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THE SWISS AMBASSADOR WITH THE PHILATELISTS.



F. STREIT.
President :
London Swiss Philatelic Society.

For the first time since the foundation of the London Swiss Philatelic Society in 1943 the diplomatic representative of the Swiss Confederation, accredited to the Court of St. James, has attended the traditional annual luncheon, which took place at the Glendower Hotel, Glendower Place, S.W.7, on Saturday, February 8th.

The community of collectors of all kinds of articles is vast, amongst them we find queer people who specialise in such trivial things as matchboxes, door-knobs, hairpins, cigar-bands, spectacle cases, used bus-tickets, etc.

Stamp collectors are, without a doubt, more numerous than any others, and they could hardly be called "queer"; at least, I found the members of the Swiss Philatelic Society quite normal and rational. As I mentioned on a previous occasion, my acquaintance with stamps is limited to the process of licking them; having done so on the very morning of the luncheon I was glad of having the opportunity though of licking instead one or two *apéritives* during the cocktail party which preceded the luncheon.

The Society has for many years now held its luncheon at the Glendower Hotel, partly because both the host and hostess, Mr. & Mrs. A. Schmid, are

members and keen collectors, and partly because the *cuisine* of the Glendower has a great reputation in the Colony, which I am sure accounted for the large attendance.

And what a luncheon it was! There was *Potage aux Légumes*, followed by *Filet de Sole Frit*, *Sauce Tartare*, and as *pièce de résistance* the reputed "Bärnerplatte" and "Sauerkraut", or *Poulet Rôti*, *Coupe Glacée aux fruits*, *Fromage et biscuits* and *Café*.

To make it "go down" easier, *Macon blanc*, *Neuchâtel*, *Johannisberg*, *Beaujolais*, *Châteauneuf du Pape* and *Volnay* were served.

The well chosen *Menu* and the choice vintages had a stimulating effect, and I expected at any moment that the company would burst into song in order to give vent to their appreciation for all the good things which had been provided for them.

Shortly before coffee was served, the President, Mr. F. Streit, proposed the customary Toasts to H.M. the Queen and Switzerland.

Mr. Streit, after a short *résumé* of the activities of the Society during the past year, extended a warm and cordial welcome to the Swiss Ambassador and Madame Daeniker, saying how pleased and honoured the members were to have such distinguished visitors at this annual family party; he also voiced his pleasure at having amongst the company Mr. A. Stauffer, Editor of the "Swiss Observer", and Mrs. Stauffer, Monsieur M. Luy, 1st Secretary of Embassy, and Miss Winifred Wright, Secretary of the Civil Service Philatelic Society.

Concluding his address he thanked Mr. A. Schmid

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and Mrs. Schmid and family for having looked after, so generously and well, the more material wants of the participants.

The Swiss Ambassador, who on rising received a spontaneous reception, thanked the President, also on behalf of Madame Daeniker, for having been given an opportunity of meeting the Philatelists; he referred very humorously to former visits to the Glendower Hotel, which he said proved to be equally "profitable".

Madame Daeniker, in the regrettable absence of Mrs. Streit — owing to illness — then presented the silver challenge cup to this year's winner, Miss A. Grünberg, a charming little lady, who blushing came forward to receive this much coveted trophy. If I am not mistaken this cup has adorned her mantelpiece on previous occasions. A small replica of the cup went to Mr. Jack Beken, the runner up. Both recipients acknowledged the presentation with a few words.

As happens to so many Swiss Societies in this country, the annual accounts usually close with a balance on the "wrong side", and to "make things even" a tombola with attractive prizes is introduced, thus enabling the Treasurer to recover from past sleepless nights.

When some years ago I attended for the first time this annual gathering, I was fortunate enough to win no less than three prizes, but I am grieved to say that ever since nothing has come my way again, but fortunately the Ambassador and Madame Daeniker have now shared this "beginners' luck", and I sincerely hope that it will not forsake them on future occasions.

Generosity is one of the virtues of the London Swiss Philatelic Society, which has a fair sprinkling of English members, so they hold every year an auction of stamps for the benefit of some charities.

Mrs. Uehlinger, ably assisted by her husband, was entrusted with the task of emptying the pockets of the revellers. With remarkable endurance they succeeded — whilst tea was served — in collecting the amount of £12.12s., which will go in equal parts to the Swiss Benevolent Society and Dr. Barnardo's Homes. Mr. O. Roethlisberger, on behalf of the Swiss Benevolent

Society, thanked the President for the generous donation.

In concluding this report I wish to repeat the sentence which I used on a former occasion, namely: "If anyone wants good comradeship, a fine luncheon, and a hearty laugh, then I would advise my compatriots to join without delay the

LONDON SWISS PHILATELIC SOCIETY."

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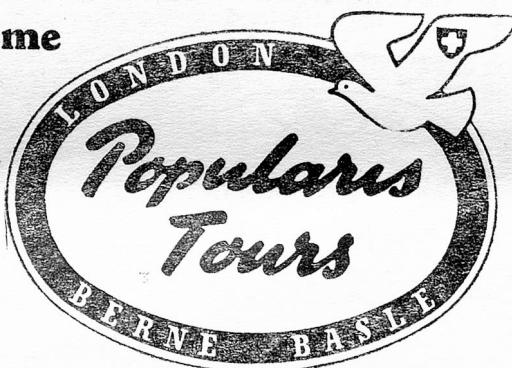
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