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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE

The winter season of the London Group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique began with a **Talk on Egypt** given by Madame Marguerite Déboeuf, wife of Monsieur Jean-Marie Déboeuf, senior consular officer at the Swiss Embassy. The talk was in French and illustrated by slides. With great ease and enthusiasm Madame Déboeuf managed to conjure up a life-like picture of "Egypte — Terre éternelle", so much so that one wanted nothing better than to go and visit the mysterious country. Her slides were of the finest quality and included some absolutely magnificent pictures. The large audience showed great appreciation of the well-informed and knowledgeable lecturer and her photos second to none.

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The next "Open Meeting" of the Society took place also at the Swiss Hostel for Girls (19th October), its theme being "**Rock Climbing**". The President and all members present were particularly happy to welcome Mr. J. G. Walters, Director of the Bowles Rocks Trust (which administers the Bowles Mountaineering Gymnasium), and Mr. Jim Kennard, its chief Guide/Instructor. Mr. Walters showed a most interesting film on the activities of the Bowles Mountaineering Gymnasium, and Jim Kennard presented some seventy colour slides of mountaineering both in this country and in the Swiss Alps.

Whilst Bowles needs no introduction to regular readers of the "Swiss Observer", it was interesting to learn from Mr. Walters that on 18th November 1967, a new artificial ski slope will be opened at Bowles. Over 70 feet long, the slope is available for 2½-hour training sessions at the reasonable cost of 15/- including the hire of skis, sticks and boots.

Bowles amenities include a clubhouse open for refreshments. Full details can be obtained from the Warden, Bowles Mountaineering Gymnasium, Eridge, Sussex.

J.S.

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On the occasion of the opening of the exhibition of paintings, drawings and engravings of views of Switzerland 1750-1850 at the Arts Council Gallery (see separate report), two prominent representatives of the "Pro Helvetia" Foundation and the Collection of Graphic Prints at the ETH, who organised the exhibition in conjunction with the Arts Council, were to come over from Switzerland. One of them, Mr. Luc Boissonnas, Secretary-General of "Pro Helvetia", was unfortunately prevented by illness from making the journey. He was to have been entertained to dinner by the Nouvelle Société Helvétique. His place at a little intimate gathering at the Strand Palace Hotel on Friday, 27th October, was taken by Prof. Dr. E. Gradmann, *Ordinarius* for History of Art at the ETH and in charge of the fine Collection of Graphic Prints at the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich.

After dinner, Prof. Gradmann gave an interesting *causerie* about various well-known **Art Collections and Foundations** in Switzerland. He told of the origins of the Collection at the ETH, and he described the activities of the "Gottfried Keller" Foundation which was started by Lydia Escher, daughter of the constructor of the Gotthard Railway. The aims and objects of this Foundation which was originally 4m. francs, is to purchase works of art and

to put them back where they originally belonged. For over 40 years, Swiss art treasures have been repatriated; the Foundation own two rooms at the Freuler Palace at Naefels, a pulpit at Poschiavo, the St. Georgen Monastery at Stein-am-Rhein, Segantini's masterpiece "Werden, Sein und Vergehen", at the Segantini Museum, precious manuscripts and stained glass windows; they bought a Giacometti bust for Geneva and exquisite drawings of all Maria Theresia's children by Jean-Etienne Liotard (1702-1790) whose technique was unique. These are only a few examples to illustrate the work of the "Gottfried Keller" Foundation, of whom Prof. Gradmann is Chairman.

He also talked of the Reinhart Collection in Winterthur, with its superb German, Austrian and Swiss masters of the nineteenth century (over 100 works); it will be open to the public in the autumn. He mentioned the Emil Georg Buehrle Collection which was remarkable for having been got together in a very short time, and which contains a fine selection of Impressionists. The Bodmer Collection in Geneva, the finest library of the German language in Switzerland and the Rudolf Staechelin Collection in Basle, which had been in the news recently on account of the 8½m. francs needed for the two Picasso pictures, were both referred to by the speaker, as well as the Asian art collection now at the Rietberg in Zurich. Finally, Prof. Gradmann mentioned the Giacometti Collection of some 70 works, which had been possible mainly thanks to the Basle which had given 1m.

Though not many were present at the gathering, the interest was keen, and members were grateful to Prof. Gradmann for presenting such interesting information in a fascinating manner.

MM

FIRST WEDDING AT BOWLES CHAPEL

At 11 a.m. on September 16th, Guide/Instructor James Kennard was married to Miss Maureen Conlon, who came to Bowles as a Student Teacher.

The best man was Arthur Wells and, of course, the bridal couple passed out of the Chapel through an archway of ice-axes, held by fellow instructors.

The reception was held at the Bowles Clubhouse. During the festivities, telegrams were read out from Mr. Constant Cashin of Zermatt and kind friends at the Swiss National Tourist Office in London.

The couple finally got away to a climbing holiday in the Lake District, but not before Arthur Wells in his speech had put it to all married couples present that, in his opinion, marriage was like mountaineering. A helpful tug on the rope by the partner in the happier position could assist the struggling one and so get both on towards their next pitch, set of hopes or plans!

RECEPTION

On 17th October, the Swiss Defence Attaché, Colonel W. Frey and his Assistant Captain F. Lanz, supported by their wives, gave their Annual Reception at the Dorchester Hotel. Amongst the guests were large numbers of Military, Air and Naval representatives of foreign countries accredited to the Court of St. James's, as well as of the British Forces and the War Office.