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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

THE LONDON SWISS PHILATELIC SOCIETY'S ANNUAL DINNER

The Swiss Philatelic Society's Annual Dinner, a merry family affair, took place in the Stanhope Suite, in the basement of the Dorchester Hotel.

After we had all enjoyed a very satisfying lunch, Mr. W. Burren, the President, rose for a short address and spoke of various philatelic events in London. He mentioned the "Stampex", an annual event held in the horticultural hall of Westminster, where the Honorary Secretary, Miss A. Grunberg had won a silver-bronze medal. She is a distinguished collector and a specialist in Swiss stamps. In this quality, she has recently been elected a member of the Royal Philatelic Society, a fact that was not overlooked by Mr. Burren. He also spoke of the world stamp exhibition at Olympia, which will be called "Philympia" and will be held from 16th to 26th September. During that time, there will be an exhibition of Swiss stamps organised by the Swiss P.T.T. and the S.N.T.O. at the Swiss Centre. The London Swiss Philatelic Society had been asked to participate at this exhibition, together with the Helvetica and Lichtenstein philatelic societies.

Mr. Burren then gave me the honour of handing out the customary cups to the worthiest collectors of the Society. Mr. Jack Beken, an honorary member and specialist in Lichtenstein stamps, received the Challenge Cup. He also received the plaque for postal history. Mr. F. Streit was awarded the plaque for thematics. Unfortunately, he was kept away because of illness and it was his attractive daughter who received the trophy. The replica of last year's Challenge Cup was given to Mr. D. W. Langley.

The prize-giving gave way to the raffle, organised by Mr. M. Uehlinger, who was carrying the ticket-basket and by Mr. D. Pashoud, who took care of the cash dish. The raffle raised £25 for the benefit of the Society. There were plenty of prizes and these ranged from the luxury box of chocolates to the roll of hygienic paper daintily wrapped in frilled paper. When the treasure-table was left empty, Mr. Uehlinger auctioned numerous lots of stamps as well as stamped envelopes and "first covers, with and without silk thread".

Over £20 were raised in this way. Half the money was for the Swiss Benevolent Society and the other half for the Marie Curie Foundation. Mr. M. Rothlisberger, who is treasurer of the Swiss Benevolent Society and connected with the work of the Marie Curie Foundation, thanked us all for our contributions.

Mr. Burren closed the evening officially and welcomed us all to next year's Annual Dinner.

(PMB)

THE NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

A good forty people were present at the Annual General Meeting. Some of the members of long standing were absent however, and the new President, Mrs. Meier, regretted that Messrs. P. Bandy, P. Inebnit, J. Zimmerman, J. Schmid and O. Grob could not be with us.

Reviewing the past year, Mrs. Meier was pleased to note that membership to the N.H.S. had been maintained. Two revered members had passed away in the course of the year, Mr. M. H. Ochsner and Mr. C. Chapuis. We stood up and commemorated their memory with a minute's silence.

The main task of the N.H.S.'s President was to get hold of good speakers. The record for last year had not been bad at all and lecture fees had been non-existent. The only expense on this account had been a voluntary contribution to the work of one of the lecturers. Mrs. Meier said that she had asked a member of the Wahlen Committee to come to speak on the total change of the Federal Constitution. This will be the subject of a debate at the London N.H.S. and, if I understand rightly, the Wahlen Questionnaire will be submitted to the Society.

Two new Council members were voted: they were Dr. Franz Birrer, the Cultural Attaché at the Embassy, and myself.

Mr. L. S. R. Asch, the Treasurer, commented on the accounts of the year. They were confirmed by the voluntary auditors, Mr. M. C. Rothlisberger and Mr. D. E. Bonnet.

Two important topics were on the agenda: the election of Dr. H. Egli, the outgoing President, to the title of Honorary President, and the confirmation of N.S.H. support to the Swiss Forum.

Mrs. Meier asked Dr. Egli to retire, which he gracefully did, while we unanimously voted in favour of his new honour.

Concerning the question of support to the Swiss Forum, we were told that the Council of the N.H.S. had decided to earmark £600, well over two-thirds of its capital to the project. Mr. R. Baumann asked for some precisions, namely, was this money actually promised, or only "reserved for" the Swiss Forum? Shouldn't the Meeting confirm the Council's decision?

This called for some explanations by Dr. Egli, the main promoter of the Swiss Forum. He told us that the money had not been promised unconditionally and was not committed yet. Among the conditions set by the London societies, the Forum will have to be open and free to all of them. The money was still in the Society's coffers and would stay so until work definitely got under way.

