

Echos from the Fête suisse 1964

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

SWISS NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION IN MANCHESTER

We have become used to the idea that a First of August celebration with the Manchester Swiss Club is an event which leaves a lasting impression in all those who feel closely connected with our home country. This year's celebration was certainly no break in this tradition.

About 130 Members and friends of the Manchester Swiss Club—amongst them a contingent from the Yorkshire Swiss Club, who had ventured to cross the Pennines by bus— assembled on the 31st July after 8 p.m. at the Cottons Hotel just outside Knutsford. They had good reason to do so! A real "Schüblig mit Händöpfelsalat" was served in due course, followed by coffee and tarts, kindly provided by Mr. J. Sohm of Oldham. This wholesome meal was enjoyed by everyone, sitting around small tables in informal groups.

When twilight came, a bonfire was lit in the grounds of the Hotel. The weather, luckily, was dry and the evening air was still and not too cool. Everyone gladly joined the gathering around the beautiful fire, to which many had made their contribution of firewood brought by car or bus.

Mr. H. Berner, the President of the Manchester Swiss Club, greeted everyone present. In his address he recalled his memories of many years ago when as, a boy, he saw the First of August fires burning on the heights in Switzerland and he reminded us of their meaning. Some of us Swiss abroad, he said, visit our Mother Country once or several times a year. Others are not so lucky. For them our gatherings, our fire and indeed the Swiss Club have a special more important, meaning; they provide the only link with their Home Land. Therefore, true to our principle "One for all and all for one", we all must help to keep alive our Swiss societies.

Mr. Berner then read the message to the Swiss abroad from the President of the Confederation, Ludwig von Moos.

Following Mr. Berner, our new Consul, Mr. G. A. Brunner addressed the gathering and first read a message from the Ambassador, Monsieur de Fischer.

He then reminded us of the manifold problems with which the Authorities and our Compatriots in Switzerland are confronted:—

The economic problems, in spite of scientific and technical progress, the shortage of labour and the rising prices, as well as the prescriptions which the Authorities have had to issue to remedy this, almost paradoxical, situation.

The economical and political integration of Europe presents Switzerland with another set of problems. On the one hand, she depends on export trade and any discrimination could harm her economy. On the other hand—with regard to political integration—she is limited by one of her firmest traditions, the Neutrality.

But "Neutrality with Solidarity"—as Federal Councillor Petitpierre called it—is not yet absolute and a "European Home Land" is still far away on the horizon. The Consul then went on to say that there is much truth in the "bon mot" according to which Switzerland is, at the same time, the most national and international country. Internationally united is a people with four different languages and three different cultures. If our traditional principle of neutrality prevents us from taking sides in political differences between foreign countries, it does not follow that we are indifferent to the fate of human beings in other countries. Switzerland's contributions to the world outside her boundaries are many:—

The activities of the Red Cross; loans to foreign Governments; help to underdeveloped countries. In every country our presence is felt on economic, social and cultural planes. Let us not forget our Swiss abroad, who in all countries of the world are ambassadors of our people. Their position is now being strengthened through a new article in the Constitution. Their Home Land does not forget them as is also shown in the message of the President of the Confederation to the Swiss abroad.

The Consul's address, followed by the singing of the National Anthem, concluded the official part of the gathering. Fireworks, and singing and dancing around the dying fire ended this evening from which everyone will have taken home a lasting memory.

R.M.

ECHOES FROM THE FETE SUISSE 1964

Much has been said and written about the Fête Suisse which took place aboard the "Royal Sovereign" on 12th June. Both compliments and criticism which have come to my knowledge have been duly passed on to the Committee. I have no intention of reiterating what happened that evening. By and large, the opinions tally with what I wrote in my report which appeared on 26th June.

The Committee have asked me to announce that, thanks to the large attendance, they were able to balance the accounts, which is more than could be said of the last few years. The Committee agree that there was overcrowding and that consequently it was difficult if not impossible to have any dancing. They also regret that the catering was not all it might have been. But they strongly refute one reproach which has been made in a letter to the Editor by an elderly woman reader, that tickets were sold to all and sundry. This is definitely not so, and if there were other nationals on board apart from English friends and relatives,

they were friends who came by invitation from Swiss individuals. Nor can the Committee be made responsible for the behaviour of some of the youngsters who—again in the eyes of this particular reader—were responsible for "rowdy behaviour, broken glasses, beer boozing and let's-go-down-the-Old-Kent-Road atmosphere". Against this, the Editor would like to mention a remark made by one of the ship's attendants who said that for such a large crowd (1,900) they were very well behaved.

The criticism which has been voiced has generally been fair and reasonable. There has only been one challenge from the above mentioned reader in Cockfosters, who called my report "trash" and wanted me to publish *her* side of the story. Unfortunately, most of her criticism was neither fair nor constructive, and the writer was so abusive both with regard to the Committee and myself for reporting with a bias that I would feel ashamed to publish such language in this paper for which have the responsibility. I am not in the

habit of giving lavish praise left, right and centre and to call everything marvellous. I also welcome criticism. But I have lived in this world long enough to know that we get out of anything precisely as much as we put into it — if we are disappointed it is almost invariably our own fault one way or another. I have also worked long enough in this Colony (thirty years to be exact) to know that there is nothing more difficult and nothing more thankless than to try and arrange something to please *all* our Swiss compatriots.

