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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

ANNETTE WEISBROD AT THE CITY SWISS CLUB SOIREE FAMILIALE AT THE DORCHESTER HOTEL

It is not often that the City Swiss Club invites the ladies to attend one of its monthly re-unions. One, therefore, would have expected that there would have been almost a stampede to book seats for a "Ladies' Night" at the Dorchester. This pious hope did not, however, materialise, on Tuesday, 27th February, when the highlight of the evening was a piano recital by that well-known and charming Swiss pianist, Annette Weisbrod, who, I am delighted to say, only recently scored a remarkable success at her recital at the Wigmore Hall. The attendance on 27th February numbered barely 80. It may well be that the unfavourable weather conditions had something to do with the poor attendance. However, those who felt that they should, by their presence, show some appreciation of the laudable efforts the committee of the Club is continuously making to ensure the attractiveness of the meetings, spent a most enjoyable and delightful evening.

Towards the end of an excellent dinner, and after the customary Toasts had been proposed and honoured, the President, Mr. Th. von Speyr, welcomed the company and especially the ladies and members of the Swiss Embassy. He then introduced Annette Weisbrod, the guest of honour of the evening, who is no stranger to the musical world either in this country or in Switzerland, having appeared on several concert platforms with no mean success.

Aged twenty-five, she is the daughter of the renowned artist, Richard Weisbrod, known by his exhibitions of paintings at various picture galleries in the West End. She was born in Blackburn and educated at Huyton College, Liverpool, where she studied under Harold Craxton. Moving to the Zurich Konservatorium, she became a pupil of Adrian Aeschbacher and Hans Linder. Since then she has given recitals as soloist and in Chamber Music Ensembles in London, Zurich, Basle, and the North of England. On two occasions she has also played with the St. Gall Symphony Orchestra.

The programme which she had chosen was befitting the occasion — a conventional one; it included works by Handel, Bach, Beethoven, Schumann, Scriabin, Ibert, Debussy, and Chopin. The wide range chosen by the artiste catered for almost everyone's taste. The programme for such an evening was almost too generous and was, no doubt, quite a strain on this young and enthusiastic artiste. To each composer she brought the right range of dynamics and the right style. The playing had authority, and pleasure was the outcome. It was the close interpretation of fine technique and refined interpretation insight that made her performance so impressive. Handel's "The Harmonious Blacksmith" was rendered with poetry and grace. In the Etudes Op. 8, No. 3, 5 and 12, of Scriabin, she showed a keen sense of the rhythmic spacing of music. In Beethoven's "Ecossaises", Debussy's "La Cathédrale Engloutie", and "L'isle Joyeuse", the music was there in all its noble proportions. All items on the programme were played with splendid strength, assurance and well-balanced musicianship.

Annette Weisbrod is indeed a very capable artiste with plenty of musical feeling, her fingerwork was a delight to behold.

It was a memorable and most enjoyable evening indeed, which, as the President rightly said before closing the evening, when he thanked the artiste for the great pleasure she had given us, "will linger in our memories for many a day".

ST.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY



R. CHAPPUIS,
President.

The Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Mercantile Society (Limited by Guarantee) was held at Swiss House on Wednesday, 14th February, the members present being welcomed by the Chairman, Mr. R. Chappuis.

The accounts for 1961, as presented, were adopted, and the auditor, Mr. Robert P. Huxley, F.C.A., was reappointed.

Reporting on the Society's activities, the Chairman stated that the past year had again been one of steady and satisfactory progress. The monthly meetings had generally been very well attended and the programme of lectures and film shows, which he detailed, had been varied and attractive. The membership also had been well maintained and at 31st December was as follows: 25 Honorary Members, 223 Active Members, 14 Corresponding Members, and 48 Contributing Members.

The College also had another very successful year and, in his report, the Chairman of the Education Committee, Mr. A. Jaccard, was pleased to record that the average attendance had risen from 191 in the previous year to 195 in 1961, the number of students enrolled being 496, compared with 463 in 1960.

In view of the considerably increased expenditure in rent and other overhead expenses, the Committee had reluctantly been compelled to increase the fees from £28 of £32 for a 15 weeks' course, with effect from the summer term 1962.

The scholastic programme had followed traditional lines and was, as usual, made more attractive by excursions to places of cultural and historical interest as well as visits to commercial undertakings and produce exchanges, Lloyd's, the Stock Exchange, etc. The College football

team had had a most successful season under the captaincy of Mr. R. Bashmann, a member of the Society and a former student of the College, whose return to Switzerland had deprived the team of a very able leader.

The importance attached to the diploma of the College could be gauged by the number of students who had presented themselves for the examinations, 308 having sat, of whom 280 (91%) were successful, compared with 263 (92%) in the previous year.

The evening classes also had had a record-breaking year, the number of enrolments having for the first time exceeded the 1,000 mark. These courses had been attended by 370 male and 633 female students, divided into 51 classes, a total increase of 35 students over that of the previous year.

