

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: - (1962)

Heft: 1400

Rubrik: News from the colony

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

The Swiss Embassy wishes to announce that from January 1962, an important change is to be made in its working schedule in order that its staff may be free on every second Saturday, as has been the case in the Offices of the Federal Administration in Berne since 1st January 1960.

Will prospective visitors therefore kindly note that the Embassy offices will be closed every alternate Saturday, starting on 6th January 1962, namely on the following Saturdays:

6th and 20th January	7th and 21st July
3rd and 17th February	4th and 18th August
3rd, 17th and 31st March	1st, 15th and 29th September
14th and 28th April	13th and 27th October
12th and 26th May	10th and 24th November
9th and 23rd June	8th and 22nd December

Visiting hours from Monday to Friday will be 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. (except Tuesday afternoons), and on working Saturdays 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

London, December 1961.

NEWS FROM

THE CHRISTMAS DINNER OF THE CITY SWISS CLUB

Christmas, with all its excitement, merrymaking and good cheer, has come and gone. The candles on the Christmas tree have been blown out, Father Christmas has gone up the chimney — or whence he came — the church bells have rung out the old, and in the new year, and all that remains is memories.

Amongst these is the traditional Christmas dinner of the City Swiss Club, which was held, as usual, at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1, on Wednesday, 13th December 1961.

Whilst in former years this jolly annual reunion has always been well attended, this time it broke all records. Over 140 members, or about 50 per cent of the total membership, gathered together in the Orchid Suite, amongst them a considerable number of the younger generation, which is a good augury for the future of the Club. It is sad to report, though, that these younger members, so badly needed, were, so to speak, "left out in the cold", as not enough accommodation had been provided — unfortunately due to the fact that quite a number of members had not notified the Hotel of their intention to be present. Tempers ran high, but soon became normal when additional tables were installed, and everybody felt happy again.

The dinner was preceded by a cocktail party, which greatly helped to kindle a festive "Stimmung". It was with some difficulty that the company could be persuaded to adjourn to the gaily decorated dining room.

The principal fare — as it should — consisted of turkey, Christmas pudding, and mince pies, and the Head Chef of the Dorchester Hotel, Mr. E. Käufeler, who, by the way, was that very same evening elected a member of the Club, deserves a hearty pat on the back for so well looking after the revellers.

Towards the end of the dinner, Mr. Th. von Speyr, who was in the Chair, proposed the customary Toasts to H.M. the Queen and "La Suisse". The President welcomed the members of the Club and the representatives of the Embassy, expressing delight at the exceptionally large attendance.

The second part of the evening proved to be as enjoyable as the first. Our old friends, Mr. A. Gandon and Mr. Ott, played with much *élan* a number of our well-known folklore songs, and soon everyone joined in singing the songs, which always recall happy memories. Mr. E. Luterbach, our old champion yodeller, gave a few yodel soli which were very much enjoyed.

All too soon the hour of departure struck, and, before leaving these hospitable quarters, the President extended best wishes to all members and their families for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. He warmly thanked Mr. G. A. Ronus, Manager of the Dorchester Hotel — and a member of the committee of the City Swiss Club — for the way in which he always makes the members of the Club feel at home in Park Lane.

Press Reporter
City Swiss Club

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY 34-35 FITZROY SQUARE, W.1

The Annual Dinner and Dance

will be held at

THE DORCHESTER HOTEL
ORCHID ROOM — (Deanery Street Entrance)
PARK LANE, W.1

on

SATURDAY, 27th JANUARY 1961
6.30 p.m. for 7 o'clock (Until Midnight)

Tickets at 30/- per person, including service, can be ordered from:

**THE SECRETARY
SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY
34-35 FITZROY SQUARE, W.1**

THE COLONY

AT THE SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

Often we hear that the Colony is getting smaller and that the average age of the Swiss living in this country is gradually rising to somewhere about retiring age. This makes us wonder what the future will bring. It also explains why the work of the Swiss Benevolent Society in looking after the aged compatriots becomes more extensive and difficult year after year. Not only are there fewer subscribers, but the number of old people in need of help will probably increase as time goes on. But, above all, the cost of living is still going up, which adds to the difficulties.

