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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

THE SWISS OF THE SOUTH-WEST

Blackpool is often considered as the most important sea-side resort of the British Isles. Torbay, the newly created county borough incorporating Torquay, Paignton and Brixham must rank close second. There must surely be few summer-time concentrations of population of such density. It takes almost an hour to drive from Torquay to Brixham in the heat of the season and a pedestrian has good chances of making it first. Other areas of Devon are equally densely packed and the longest bottleneck of my experience of English roads froze our journey for an hour at the entrance of the Exeter by-pass. The queue was several miles long. Torquay, for example, has a residential population of about 100,000 which trebles during the holiday season. Practically every building in the centre is a hotel. They are heaped one upon another and their operations during the short but hyper-active summer months must surely be enough to secure their wherewithall for the rest of the year. The area is noted for its mild weather—palm trees are actually to be found—and thus attracts a great number of retired people. Torquay has seen a fantastic building and real estate boom in the last ten years and those who knew the place in those days will hardly recognise it now.

There are approximately 100 elderly Swiss in the Torbay area, mainly women married to Englishmen. With such a density of hotels one might be surprised to know that, barring a grave oversight, there are only two Swiss hoteliers in Torbay. They are Mr. J. P. Locher, in fact, no longer a hotelier but former owner and manager of the Palm Court Hotel. He still holds considerable interests in his former hotel but now runs an attractive "patisserie" in

a residential part of Torquay. The other prominent Swiss in the area is Mr. K. Kappeler, owner and manager of the Osborne Hotel.

Mr. Locher is well known to the Swiss of the north as he settled in the north at the end of the war and started a chain of cake shops. He is the founder of the Manchester Swiss Rifle Club—which unfortunately was closed at the last AGM of the Manchester Swiss Club. The two serviceable guns of the Association were sold at a good price by Mr. Ermano Berner. Members of the Manchester Swiss Club may be interested to know that Mr. Locher, having sold his shops to an important group 12 years ago, settled down in Torquay, where he bought and managed a very attractive hotel on the sea-front, the Palm Court Hotel. Having injected a great deal of personal capital in renovating this hotel, Mr. Locher partially sold it after eight and a half years and opened his "patisserie"—a more relaxing occupation. The best continental delicacies are always on display in the windows of the "Confiserie Locher" where the gourmets and epicurians come to seek the good things of life from as far away as Plymouth.

The Swiss of Torquay not only know Mr. Locher for his involvement in the hotel and mercantile life of Torbay (he is a member of the local chamber of commerce and past president of the hoteliers of Torquay) but also for his Anglo-Swiss activities. Many years ago he was appointed Consular Correspondent for Devon and Cornwall and has served Swiss interests in this area with distinction. He has, in this quality, organised National Day celebrations and Swiss Weeks on many occasions. It is a pity that these

patriotic events never came to get the publicity which they deserved in the Swiss Observer!

Mr. Kappeler's is also a remarkable success story. The four-star hotel which he now owns and manages, the Osborne Hotel, can be objectively described as the best-sited hotel in Torquay. It surpasses its most immediate peer, the Imperial Hotel, in this respect. Facing the marvellous panorama of Torbay, it is separated from crowd, traffic and noise by a green belt of trees and lawns. Residents also enjoy a tennis court and a limpid, heated swimming pool. Mr. Kappeler has spent a six-figure fortune in making his hotel what it now is and asserts that much more will have to be put in before it is exactly what he wants it to be.

Compatriots in the hotel trade in London must know Mr. Kappeler who came to London in 1947 and was managing director and a partner of the Grosvenor Court Group of Hotels. The Grosvenor Court, which is the main of the three hotels of the group, is conspicuously sited above Bond Street Station. Mr. Kappeler, who had worked his way into ownership of the group sold out to various interests with attractive offers some eight years ago. The Grosvenor Court now belongs to the Grand Metropolitan Group and has, according to Mr. Kappeler, since considerably Americanised its style. This financial boost permitted him to buy the complete crescent which embodies the Osborne Hotel and a number of luxury flats from the family which had held its freehold for over a century and was eager to sell it to a worthwhile buyer. Mr. Kappeler fell on the Osborne Hotel quite by chance in the course of a holiday in Torquay and it was a pure chain of circumstances which led him to take over this high-class hotel.

Mr. Kappeler has very lofty views on what a hotel should be. He was putting his professional ideals into effect in the early post-war years already, installing bathrooms in the

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rooms of the hotels under his care at a time when accommodation was very scarce. A private bathroom, he contends, is a "must" in any hotel and hotel room TV sets need hardly be considered as a luxury nowadays. If a hotel is to survive, he says, it must offer the best service possible—and this starts with the menial convenience of a private bathroom and a TV set. Such a hotel will survive, and the Osborne certainly will, because there will always be a clientele ready to support this managerial philosophy with its cheque books.

(PMB)

FORTHCOMING MUSICAL EVENTS

Tuesday, 29th September, Royal Festival Hall, 8 p.m., Paul Kletzki conducts the New Philharmonia Orchestra in a Haydn, Mozart and R. Strauss programme.

