l'information". On June 17th our official outing to Hebden Bridge with the Leeds and Bradford Swiss Clubs, a function already known as "Our Landsgemeinde", attended by 93 participants. On July 5th a causerie by our member, Mr. Richard Weisbrod, on "Painting for Pleasure" with exhibition of many of his works. On 29th July, National Day Celebration, with a well attended excursion to Bolton Abbey and Harrogate.

On the 22nd and 23rd September we had the visit of Pastor Claude Reverdin of the Eglise Suisse de Londres, with religious service, followed by an address on the history of the Swiss Church in London which was founded in 1722. Also the christening of little Andrée Beaujon.

On October 18th a lecture by our member, Professor Jean P. Inebnit, on "Contes et Légendes suisses", also farewell to our departing Consul, Mr. J. Huber, and welcome to our new Consul, Mr. Oscar Schneider.

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Besides these official and semi-official functions, we had our usually well attended business and Jass meetings and various unofficial rambles, everything properly and efficiently organized by our treasurer.

That, Ladies and Gentlemen, is a brief survey of our Club's efforts since our last Festival, and I think I may be allowed to say that it reflects great credit on those responsible for the arrangements. In my opinion, if we can continue in such a manner, the future of our Manchester Swiss Club augurs well.

A short address was also given by Mr. A. Bebie, who for unaccountable years has taken charge of the

affairs of the Swiss Relief Society, appealing for support and inviting new membership.

The proceedings terminated with a Ball, to which Swiss young ladies of the district who could not attend the banquet have been invited to participate.

The whole evening was a tremendous success and midnight seemed to come much too soon.

H.M.

URGENT APPEAL.

33rd Swiss Children's Annual Xmas Party.

It is said:—"History often repeats itself," that saying is no doubt true, but this year, . . . with a difference! the funds are low and the difficulties not minimised.

A strong appeal is thus addressed to all well-wishers, who, for so many years, have supported a good cause, the Colony's children must not be disappointed. Since 1909, thousands of them have enjoyed and can remember that traditional celebration! Last Xmas, 210 attended.

M. le Ministre and Madame de Torrenté with their little daughter are honouring the party with their presence, also the three spiritual leaders of the Colony are giving efficient support, to all we tender our most sincere thanks.

Enquiries should be addressed immediately to Miss Ida Matthey, 102, Hornsey Lane, N.6, and donations, large and small, will be gratefully received and entered in the well-known "Little Black Book" — which this season, is not making sufficient progress, and acknowledged by Mr. C. Campart, of 33, Heathfield Park, Willesden Lane, N.W.2.

Please do not forget!

THE COMMITTEE.

ESCALADE 1951.

Genevoises et Genevois sont invités à prendre part au dîner de l'Escalade qui aura lieu Mercredi le 12 Décembre au Majorca Spanish Restaurant, 66 Brewer Street, W.1, à 6h.30 pour 7 heures.

Prix du dîner: sh.12/6, boissons en plus. Pour faciliter la tâche des organisateurs prière de s'inscrire avant le 10 décembre auprès de: MM. R. de Cintra, 27, Tamworth Road, Croydon; J. H. Oltramare, 7, Great Winchester Street, E.C.2; H. Jacques c/o Swiss Bank Corporation, 99, Gresham Street, E.C.2.

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