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SWISS HOSTEL FOR GIRLS

The Tenth Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Hostel for Girls was held at 9-11 Belsize Grove on June 21st under the chairmanship of Mr. J. P. Christen, the President of the Company.

On opening the meeting the Chairman asked the members present to stand up in silence as a tribute to Mr. Fred Suter in recognition of the keen personal interest which he and his wife, Mrs. Germaine Suter, have shown for the Hostel since the very beginning.

Mr. Christen had another sad duty to perform, namely to take official farewell of Miss Rosie Preiswerk who, after ten years of devoted service as warden of the Hostel, will shortly be leaving this country. In the name of the Council of Management and of every member of the Company, in that also of the thousands of Swiss girls who have so far found a happy home at Belsize Grove, he thanked Miss Preiswerk wholeheartedly and wished her a happy return home and a well-deserved retirement. The Chairman then introduced to the assembly Miss Heidi Siegrist who had just arrived from Switzerland to take up her new job as warden. He wished her God Speed in her new venture and assured her of the friendly support of all those who have the welfare of the Hostel at heart.

After the reading of the Secretary's and Warden's reports, and the presentation by the Treasurer of the Balance Sheet and Accounts for 1965 the Council of Management was re-elected *in corpore* under the temporary chairmanship of Mrs. Mariann Meier.

The following excerpts from Miss Preiswerk's last annual report are sure to interest our readers:

The year 1965 was marked by a notable increase in bookings. We accommodated 21,036 girls (1964: 18,989) with an average of 57.6 beds let per night against 52.3 in the previous year. Consequently the admission of foreign girls was reduced to 115 from 22 different countries (1964: 127 from 18 countries). We have by now learnt to accept the fluctuating numbers as something beyond our control.

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Once more we shared a number of cases with the Welfare Office, some to be accommodated, others to be engaged temporarily or for good by the Hostel as domestics. The team-work with the present Welfare Officers could not be more satisfactory.

Among the residents we had a few who were seriously ill and had to be sent to hospital. All of them have fully recovered. During the Centenary Festivities of the Salvation Army we accommodated a Swiss delegation of nine members, mostly elderly women. They were a cheerful lot and brought a pleasant change to the usual composition of our residents.

Several successful Residents Parties were held. The Advent Sundays were spent with Carol-Singing, Music and Reading. Christmas and New Year's Eve were as usual happy family events in which we were haphazardly joined by non-residents and Amadeo, a Brazilian boy.

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While we sometimes deplore that preference is given to the light TV programmes, it goes to the credit of many residents that they are making ample use of the cultural features London offers. We have a great number of enthusiastic concert goers. Some of them are talented piano players.

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Regularly once or twice a week, Mrs. H. Cottet has taken charge of the Hostel and enabled the Warden to

have her time off or to discuss various problems with her. Her wide experience and sound judgment have proved a tremendous help and I am deeply grateful to her.

To my very best wishes for a prosperous future of the Hostel I would like to add my deep-felt gratitude to the Council of Management, the House Committee, the Embassy, the Swiss Benevolent Society, Mr. Asquith, the Clergy, the Welfare Officers and all our other friends, not only for their personal kindness but for their generous contributions in time, encouragement and support. They are far too many to be mentioned individually. We like to think of them as a connecting link, so essential to the Hostel if it is to fulfill its task as an integral part of the Swiss community in London.

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I now leave this place in the good care of Miss Siegrist, deeply convinced that a wind of change can only be beneficial to its further development. May she find the same satisfaction and joy I have known in the past eleven years.

F.A.

THE CITY SWISS CLUB SUMMER DANCE

It has never been considered wise to pay heed to rumours. Those who kept aloof when it was said that the food at Great Fosters was no longer what it was, were rewarded not only by an excellent dinner, but by an extremely enjoyable evening. Those who decided to be influenced by the whisperings and to forego the City Swiss Club Summer Dinner and Dance were quite definitely the losers. In any case, it seems to me that the duty of a member to support the efforts made by a Club should outweigh any culinary considerations. It is, of course, quite true that good food and first class wine enhance a pleasant evening; but a few carefree hours spent in the company of good friends, to my own mind at least, should always be the decisive factor — food and drink should be of secondary importance.

Be this as it may, those who supported the President and Committee of the City Swiss Club and drove to Great Fosters on Friday, 1st July, never regretted it. It was a lovely evening, not too hot and with the promise of mid-summer night still in the air. The stately Elizabethan manor looked inviting, and the spacious gardens were a treat to behold. Drinks were served out of doors tasting twice as good in the cool of the rose-scented summer evening.

Any lingering speculation as to the quality of the meal was quickly dispersed, once the sixty or so members and friends had sat down and started to dine and wine in the ancient tithe barn. The Commercial Counsellor and Madame M. Feller graced the table of the President and Mrs. Edgar Bonvin. Also of the party were Consul and Madame E. Tosio, Monsieur G. Bodmer and Dr. and Mrs. H. B. Knuchel representing the Manchester Swiss.

One of the attractions of this summer function is the absence of formality, no toasts, no speeches. Soon *Pâté*, salmon, duckling and strawberries had receded into the past, and the main business of the evening began — dancing. This went on until 1 o'clock, an hour considered regrettably early by most of the dancers. The farewell thank-you's to the President were sincere, and contentment was expressed all round at an extremely successful and pleasurable evening.

MM