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ESCALADE LONDON 1964

There used to be a number of cantonal groups active in the Swiss Community in London. Today, the Cercle Valaisan has disappeared, the Confrérie Vaudoise is dormant, and left are only the Unione Ticinese, fortunately very much alive, and the Cercle Genevois whose sole function seems to be to celebrate the "Escalade". It met again on the right date, the 11th December, exactly 362 years after the historic event which they were commemorating. This was by way of being a golden jubilee, for it was in 1914 that the present organisation met for the first time. Genevese, of course, have lived in England for much longer than that, and I dare say they met to celebrate the "Escalade" long before the first world war. But the only records available go back to June 1914, when a group of Genevese met at the Mont Blanc Hotel in Gerrard Street. They included such well-known men as Mr. S. Dimier, Mr. R. de Cintra (Chairman for many years), Monsieur le Ministre Carlin, Pasteur Hoffmann-de Visme, Prof. W. Rappard, Mr. C. Campart. Already members then were Messrs. Emil Meyer and Oltramare, both present at the last "Escalade", whilst the present Chairman, Mr. A. Bleiker, in 1914 was taking part in the commemoration ceremony in Geneva itself.

The Book of Honour was to hand on 11th December last, and memories were revived by many present. Some of the thirty-two members and friends had travelled to London from as far away as Eastbourne and Somerset. The Chairman, Mr. A. Bleiker, told of the difficulties he had in getting a *marmite*. It was only after many hurdles had been taken, that the Head Chef of the Dorchester, our compatriot Mr. Kaeufeler, kindly saw to the real thing being produced in all its brown sugary splendour and garnished with the red and yellow Geneva colours. "Ainsi périssent les ennemis de la République!" was said with the necessary fervour, and the youngest lady present smashed the *marmite* with a bottle, but not until the names of the Genevese who lost their lives in the fighting in 1602 had been cited by Monsieur Revilliod. Incidentally, there used to be seventeen, but in the course of last year a further name was discovered.

The *marmite* pieces were distributed after the excellent patriotic dinner which included such items as *Emincé de veau Brunaillieu*, *Roesti des Confédérés*, *Salade St. Pierre* and the traditional sweet chestnuts kindly prepared by Mrs. Bleiker. Her absence due to illness was much regretted, and the party was very sorry to hear that for that reason, Mr. and Mrs. Bleiker would in future be spending the winter in a warmer climate. It was Mr. Bleiker's last time as Chairman of the Cercle Genevois, and many kind things were expressed in his praise.

The Editor of the "Swiss Observer" read an interesting account of the *Escalade* written by a young English lady Miss Marion St. Aubyn. Monsieur Revilliod read an account of how a Genevan family spent the *Escalade* "in exile" in the Canton of Vaud. Madame Curchod reminisced on Geneva and its history. A collection was taken in favour of the Swiss Children's Annual Christmas Party, and, of course, the traditional *Escalade* songs were rendered.

Everyone present was either a Genevese citizen or of Genevese extraction or otherwise connected with Geneva. There was only one complete outsider — the Editor of the "Swiss Observer". But the fact that she was never once conscious of this proves what a friendly gathering it was, made up of men and women loyal to their Canton, but Swiss first and foremost nevertheless. *Mariann*.

SWISS CLUB MANCHESTER

On the 19th December the Swiss Club of Manchester held what must be one of their happiest annual events — the Christmas party at the Midland Hotel. This year forty-five excited children were entertained to a splendid tea of sandwiches, jellies, ice cream, cakes and trifle. Afterwards, in the magic of a darkened room lit only by fairy-lights and candles from a tall Christmas tree, Father Christmas (Mr. Mettler of Swissair, in a beard and red gown) came to ask if all had been good and to present personally a bag of toffees to those who were brave enough to sing or recite. Then the lights were switched on, and every child received a present which had been chosen and wrapped by a very able Ladies' Committee, with obvious care and thoughtfulness as to its suitability.

When the excitement and romping had subsided the seventy-four adults present, who had also enjoyed themselves enormously in the friendly warmth of traditional things, took their flushed, weary charges back home through the fog which they had already braved once that afternoon in order to reach the party. It is worth noting it had kept very few away.

O.S.

ANGLO-SWISS SOCIETY

The Annual General Meeting of the Anglo-Swiss Society was held at the Montana Hotel, S.W.7, on 18th November. It was followed by an interesting Swiss film show. Afterwards, some forty members and friends enjoyed a *Fondue Bourguignonne* Dinner. As usual, it was a very pleasant evening.

SWISS BANK CORPORATION PROMOTIONS

We have pleasure in announcing the following promotions at the Swiss Bank Corporation as from 1st January 1965. We extend our hearty congratulations to the gentlemen concerned.

Mr. A. E. Wilkins is promoted to be Deputy Manager. He joined the Bank in January 1925 and thus (excepting only the war period and some years in Zurich and Lausanne) has completed nearly forty years in the City of London with the Swiss Bank Corporation. He is already well known to the Swiss Colony.

Mr. H. Jauslin becomes Sub-Manager. He has been responsible for the introduction of the Bank's new computer and "automation" system and will be known to many as secretary of the City Swiss Club.

Mr. M. Schneebeli, Manager of the West End Branch, will be eventually returning to the City Office where he is promoted Sub-Manager. His previous experience in Zurich, Geneva and New York will no doubt stand him in good stead.

We would not omit also to congratulate Messrs. Ackerman, Grüninger and Henning on their promotion to the rank of Attorney.

OUR NEXT ISSUE

The "Swiss Observer" is published every second and fourth Friday. Publication date of our next issue will be Friday, 22nd January. We shall be glad to receive reports and articles not later than 13th January. Short news items only can be accepted later.