Wednesday, 9th December, Queen Elizabeth Hall, 7.45 p.m., Concert by the English Chamber Orchestra to mark Frank Martin's eightieth birthday. Paul Sacher will conduct, and all the soloists will be Swiss.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Every Thursday from 6 to 7.30 p.m. Discussion Circle in English. Young men especially invited. Tea from 6 to 6.15 p.m., Swiss Room, YMCA, Gt. Russell St., W.C.1.

Secours Mutuels des Suisses à Londres. No meetings until October.

SWISS RIFLE ASSOCIATION: Shooting at the Siberia Range on Sunday, 13th September, Sunday, 27th September and Sunday, 11th October (Gruempelschiessen).

Wednesday, 23rd September. City Swiss Club Card Evening.

Thursday, 24th September, 7.45 p.m., Swiss Hostel for Girls, Open Meeting, Nouvelle Société Helvétique. Talk by Mr. F. J. Fraefel on "23 years with Swissair, a look behind the scenes". FILM (see editorial overleaf).

Saturday, 3rd October. Charity recital by LENNART RABES and singing by MADELEINE BAER in favour of the preservation of animal life. Humane Education Centre, Avenue Lodge, Bounds Green Road, London, N.22. 7.45 p.m. Send 10/- for your ticket to the same address now!

Saturday, 31st October. Swiss Church Bazaar at the Westminster Central Hall.

Friday, 20th November. City Swiss Club Annual Banquet and Ball.

ABOUT BIRCHERMUESLI

The most preposterous of all the shaky statements that I have made in the course of a year's editorship of the S.O. must surely have been committed a month ago, when I said that no British food firm had thought of producing Bircher-muesli! Friendly readers were quick to point out to me that *Sainsbury's* produce an excellent Bircher-muesli for only 2/10d.! I've indeed tasted it and found it excellent. But I still prefer *Familia*, which of course costs 1/5d. more. "Familia" is, to my mind, a better deal than two other Swiss makes of Bircher-muesli which I have discovered lately, which are "Frutti Fort" (4/10d.) and "Swissy" (3/6d.). I've also been told by English friends that it is possible to find Bircher-muesli at health food stores such as *Horsebury's* and *Prewitt's* and at *Crank's*, the vegetarian restaurant. Bircher-muesli must be better established here than I ever dreamt of.

(PMB)

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RECEPTION HOURS

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

2 p.m. to 5 p.m. or by appointment.

SWISS CHURCH

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS: à l'Eglise Suisse, 79 Endell Street, W.C.2, tous les dimanches a 11h15 et 19h00.

SAINTE-CENE: le premier et troisième dimanche du mois, matin et soir.

PERMANENCE: chaque jeudi de 15h00 à 18h00.

REUNION DE QUARTIER: huit veillées en automne et au printemps: voir "Le Messager"

CLUB DES JEUNES: tous les dimanches de 12h00 à 22h30, tous les jeudis de 15h00 à 22h30.

REUNION DE COUTURE: le 2e mardi du mois.

LUNCH: tous les dimanches a 13h00.

VISITES: sur demande.

PASTEUR: A. Nicod, 7 Park View Road, London N.3. Téléphone 01-346 5281.

* * *

SERVICES IN GERMAN: at Eglise Suisse, 79 Endell Street, W.C.2, at 10 a.m. At St. Ann's Church, Abbey Orchard Street, S.W.1. at 7.30 p.m.

HOLY COMMUNION: every first Sunday of the month at evening service only. On major feasts at morning and evening services.

CONSULTATIONS: every Wednesday 4-6 p.m. at Eglise Suisse.

DISTRICT GROUPS (W.4 and S.E.21) and SERVICES OUTSIDE LONDON: see "Gemeindebote".

SERVICES IN ENGLISH: every fourth Sunday at 7.30 p.m.

"KONTAKT" (Youth Group): every Wednesday 4-10 p.m. at Eglise Suisse. Supper at 6.30 p.m. Programme at 8 p.m.

SWISS Y.M.C.A.: see Forthcoming Events.

WOMEN'S CIRCLE: every first Tuesday of the Month.

MOTHERS' REUNION: 1st Wednesday in the Month, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

VISITS: by request.

MINISTER: Pfr. M. Dietler, 1. Womersley Road, N.8. Telephone 01-340 6018.

SWISS CATHOLIC MISSION: at St. Ann's Church, Abbey Orchard Street (off No. 25 Victoria Street), S.W.1.

SATURDAYS: Ecumenical Service at 6.30 p.m.

SUNDAYS: Holy Mass at 9 and 11 a.m. (in English). At 6.30 p.m. (mostly in German)

CONSULTATIONS AND CONFESSIONS: preferably on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays in the afternoon or by appointment.

SERVICES EN FRANCAIS: Notre Dame de France, 5 Leicester Place, W.C.2. on Suns. at 9, 10, 11 a.m. 12.15, 6, 7 p.m.

SWISS CATHOLIC YOUTH CLUB — Meeting every Sunday after Evening Mass (8-11 p.m.) at Westminster Ball Room, 30 Strutton Ground, S.W.1.

CHAPLAIN: Paul Bossard, St. Ann's Church, Abbey Orchard Street, S.W.1. Tel.: 01-222 2895.