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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

SWISS CLUB MANCHESTER

ANNUAL BANQUET AND BALL

11th NOVEMBER 1962

Manchester — to most people the very name conjures up a black city, rain and more rain. To me it stands for a warm-hearted welcome, friendliness, generous hospitality and even sunshine. All that and more I have received on the three occasions that I have been there and always from the members of the Manchester Swiss Club.

The first time I visited Manchester was in 1950 when the Club celebrated its centenary. At that time I went as the wife of my husband, who as the then president of the Swiss Mercantile Society felt he wanted to show our countrymen up there that not everybody considered the London Colony as the only important one. For the same reason I went last year on my second trip, when as President of the Welfare Office for Swiss Girls in Great Britain I attended the Presidents' Assembly — exceptionally held in Manchester the day before the famous "Landsgemeinde" at Hebden Bridge.

And this year once again I travelled up on 10th November, anxious as the new editor of "The Swiss Observer" to show, as Mr. Stauffer used to do, that I value the support of the Midland compatriots as much as that of the subscribers nearer home. The fact that I represent the whole Colony of Great Britain on the Solidarity Fund of the Swiss Abroad was an additional reason for presenting myself. And the welcome I received could not have been any kinder.

In London we are used to the differing atmosphere of the many individual clubs and societies. By way of contrast the uniqueness of the one and only Swiss Club which unites all Manchester Swiss makes it all the more attractive to me. The young and the old, the successful businessman and the unsophisticated Swiss housewife married to an Englishman, the long-term resident scientist and the temporary typist or mother's help — all are members of one and the same community. The Annual Banquet was characterised by just that heterogeneous mixture, white tie and tails and magnificent velvet gowns on one hand, plain lounge suits and simple cotton frocks on the other. But — and it is a big but — it made no difference; the atmosphere was gay and friendly and I could detect no hint of snobbery or resentment. I have no doubt that a lot of work and masses of common sense and tactful handling are required to create such a smooth and happy atmosphere, but it certainly seems to work and the evening was teeming with good will and companionship and cannot be called anything but successful.

Some seventy-odd members and friends sat down to a good meal in the small ballroom of the Midland Hotel, the headquarters for many years of the Manchester Swiss Club. After dinner the Chairman, Mr. B. Simon, the energetic young President of the Club, gave the loyal toast. It has always been the custom in the Swiss Club to have the toast of Switzerland proposed by an Englishman. On

this occasion Mr. Derek Meakin performed the task very creditably. From his remarks it became clear that he knows and loves Switzerland very much. He is a journalist and writer whose interesting articles we have often had the pleasure of reading in "The Swiss Observer", and his wife is a Vaudoise.

The President then welcomed the guests, Monsieur and Madame de Stoutz, representing the Swiss Ambassador and Madame Daeniker, the popular Swiss Consul in Manchester and Madame Rosset as well as the Editor of "The Swiss Observer".

Monsieur de Stoutz brought greetings from the Ambassador and talked about the Swiss National Exhibition 1964. His main subject was the Solidarity Fund of the Swiss Abroad and he stressed the importance of this splendid creation which gave a threefold opportunity to anybody joining, that of insuring oneself against losing one's livelihood through no fault of one's own, that of saving some Swiss francs to be repaid in old age or at death, and that of helping less fortunate compatriots living in economically or politically unstable countries, by simply forgoing the interest on the annual payments.

After the well-received speech, the Chairman called on Mr. H. Monney, a trusted friend and active committee member of the Club for thirty years, who reminded the audience of the notable success of the Manchester Swiss Rifle Group. Madame de Stoutz and Mrs. Simon presented two of the cups to the champion shots, Dr. H. R. Bolliger and Mr. J. Scheiwiller.

This brought the formal part of the function to a close and dancing began. Midnight came all too soon and ended the gay and happy evening. Though, be it confessed, I was only one of quite a number of guests who spent the next few hours at the hospitable home of the President and his wife. It was so cheerful and pleasant that I only regretted being unable to accept the invitation for Sunday afternoon which the Consul and Madame Rosset had kindly extended to the guests from London. I left Manchester on Sunday morning, with blue sky and sunshine, only to arrive six hours later in dull and drizzly London. Thank you, Manchester Swiss Club, and the best of luck for a successful year!

Mariann.

CITY SWISS CLUB

The Press Reporter of the **City Swiss Club** would like to draw the attention of members and friends to the Club's **Christmas Dinner** at the Dorchester Hotel (Orchid Suite) on Wednesday, 12th December, at 6.30 for 7 p.m.

The report on the City Swiss Club's **Annual Banquet and Ball** on 16th November will appear in the next issue.