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: - (1965)

Heft: 1478

Artikel: Geneva on show

Autor: [s.n.]

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-691815

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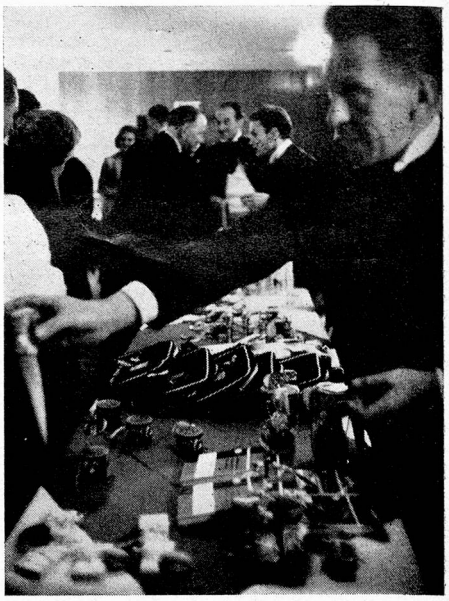
GENEVA ON SHOW

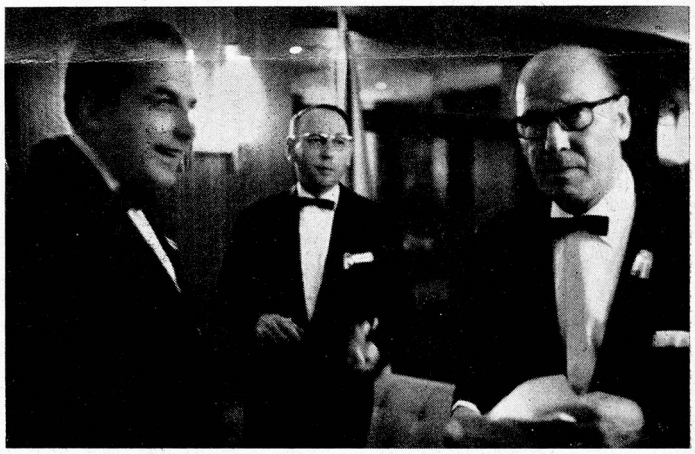
When an invitation to a Gala Evening " Geneva on Show " arrived, my expectations were immediately raised high, for I knew from past experience that our compatriots of the Léman region had an admirable capacity for presenting magnificent shows. The fact that the invitation was sent out in the name of the " Government of the Republic and Canton of Geneva ", the " Municipal Council of the City of Geneva " and the " Association des Intérêts de Genève " gave it special distinction. And when it was made known that the evening was organised in collaboration with the Swiss National Tourist Office, Swissair and British European Airways, the success was even further assured.

And so it came about that we journeyed to the Carlton Tower Hotel in London's fashionable Knightsbridge district on a beautiful, warm May evening of a kind only to be enjoyed in the British Metropolis. That it happened to be the thirteenth can't have deterred many superstitious invitees, for as many as 350 guests assembled in the attractively appointed ball room with its gaily decorated tables and subdued lighting.



Prizes with table numbers on display

The Swiss Ambassador, Lady Wakefield and Lord Balniel at supper.



Mr. A Kunz, Monsieur le Conseiller d'Etat A. Ruffieux and Monsieur M. Nicole.

Genève Chante leaving Geneva by Swissair

Geneva sings — delightfully.

GENEVA ON SHOW

BERNARD HALLER ...

. . . without words

The guests were received by two *Conseillers d'Etat,* Messieurs André Ruffieux and Charles Duchemin, and the *Chancelier d'Etat* Monsieur Jean-Paul Galland, as well as Monsieur Frédéric Rochat, *Conseiller Administratif* of the City Council of Geneva, Monsieur Marcel Nicole, Manager of the Geneva Tourist Office and Monsieur Eric Sandoz, President of the *Association des Intérêts de Genève,* all of them accompanied by their ladies.

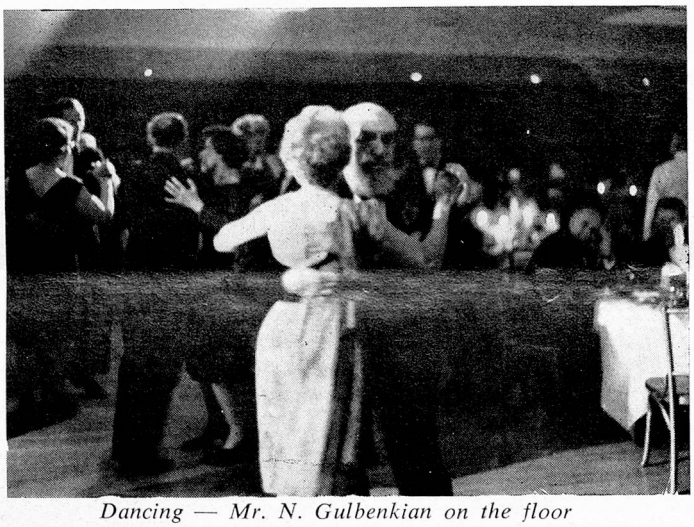
The first unusual feature which struck one on arrival, was the way the tables were allocated: One chose a present ranging from dolls and travel bags to cigarette lighters and tickets for a cruise on the Lake of Geneva. Every gift had a number, and this indicated the table one would sit at for the evening. Thus the guests were well and truly mixed. Our table happened to be " Vevey ", and there were small gifts and souvenirs, some specially connected with the town of Vevey, chocolate and badges, flags and pencils waiting for us. The gold, red and black of the Geneva flag was proudly displayed everywhere in the hall. Above the band — Henry Zeisell and his T.V. Orchestra — the Union Jack and the Swiss flags were draped over a mural depicting a Swissair plane at Geneva's Cointrin Airport.

