

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: 1490

Rubrik: Swiss Club Manchester

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

SWISS CLUB MANCHESTER

ANNUAL BANQUET AND BALL



The President

When one has to write a report on the same function year after year, it is not easy to evade repetition. If I express my feelings about the last Annual Banquet and Ball of the Manchester Swiss Club, I cannot help repeating myself. For, once again I was impressed the same way I was the first time I visited this function fifteen years ago — struck by the friendly and happy atmosphere, the democratic way class and age differences are disregarded, the feeling of a thriving community.

That the Club has had its problems, too, was evident from the President's speech. Mr. E. Berner referred to the long history of the Club which started 115 years ago. The annual event used to be called the "Grütli-Feier", though nobody knows how it came about. Mr. Berner said that the Club had had its ups and downs, starting "as a small but sturdy men's drinking circle. Gradually, it acquired respectability and status, and in the later years with our ladies joining us, it improved also in liveliness and grace."

Witness to that were the well-dressed and happy women, young and not so young, who assembled in the ante-room at the Midland Hotel in the evening of Saturday, 13th November. The splendid colours of their gowns and their happy faces must have inspired the men, for I have seldom seen a more vigorous-looking company of gentlemen. The Swiss Ambassador and Madame de Fischer, the Deputy Lord Mayor of Manchester and Mrs. Chadwick, the President and Mrs. Berner, received the members and guests, about 120 of them. The Wedgwood-blue dining hall was profusely decorated with red and white flowers, chrysanthemums, anemones and carnations. The Swiss flag, not just in red and white cotton, but in beautifully embroidered silk, made the background for the presidential chair. The weather man have been dull, *very* dull as only Manchester can supply it, but in that room, it was warm

and friendly. And there certainly was nothing unfortunate about the choice of date, the 13th.

Dinner hardly over, the President proposed the loyal toast to "the Queen, Duke of Lancaster". Unlike in most London Clubs, in Manchester, the toast to Switzerland is not proposed by the Chairman. It is left to an Englishman, and this time it was a Vice-President of the Manchester Rifle Club with which the Swiss Club have particularly close connections. Mr. Ewert referred to this happy relationship and the exchange visits by Swiss and British teams of riflemen over the past few years. He also had a few kind words to say about beautiful and friendly Switzerland.

The President welcomed the guests of honour and expressed his appreciation that the Ambassador and Madame de Fischer had undertaken the tedious journey to Manchester in order to be with the Club. He continued:

"My Deputy Lord Mayor, Mrs. Chadwick, may I extend to you a very hearty welcome and tell you that we are not only honoured but very happy indeed to have you with us. We all know that your town, your City, can look back to a very long and exciting history. The Mencionium of long ago, a Celtic settlement, the place of tents may have been the home of fur-clad hunters and hikers, it became then for almost 400 years the Roman Mancunium, and having survived the dark ages gradually developed into today's great centre, as we know it, bristling with industries of the most varied character, a citadel of free enterprise and commerce. A Cathedral town, a University town where cultural life is of the highest level. We find here a host of libraries of which the John Rylands is perhaps the most famous of all, there is the Hallé Orchestra of world fame, the many schools and museums, the hospitals, the theatres, the famous ship-canal, Ringway Airport and not far away the great radio-telescope of Jodrell Bank and its scientists, and so I could go on and on.

"But what was Manchester 30 years ago to me? One bleak and cold January evening I arrived in this City, on my trek to the North, with my young wife and little son, hardly speaking any English, with very little brass but great expectations. Strangely enough the first night spent on British soil was in this Hotel, which unknown to us was to become our rallying point. Coming straight from Italy and looking at the black splendour of Albert Square, my poor wife in the grip of a splitting headache and some *Heimweh* told me most emphatically that she would never again set foot in your City, and today? Times have changed, we might have changed, even our English has changed; certainly it speaks well for your country and your people that after thirty years we are still here. We live now in the lovely Yorkshire hills and for her, my wife, to come to Manchester is always a great treat and we like everything about it."

Next, the President welcomed Mr. and Mrs. Ewert, the Swiss Consul and Madame Brunner and the Editor of the "Swiss Observer". He then expressed gratitude to the many British Associate Members who had come along and whose friendship and loyalty were particularly valuable. He singled out Mr. and Mrs. Sam Hanna and the members of the Committee, ever hard-working and loyal;

the Vice-President Dr. Obrist, the "financial wizzard" Mr. Scheiwiller, the indefatigable Secretary Mrs. Monney and Swissair's Manager Mr. Mettler, not to forget Mrs. Themans and Miss Rietmann.

Mr. Berner mentioned the loss of three faithful members, Mr. Liechtensteiger, Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Corrodi. On the other hand, he was happy that so many young members took an active part in the Club. Finally, the President sketched the new task which would be facing the Club in the near future, the decision to join the Federation of Swiss Societies in the U.K. in connection with the new Swiss Centre in London.

