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THE PRESENTATION OF A PAINTING TO THE TIMES FOOTBALL CLUB

Swiss Mercantile Society's Token of Appreciation of Hospitality

A very pleasant ceremony took place in the Board Room on October 13, when representatives of the Swiss Mercantile Society came with a gift of a painting as a token of their appreciation of the hospitality extended to their members when they visit Ravensbourne each year for a match between their Football Club and The Times Football Club for possession of the Lints Smith Trophy.

This series of matches commenced as far back as 1936 — when Mr. Westcott, who was then Secretary of The Times Football Club, received a request to arrange a match with the members of the Swiss Society, since when it has become an annual feature.

The Swiss team is composed each year of students who visit England for periods of a few months to learn the English language and English business methods. Consequently the team from year to year is of a different composition as also is the large number of the supporters who come with the team. Over the number of years this means, therefore, that some two or three thousand natives of Switzerland have visited our ground at Ravensbourne, and have, we trust, taken back to Switzerland pleasant recollections of their visit.

This prompted the idea that some tangible expression of their appreciation should be made to The Times Football Club and after consultation it was agreed that a painting by a Swiss artist of a typical scene of his country would be most suitable and that it should hang in the Club House at Ravensbourne.

The presentation was made by Mr. O. Grob — President and Chairman of the Council of the Swiss Mercantile Society — and others present were Mr. W. Meier — Past President and member of the Council, Mr. A. Jaccard — Chairman of the Education Committee of the Swiss Mercantile Society, Mr. W. Burren — Secretary of the Society, Mr. C. Slade, M.A. — Principal of the College, Mr. G. Kitchen — Sportsmaster at the College and Hon. Secretary of the Football Club :

Mr. Grob said :

" This is indeed a very happy occasion for me, having the honour and privilege of expressing to you, Sir, and all the Members of The Times Football Club our great appreciation and sincerest thanks for the hospitality you have shown to the S.M.S. Football Club over the last 23 years.

" The highlight in our Club's activity is, without any shadow of doubt, the annual Cup competition for the Lints Smith Trophy. I can assure you that you have made an everlasting impression of the true British sportsmanship on many of my young compatriots who have had the good fortune to come to your wonderful sports ground at Ravensbourne.

" This may be an opportune moment to express to your Vice-President, Mr. C.

W. Westcott, once again our gratitude for the tremendous help he has given us for so many years, and who has made this annual event the success it is today.

" We are in the middle of the Swiss Fortnight, when Switzerland is ' on show ' in Britain, and I feel certain that this function here this evening will also further the Anglo-Swiss friendship.

" As we are here in Printing House Square, I may be permitted as a humble Swiss citizen to congratulate your illustrious paper on the production of your Supplement on Switzerland. After living for over 34 years in this wonderful Metropolis, and having seen such events as the Coronation, Olympic Games and Wembley Exhibition, I developed a slight inferiority complex; but I must confess after having read your Editorial to the Supplement ' Living at the Crossroad ' and the other articles, I regained all my old pride in my own country.

" To commemorate our very happy association, on behalf of the Swiss Mercantile College Football Club, I have great pleasure in presenting this picture — ' Winter Sun in Arosa ' by Professor Gruber — to The Times Football Club."

Mr. Hugh Astor, the President of The Times Football Club, accepted the gift on behalf of the Club and others present included Mr. F. Mathew, Chairman of the Council of T.T.A.A.A., Mr. Fursse, Hon. General Secretary, Mr. C. Gordon Brown, Vice-Chairman, Mr. P. E. Clarke, a member of the Council, Mr. C. W. Westcott, Vice-President of the Football Club and Mr. J. Gard and Mr. B. Forbes, the present Secretary and Captain of the Football Club.

Mr. Hugh Astor in thanking Mr. Grob for the handsome gift and also for his kind expressions said how glad he was to know that the Swiss members enjoyed visiting Ravensbourne and that The Times members also enjoyed receiving them. He hoped that they would continue to come for many years in the future.

The Times House Journal, Oct.-Nov. 1959.



By courtesy of THE TIMES HOUSE JOURNAL.

Mr. Hugh Astor, the President of The Times Football Club, receiving the painting in the Board Room from Mr. O. Grob, Chairman of the Council of the Swiss Mercantile Society.