The galaxy of guests was headed by the Swiss Ambassador and Madame Béat de Fischer, and also present were several members of the Embassy and their ladies. Visitors from Switzerland included representatives of some of Geneva's top-ranking hotels and Mr. W. A. Wyler of Swissair Geneva, who used to be Swissair's U.K. Manager in London. A number of distinguished British guests graced the gathering, among them the President and Hon. Treasurer of the Anglo-Swiss Society Sir Clifford Norton, K.C.M.G., C.V.O., and Mr. T. D. Richardson, O.B.E., and Lady Blane, O.B.E., of the Ladies' Ski Club. Members of Parliament present included Lord Balniel, Lord Wakefield of Kendal and Colonel Lord Tufton Beamish. Other guests were Sir James Harman, Mr. Charles Clore and Mr. Nubar Gulbenkian, to mention but a few of the prominent personalities.

The majority of guests were from airlines, travel agencies and Press and Radio and TV. Incidentally, another reception had been given at the Café Royal the previous day, when sales staff and counter clerks of travel agents and airlines were entertained. Among the Swissair representatives were Mr. M. A. Keller and Mr. E. Burgazzi, Manager and Deputy Manager for the United Kingdom, and from the Swiss National Tourist Office in London its Manager Mr. A. Kunz and Mrs. E. Holman. Motoring organisations had members present from the AA and the RAC, as well as from the American Automobile Club Service Inc. Even travel department chiefs of some of the banks had been invited. A Press contingent covered daily and weekly papers, periodicals and journals, British as well as Swiss, including the " Swiss Observer " which might be classified as Anglo-Swiss. The London *Cercle Genevois* had its President Mr. A. Bleiker in attendance, and the City Swiss Club its President Mr. E. Bonvin and Honorary Treasurer Mr. C. Nater. The architect of the Swiss Centre Mr. D. du R. Aberdeen was one of the guests, and the Swiss Bank Corporation was represented by Mr. T. von Speyr and Mr. A. Looseley.

On many such functions which might be termed " combining business with pleasure ", personalities are often invited unaccompanied and in their own right. This time, the guests were asked with their partners, particularly appreciated by " unattached " ladies, and it made the occasion very special. This was evident in the smartness of the men's dinner jackets and the sparkle of the ladies' gowns and trimmings, but above all by an atmosphere of gaiety, enhanced by champagne and Swiss wine.

GENEVA ON SHOW



Dancing — Mr. N. Gulbenkian on the floor

The great attraction of the evening was " Genève Chante ", the appearance of the mixed choir, some thirty strong, who were no strangers to London. They took part in the Swiss Fortnight in 1959 when they gave a concert at the Albert Hall on the occasion of the Swiss-Scottish evening.

The Choir was founded some fifteen years ago and is dedicated to popular songs of the French-speaking part of Switzerland and France, old and modern. The choral group, dressed in charming period costumes of the 1830 Geneva, made with the help of drawings and watercolours of the famous Geneva painter Adam Topfer, made an excellent background for the evening's programme. Their charming songs were well chosen and pleasingly rendered.

One of the Councillors of State, Monsieur André Ruffieux, gave the welcoming address in French, afterwards courteously translated into English by Monsieur Nicole for the benefit of those whose ears were not so accustomed to the easy flow of the French language. The cabaret entertainment was spread out over several hours, with dancing and partaking of a buffet supper in the Chelsea Room in between items. " No words necessary " was the title of Mr. Bernard Haller's presentation. In three sketches this well-known cabaret star demonstrated his exceptional talent as comic actor. Mr. Jean Tarac entertained the party with his clever caricatures — black chalk on white canvas — and the choir came back, not only for more songs, but also for some attractive folkdancing. One of the dances was Rousseau's " Under the shade of the elm tree ".

Mr. Wynford Vaughan Thomas conducting the draw of the watches.

The eminent Radio and TV personality, Mr. Wynford Vaughan Thomas, diligently acted as compère. He conducted the draw of two lovely gold ROLEX wrist watches generously presented as prizes.

Geneva was certainly on show, and the choir no doubt contributed largely to the presentation of what is essentially

Jean Tarac in action with his chalk.

Monsieur Nicole reading English to the Compère.

Genevese. Whether they sang Jaques-Dalcroze's "le vieux chalet " or " My Bonny is over the Ocean ", it made no difference to the quality of their singing, and they delighted the audience by not only rendering the two National Anthems to perfection, but also " Auld Lang Syne " when the happy evening finally drew to a close.

The candles had by then burnt down, the glasses drained. The cigar smoke had settled with Dior and Côty scent. A discreet yawn was stifled here or there, the button hole carnation had lost its freshness, but elegantly shod feet went on tapping and there was still a whisper in the air of "Les Dames de St. Gervais " and its catching tune. The last applause resounded from the trellised walls — " Geneva on Show " was over at the Carlton Tower, but it is " Au revoir " on the shores of the Léman where " Genève Chante " goes on.

MM

We are indebted to the Swiss National Tourist Office for photos and blocks.