The presidential address was warmly applauded. It was followed by the presentation of the Swiss Challenge Cup (Rifle Club) to Mr. Mettler and the Vaud Cup and the Swissair Cup to Mr. Scheiwiller.

The Swiss Ambassador replied to the President as follows:

"I should like to thank you, Mr. President, on behalf of my wife and myself, for your very kind words of welcome, and to add that we are greatly enjoying your hospitality. We always look forward to a visit to Manchester, first because we are delighted to meet again all the interesting personalities, Swiss and Mancunian, whose acquaintance we have had the pleasure of making — may I mention, in particular, Alderman and Mrs. Chadwick — and secondly because there is always something new to hear, to see and to learn in Manchester. There is a saying that "what Manchester thinks today, the world will think tomorrow". This adage dates from the free trade era but is, of course, still true today if we think in terms of town planning building or development.

"Indeed, during the past month I have had the pleasure of witnessing two great achievements in Manchester. The first was the modernization of the Clayton Aniline Company, and I had the honour to attend the festivities celebrating the wonderful realization of many years' planning and the results of a great investment programme, which make the company one of the most advanced and technically perfect in its field.

"I have had the privilege of visiting, also, three of the marvellous plants of Geigy Ltd., where I admired the extremely up-to-date installations and the fine organization of the management, the planning, the scientific research, the manufacturing, as well as the splendid spirit of progress and the constant desire for perfection which inspires its leading personalities.

"May I say here how proud I am of this brilliant Anglo-Swiss collaboration, to which I wish ever more success. It is true, as people say, that there is something in Manchester that produces fighters and creators.

"As you see, to be in Manchester is indeed always an enriching experience.

"But I can also bring you some news from London. As you know, we have founded there the Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom, which hopes in this form to be able to give stronger support to the plan to create a Swiss social and cultural centre in London. Federal Councillor Wahlen has convened a meeting of Swiss firms connected with Great Britain and will try to persuade them to collaborate financially in the realization of this scheme.

"Another event was the opening on Wednesday in the Goldsmiths' Hall of an exhibition of magnificent jewellery by our compatriot from Geneva, Gilbert Albert. This is the first time in its 600 years' history that the Goldsmiths' Company has honoured an artist with a one-man show. The 80 exhibits incorporate mostly meteorites or

stones from outer space, which may be millions of years old. This extraordinary exhibition is arousing much interest.

"May I now raise my glass to the continued success of British-Swiss collaboration, to the further prosperity of your Club, which is cultivating that tradition of good understanding, and to the health of your members and your distinguished guests."

The Ambassador's well-received speech brought the formal part of the evening to a close. The tombola tickets were on sale in the interval, and in no time, all of them were sold — the prizes were most attractive and ranged from a roll of velvet and a clock to wines, scent, kitchen towels and playing cards.

Dancing started as soon as the room was cleared, and throughout the evening there was not a dull moment. Real universal enjoyment could be seen *and* felt, whether it was with an old-fashioned waltz or a modern contortionist dance. Incidentally, it was quite remarkable how many of the members had brought sons and daughters along. They mingled with the large number of young Swiss temporarily in the City. There was proof, if it was needed, that the Swiss Club in Manchester, however great its problems may be, need have no fear of the future. Good luck and thank you!

MM

SWISS CLUB DUNFERMLINE

On Sunday evening, 7th November, the chairman of the Dunfermline Swiss Club welcomed about fifty members and their friends to a very successful film show sponsored by Mr. W. Bosshardt and his son Charles.

The programme included three films, the first of which — the EXPO Film — was particularly fascinating both for those who had actually visited the exhibition and for those who had been unable to enjoy that impressive and go-ahead expression of contemporary Swiss activity. The second film formed a pleasant contrast since it introduced the viewers to the Ticino, a Canton abundant in tradition made visible in beautiful romanesque churches like the one at Giornico and also expressed in the ancient crafts like loch-fishing.

The third film gave a wonderful and somewhat nostalgic account of Swiss agricultural development in the Valais. The evening ended on a more social note when members and friends met over a cup of tea and cakes in the canteen of the Winterthur Silk Mills. Altogether a very successful evening!

U.D.

AN APOLOGY

We wish to apologise for a mistake which occurred under "Forthcoming Events" in the last issue, when the Monthly Meeting of the SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY was announced for the 15th December. This is wrong; the date is the usual second Wednesday of the month, i.e. 8th December, and it will not clash with the Christmas Dinner of the CITY SWISS CLUB. We regret any inconvenience which may have been caused.

OUR NEXT ISSUE

The Swiss Observer is published every second and fourth Friday of the month. Our next issue will be the DOUBLE CHRISTMAS ISSUE, the only one in December. It will appear on 17th December. We shall be glad to receive all articles and reports by 3rd December. Only short news items can be accepted later.