I understand from the Committee that there will be no Fête Suisse in 1965, but that plans are already being made for another one in 1966. It is not known yet what shape or form it will take. But the Committee will try hard to find something novel which will appeal to the largest possible number of Swiss. No doubt, there will again be criticism, but fortunately there are still large numbers of our fellow-countrymen (and women) who appreciate the unselfish efforts which are being made for their enjoyment, and they will be able to look forward to the Fête Suisse 1966.

Mariann.

MEIN SCHWEIZERLAND, WACH AUF!

Noch ruh'n in weichem Morgenglanz
Die Täler weit und klaren Seen,
Ein Silbernebel deckt den Kranz
Der holdgeschmückten Bergeshöh'n:
"Wach auf, mein liebes Heimatland,
Mein Schweizerland, wach auf!"

In Purpurgluten wallt empor
Durch Frührotschein der Sonne Pracht,
Und leise schallt der Vöglein Chor
Und Sonntagsfrieden wönnig lacht:
"Wach auf, mein liebes Heimatland,
Mein Schweizerland, wach auf!"

Doch wenn des Krieges Fackel glüht,
Der Freiheit Aar, von Gott gesandt,
Weithin durch Wald und Auen zieht,
Dann klinge laut der Ruf durch's Land:
"Wach auf, mein liebes Heimatland,
Mein Schweizerland, wach auf!"

This is the original text by Dr. Fritz Rohrer (1848-1932). The tune was composed in 1875 by Carl Attenhofer (1837-1914). It was also called "Ode an die Heimat" and performed at the "Sängertag" in Lucerne on 2nd June 1878 by the "Männerchor Zürich". It was reported in the "Swiss Observer" last year that the Attenhofer song was rendered by the same choir at the Royal Festival Hall on 8th May, when the British Red Cross Society celebrated the Red Cross Centenary in the presence of H.M. Queen Elizabeth II.

PERSONAL

We regret to announce the death of Mr. Charles Mayr of Grange Farm, Woodgrange Close, Kenton, Middlesex. An obituary notice will appear in the next issue.

OUR NEXT ISSUE

Our next issue will be published on Friday, 11th September. We shall be glad to receive reports and articles not later than Wednesday, 2nd September. Short items only can be accepted later.

RETIREMENT OF MR. W. T. ZUBER

Our compatriot, Mr. W. T. Zuber of Ventnor is retiring. In a tribute called "Switzerland's Unofficial Ambassador", the "Isle of Wight County Press" had the following to say on 25th July last:

"Retiring at the end of the month after 39 years in business as a pastrycook and confectioner and proprietor of the Café Suisse, Ventnor, is Mr. W. T. Zuber, of The Grove, Grove Road. Well known in Island business and sporting circles he has played a leading part in fostering Anglo-Swiss relations.

"A citizen of Aarau, Mr. Zuber has taken considerable pride in his Swiss nationality and over the years has been engaged in many activities to demonstrate the ties of affection between his native land and the country which provided his business opportunity. After the last war he supervised for his government the distribution of utility furniture given by Switzerland to help bombed families in Poole, Gosport and Weymouth. For many years, on behalf of the Swiss Embassy in London, he has looked after young people who have come from his country to seek work in the Island during the summer.

"As a past president of Ventnor Rotary Club and particularly as chairman of its international service committee for about 10 years, Mr. Zuber seized every opportunity of fostering goodwill among foreign nationals. The International Friendship League vacation courses for overseas students visiting groups and individuals all received his active interest. His home, where the national flag of Switzerland always flies from the flag pole in the garden, has become an "open house" for many Swiss visitors.

"Coming to England in 1922 as a pastrycook and confectioner he worked in Woking and London before deciding to set up in business on his own account. It was on June 24th, 1925, that he took over the former Victory Café in Sping Hill, Ventnor. He re-named it the Café Suisse, acquiring adjoining properties. For many years it has been a popular rendezvous in the town for coffee, light meals and teas.

"Mr. Zuber is president of Ventnor Professional and Business Association and their delegate to the I.W. Chamber of Commerce and is a former chairman of the South Wight Boy Scouts Association. He is well known throughout the Island as a bowler and has been president of both the I.W. County Bowling Association and Ventnor Bowling Club. Apart from bowling, his main recreation is bridge and he describes himself as a "dabbler" as an artist and poet.

"Mr. Zuber twice served in the Swiss Army. For a period during the 1914-18 war he served as a recruit and he was recalled in September, 1939, but returned after a few months and became an A.R.P. warden. To help the food situation, he formed a company which bought land at Niton Undercliff for tomato growing and at one time he had 42,000 plants under cultivation."

We understand that Mr. and Mrs. Zuber will continue to live in Ventnor. We send them our best wishes for a happy retirement.

CITY SWISS CLUB

Will Members please note that
NO MONTHLY MEETINGS
will be held until 8th September