

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: - (1966)

Heft: 1497

Rubrik: Swiss Club Dunfermline

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

ANNUAL DINNER OF THE LONDON SWISS PHILATELISTS

The membership of the London Swiss Philatelic Group is half Swiss, half British, and it was a congenial Anglo-Swiss gathering of over thirty which took place at the Montana Hotel, London S.W.7, on Friday, 4th March. It was mixed, men and women, mixed as to ages and indeed as to the menu which was either steak or *Bernerplatte*. But after that it was one thing only, undivided interest in stamps, complete enjoyment and comradeship and determination to raise money. For the Philatelists have a tradition at their Annual Dinner to auction stamps in aid of charity and to support their own funds by a raffle.

The President, Mr. W. Burren, affable as ever, welcomed members and guests and announced the winner of the cup competition. The Editor of the "Swiss Observer" presented the handsome cup to Mr. O. Grob, and a replica for keeps to Mr. D. W. Langley, last year's winner and previous runner-up for eight times. The collection of raffle prizes was once again very richly endowed, and the sale of tickets resulted in £33.15.0 towards the Club's funds. The Vice-President, Mr. E. Huber, then proved his worth as an efficient auctioneer, and the value of the stamps auctioned as well as the interest of the members can be gauged by the resulting record figure of £35.4.0. As is customary, half of this will go to the Swiss Benevolent Society, the remainder to a British charity.

The President thanked all the donors for their gifts of prizes which ranked from a watch presented by a non-member to wines, stockings and jams. He also expressed appreciation to absent friends (Miss Gruenberg, Messrs. M. Rothlisberger and M. Uehlinger as well as to the Society's "Patron" Mr. F. Streit) who had kindly sent stamps for auction. The doyen of the Group, Mr. A. Schmid, owner of a fabulous stamp collection, was present at the dinner, as were several other staunch supporters. It was a highly enjoyable and interesting evening at a Club which seems to have no problems — quite outstanding these days.

MM

SWISS CLUB DUNFERMLINE

Our Club held its 'Social' on Saturday evening, 5th March, under the motto "Jödele und Bödele" in the gaily decorated and candle-lit canteen of Winterthur Silks. Following introductory play, from tape, of the "Zürcher Kirchen Glocken", our President, Mr. Schoenenberger was pleased to welcome almost fifty people who came along to this annual event, one of few designed to stimulate contact and friendship between all the Swiss members of the Club, their families and their friends.

It did not take long to create an atmosphere and the organizing group ensured that there were no dull moments during the evening. A song competition was the main attraction and entirely accidental that it should have coincided with the Song of Europe contest at Brussels! Mrs. Ditchburn was responsible for this part of the programme, the idea having in fact been conceived by her and being her entry to a competition within the Club, aimed at creating a new pattern to the social gatherings.

Several groups of six singers were competing with songs of their choice, the Scottish in the local language, the Swiss in "Schwyzerdütsch". The unanimous winners: a Scottish group with the song "Auld Aberdeen".

The programme was richly complemented by various other musical performances, instrumental and vocal, by young and older members. A tombola with, later, a rewarding distribution of prizes was very popular. Dancing to a mixed selection of tunes and rhythms filled the gaps in the programme and rounded up the evening, in the later hours.

The catering side was a treat of its own. A selection of *Waeihen* from cheese and onions to all types of fruit, all supplied by members, with coffee and tea, were enjoyed by everybody and were indeed an appropriate refresher, in keeping with the pattern of the evening.

Altogether, a successful event!

H.

SCHWEIZERBUND (SWISS CLUB)

On Friday, 11th March, the Committee and half a score of members of the Swiss Club met at the Glendower Hotel for their Annual General Meeting. That seems a small number on the face of it; but it is doubtful whether many Swiss Societies could boast half their membership at an AGM. The Swiss Club have about 25 paid-up members and about the same number of "passive" members on their list. The President, Mr. V. Berti, was in the chair; the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. L. S. R. Asch, presented the accounts which ended with the amazing surplus of 8d., and the Hon. Secretary, Mr. J. Schmid, gave the annual report on activities in 1965. The main discussion concerned the Society's relation to the Federation of Swiss Societies in the U.K., and it was decided to offer the full nominal subscription sum, although the minute membership and extremely low annual due would probably warrant a reduction.

The meeting was followed by a dinner at which twenty-five members and friends were present. And it was here that the *raison d'être* of the Club became truly evident. The atmosphere throughout was a happy one, obviously not only due to the excellent "Gschnätzlets mit Röschti" and the Swiss wine. It was a gathering of old friends relishing reminiscences and pleased to let the young boys and girls (most of them from the Embassy Chancery) share in them. The oldest members present have belonged to the Club for nearly half a century, Mr. and Mrs. F. Delaloye, Mrs. A. Burkhalter and Mrs. C. Bolla. The youngest member had joined that evening. As usual, the evening ended in a sing-song, and no thought was further away from anybody's mind than that of an organisation on its last leg. The creation of the Swiss Centre may be the turning point in the Club, until then the members are content to meet occasionally for a social gathering.

MM

MRS JOHN FREI †

It is with deep regret that we announce the death of the wife of Mr. John Frei, 33 Orchard Avenue, Shirley, Croydon. She died on 10th March, at the age of 69. Mrs. Frei was English and met her husband when he first came to this country after the first World War. We express our deep sympathy to Mr. Frei, his two daughters, his son and eight grandchildren.