At the examinations held under the auspices of the University of Cambridge, the students of both the day and evening classes had again obtained very satisfactory results. Out of a total of 166 candidates, 130 had been successful in the examination for the Lower Certificate in English, whilst of 41 candidates, 22 had been awarded the Certificate of Proficiency in English.

Thanks to the employment advisory service provided by the Society, 36 of our young compatriots had obtained office employment in England on completion of their studies.

Thanks were expressed to the teaching and administrative staffs for their continued good work and co-operation.

The report of the House Committee was presented by the Chairman, Mr. L. W. Krucker. He was pleased to state that, after lengthy negotiations, a new lease, which secured the tenure of Swiss House for a further 12 years, had been signed last year. Although at a considerably higher rental, the new lease would ensure accommodation for the College until June 1973.

In order to give the teachers more adequate accommodation, a new staff room to suit their needs had been provided at Swiss House.

Concluding his report, Mr. Chappuis expressed thanks to our Honorary President, the Swiss Ambassador, Monsieur A. Daeniker, and his collaborators for their continued interest in and support of the activities of the Society and the College. He also expressed appreciation to National Councillor Ph. Schmid-Ruedin, Central President, and Mr. A. Meier-Ragg, Secretary-General of the S.K.V., for their continued advice and assistance.

Further, he gratefully acknowledged the annual subsidy received from the Swiss Government (B.I.G.A.) as well as the donations in favour of the Education Fund from contributing members and firms.

The report as presented was adopted unanimously, thanks being expressed to those who had compiled it.

Under the temporary Chairmanship of Mr. A. C. Stahelin, Hon. Member of the S.K.V. and the London Section, the meeting then proceeded with the elections, as a result of which the Council and the Committees for the financial year 1962 were constituted as follows:—

Council:— Chairman: Mr. R. Chappuis; Trustees: Messrs. J. J. Boos, H. Knoll, L. W. Krucker, F. G. Sommer, C. Voegeli; Members: Messrs. J. W. Bonjour, A. Faes, O. Grob, E. M. Huber, A. Jaccard, J. E. Schneider, R. Senn, F. Streit.

General Purposes Committee:— President: Mr. R. Chappuis; Vice-Presidents: Messrs. A. Jaccard and L. W. Krucker; Hon. Secretary: Mr. J. E. Schneider; Hon. Treasurer: Mr. R. Senn; Members: Messrs. H. Andrea, H. Mock, E. P. Seigfried, E. Zwicky.

Education Committee:— Chairman: Mr. A. Jaccard; Vice-Chairman: Mr. A. Faes; Members: Messrs. J. W. Bonjour, F. Burri, G. Hediger, O. Luterbacher.

House Committee:— Chairman: Mr. L. W. Krucker; Vice-Chairman: Mr. H. J. Keller; Members: Mrs. M. Meier and Mr. W. Schedler.

Press Reporter: Mr. W. Burren.

Delegate to the N.S.H.: Mr. H. Mock.

The A.G.M. was followed by an Ordinary Monthly Meeting, when the following new members were elected: Messrs. C. L. Coulet, F. A. Irmiger, A. Schmid, M. Spycher, and P. Woodtli.

Finally, the draft text of a new Article (45 bis) defining the status and rights of the Swiss abroad, which it is proposed to introduce into the Swiss Federal Constitution, was discussed. The meeting unanimously favoured the adoption of this article and decided to make a suitable recommendation to the Assembly of Presidents of Swiss Societies in Great Britain, at their next meeting.

W.B.

NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE STATUS OF THE SWISS ABROAD

Should status and legal position of the Swiss abroad be specially anchored in the Swiss Federal Constitution? This question has agitated the minds of members of the Federal Parliament and others for ten years on and off. Some time ago the Nouvelle Société Helvétique formulated the text proposal for a new section to Article 45 of the Federal Constitution. This proposed "Art. 45 bis" was the subject of lengthy discussion at the Council meeting, on 7th February last, of the London Section of Nouvelle Société Helvétique, to which all members of the society had been invited. Twenty-two members were present, and practically everyone took part in the debate. The President, Mr. M. Homberger, was in the chair.

To provide the members with the documentary background the President had, very generously, circulated members with the text of the proposal and the Memorandum which accompanied it, as well as with the text of the report of the official constitutional expert. The members of this *ad hoc* parliament were therefore able to — and on the whole did — deal with the question objectively.

At the open meeting of the society on 20th February last, at the Swiss Hostel for Girls, Belsize Grove, Mr. M. Homberger, who was again in the chair, was able to present the meeting with a summary of what may fairly be called the consensus of opinion of the participants of the first-mentioned council meeting. The following is the text of his summing-up:—

"We have been asked to discuss at NSH the draft Article 45 bis of the Federal Constitution defining the status of the Swiss abroad. The Council prepared this evening's discussion in a long session on 7th February, at which twenty-two members were present. We were delighted that members who did not belong to the Council have given us the benefit of their presence and enlightened opinion.

"I will now try to put into a few words the gist of a very lively discussion, and I should here like to thank all who have assisted in an unusually long meeting.

"The idea of a Constitutional Article is almost ten years old. The question was raised in Parliament by Nationalrat von Tobel. It was stressed at our meeting