We were reminded of this by the Hon. Treasurer of the Swiss Benevolent Society, Mr. M. Rothlisberger, who presented the accounts to the Quarterly Meeting of the SBS on Monday, 27th November, at Swiss House. He told members that several hundred pounds more had been spent on relief than during the same period last year. In 1950 a single pensioner of the Society had been paid 25/- a week and a married couple 47/-. Gradually these allowances were increased until they reached 56/- and 92/6 respectively. In addition, a rent and fuel allowance was being paid. The number of regular pensioners had been kept between 60 and 70 all along, but amongst the people receiving casual assistance there were more and more cases who had the appearance of becoming permanent. It was therefore not surprising that the first nine months of 1961 showed a deficit. The last quarter of the year usually makes heavy demands on the Society, seeing that Christmas gifts are distributed. All during the year the ladies of the Swiss Churches have been busy knitting and sewing for their less fortunate compatriots, and at the time this report was written a number of voluntary helpers were busy at 31 Conway Street, sorting out clothing and preparing parcels. Individuals and firms make special contributions in cash and kind every year. Amongst them are Madame Daeniker, who makes an annual gift of "Swiss Lebkuchen" prepared by the Embassy's chef, and the Swiss Hostel for Girls, whose staff bake some 50-60 lbs. of Christmas "Guezli" for distribution. Thus, at Christmas the families and individual compatriots on the books of the SBS receive parcels of food and clothing to make theirs a happier Yuletide.

But in spite of all the extra support forthcoming at Christmas, funds of the Society have to be used to supplement the gifts. Realisation of these facts may induce some of the supporters to sign a seven year's covenant by which the Swiss Benevolent Society can claim back from Inland Revenue the tax paid, without extra cost to the subscriber. Not only would this relieve the strain on the funds during Christmas time, but it would considerably reduce the deficit at the end of the year.

The meeting on 27th November started on a sad note. The President, Mr. F. G. Sommer, had to report the death of two valued members of the Society, Mr. Walter Meier and Mr. Raoul de Cintra. On the other hand, the Chairman

was able to disclose a happy jubilee, that of Mr. M. Rothlisberger who, on 26th October, had completed thirty years of devoted service to the Society, most of it as Hon. Treasurer. The meeting fully supported the Chairman in his praise of Mr. Rothlisberger's loyal and unselfish work over such a long period. It must be remembered that (with the exception of the Secretary and Assistant Secretary) the work of the Society is carried out in an honorary capacity. Every second Monday a few staunch and untiring Officers and Committee members meet at 31 Conway Street to deal with some of the business of the Society. It was Monsieur de Torrenté, one of our former Ambassadors, who said that the many voluntary activities performed in the Swiss Colony provided the strong pillars on which the whole Colony rested. Not everybody can do spare-time work. But by our financial and moral support we can at least ensure that the task carried out by the voluntary workers is less strenuous.

MARIANN.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MISS WINTER!

It is only on very rare occasions that we are able to celebrate the hundredth birthday of one of our compatriots in Great Britain, but on 31st December 1961 Miss Klara Winter attained that biblical age.

Miss Winter, who hails from Kaisten, Canton of Argovie, came to this country as a young girl in order to train workers on Swiss Knitting Machines. She worked until the age of 70, and her last post was that of supervisor in a stocking factory. As she had always shown much interests in church affairs she was then taken in by St. Elizabeth's Convent, Belper, Derbyshire, where she is being very well cared for. Miss Winter carries her age quite well and is mentally alert. She has remained Swiss at heart, so she likes to tell of her younger days in the Fricktal and is still in touch with her priest in Kaisten.

The celebration itself was quite an event. Not only was Miss Winter honoured by the local authorities, but the Swiss Consul in Manchester, Monsieur C. E. Rosset, presented her personally with a gift from her home town in Switzerland, which had also arranged with the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation for a congratulatory message to be sent to her. Among her telegrams was one from the Swiss Ambassador in London.

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