

Swiss Mercantile Society

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A PHILYMPIA RECEPTION HELD AT THE SWISS CENTRE

The Swiss Centre Restaurant was crowded by the Press and representatives of world philately on Tuesday, 15th September. The function was to mark the opening of the Philympia exhibition. We glanced at the Swiss stamp exhibition and marvelled at the exhibits of the "Helvetia" Stamp Society and those of Miss Gruenberg, champion collector of the Swiss Philatelic Society. Interesting Swiss stamps are on sale for the duration of the Swiss Centre Exhibition, which lasts till 15th October.

THE SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY'S SEPTEMBER MEETING

Fourteen faithful members turned up at the Swiss Mercantile Society's first meeting following the holiday "recess". When the minutes had been read and approved, and current matters dealt with, the President asked Mr. Hediger to give us his impression of a trip to Basle, where he had received the "Wappenscheibe" awarded to all members who can pride themselves of 50 years membership of the Society. Mr. Hediger received his painted glass trophy, together with 200 other Mercantile veterans, from the hands of Mr. Maier-Naef. He told us that he had not managed to establish any new contacts or crossed upon old friends during the presentation ceremony and the ensuing dinner. He was the only Swiss abroad with the exception of a compatriot who had come from Bogota, Columbia. Mr. Gruetzner, a former resident in London, was also present, but he now lives in Berne. Mr. Hediger experienced a surprising encounter as he was taking a drink in the buffet of Basle Station. He sympathised with his neighbour who turned out to be his successor at the Handelsbank, London, which he left in 1919! The man told Mr. Hediger that he remembered his name well through the files and dossiers which he had inherited from him!

The rest of the evening was devoted

to a presentation of slides by Mr. L. S. R. Asch and Mr. J. Oertli. Mr. Asch showed us an inspiring collection of photographs taken during a journey through Italy, Switzerland, Germany and Holland last year. Some of his pictures were photographically supreme and were a demonstration of Mr. Asch's talents! He had a few slides of the S.M.S.'s outing to Clivesden last year and some of his thatched cottage in Essex—which was built as far back as 1649.

Mr. Oertli then commented on an original photograph showing the panorama of the Umbreit Pass and the Stilschjoch. Mr. Oertli was stationed in the area in 1916, at a time when the Pass lay at the meeting point of three borders—those of Switzerland, Austria and Italy. He told us of the kind of colourful adventures which resulted from such an exposed assignment. He could witness from his retrenched outpost the Austrians transporting goods and ammunition with the help of convoys of Russian prisoners and the Italians firing shells over the mountains into the Reighbowing Austrian valley. He ended his presentation with a collection of beautiful photographs taken in the Rosengarten in Berne.

Most members concluded the evening downstairs, enjoying the traditional Dutch beer which the Society always unstintingly offers to those who make the effort to come to its meetings.

The next meeting of the S.M.S. will be a Veterans Evening in which all the recent holders of the Wappenscheibe will be offered a free supper. No programme is foreseen and I understand that this will be a purely social and friendly evening.

(PMB)

PROMOTION IN THE COLONY

We have been informed that Mr. F. De Maria, President of the Unione Ticinese, has been appointed as Headmaster of the Cardinal Vaughan Grammar School. Our warmest congratulations to Mr. De Maria!

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