Dr. Egli thought that the Society's effort was a very good show and an example to all.

Mrs. Meier said that nothing would be undertaken concerning this contribution unless all were satisfied of the conditions. She assured the meeting that the Council wouldn't commit the Society's money without full assurances and would call an extraordinary meeting if this were necessary.

Dr. Egli informed us that auguries for the Forum were quite encouraging. The City Swiss Club had reserved £6,000, the Swiss Youth Club Fund £2,000, the Nouvelle Société Helvétique £600, the Unione Ticinese £750, this in addition to the contributions of other societies summed up to about £10,000.

The meeting was followed by a half-hour reception and then by an informal dinner in the Swiss Hostel's refectory. The pretty boarders of this institution mingled with N.H.S. members and conversation was so animated that it was hard to be heard without raising one's voice.

Mrs. Meier rose for her address, whose text we now reproduce:

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, Madame Keller, Ladies and Gentlemen. Having said this, I should like to scrap it at once and simply say "dear friends all". For it is true to say that the annual dinner of the N.S.H. has no high social claims, it is not a function of great prestige value. Throughout the year, we offer our members lectures, films, discussions which keep them informed on matters concerning Switzerland, but when we meet for our AGM, we simply take stock and sit down to dinner as a group of friends, sharing a genuine and lively interest in our homeland and finding pleasure in meeting in these congenial surroundings.

We are proud to count among these friends *Monsieur and Madame Keller*. The Ambassador is our Hon. President while in this country, but his regard for the Society goes much deeper. We value it and appreciate that he and Mme. Keller have spared us an evening.

We have always been able to count on the Embassy, not only for advice and practical help, but also for good representation at all our meetings; tonight is no exception: We welcome *Consul and Mrs. Adams* and *Vice-Consul and Mrs. Abegglen*, as well as a handsome number of Embassy and Consulate staff. We have had excellent relations with the cultural section of the Embassy and are looking forward to co-operating with the new Cultural Attaché, *Dr. Birrer*, recently arrived, and whom we have the pleasure of seeing with us tonight. I have had a letter from *Dr. Stauffer*, former Cultural Attaché and Council Member who has

been transferred to the Embassy in Ankara. He says he thinks of London and the NSH with nostalgia and considers himself a "Londoner Auslandschweizer."

Among the guests are *Monsieur le Pasteur and Madame Nicod, Herr and Frau Pfr. Dietler and the Rev. Father Bossard*. The ecumenical co-operation which has become a characteristic of Swiss church life in London, is making history. The large numbers of young people who find interest and guidance in the Church Communities are lively witnesses to the valuable work done by the Ministers who, together with the two Assistant Ministers, have always shown a liking for our activities.

The same applies to the Warden of the Hostel and the President and Secretary of the Swiss Welfare Office, as well as the Secretary of the Swiss Benevolent Society, *Mrs. Sharp*, whom we welcome in our midst. Unfortunately, the former three are about to resign from their offices, *Mrs. Kind* going to Moscow with her husband, *Mrs. Ellis* retiring after eight years of presidency, and *Miss Siegrist* returning to Switzerland at the end of a month. Unfortunately both the *Kinds* and the *Ellises* are unable to be with us, *Dr. and Mrs. Kind* have to entertain important visitors from abroad, and *Mr. Ellis* is not well; we wish him a speedy recovery and express our thanks to both these ladies for all the work they have done in the interest of our young compatriots.

Miss Siegrist is with us, and whilst we naturally regret her departure, we are happy to have her in our midst so that we can thank her for all the friendly welcome she has given us during the four years as Warden of the Hostel. She has been looking after us in an exemplary way, often under difficult circumstances. May we ask *Miss Siegrist* to accept a small token of our appreciation and our sincere wishes for her future. (Presentation of Book).

At the same time as *Miss Siegrist*, the Hostel is also losing another most important person—the cook—who has administered to our culinary needs most competently for just over three years. We wish *Miss Gruetter* the very best for the future and ask her to accept this little present.

Thanks are also due to the *young ladies* who have been waiting on us tonight, headed by *Mrs. Brunold*, *Miss Siegrist's* successor. We hope that we may have the same happy relationship with her as we had with *Miss Siegrist*.

And while we are about it, we should also express thanks to the *anonymous donor* who gives a present to all the ladies every year and who has once again kept up the pleasant tradition (attractive stationery).

We have already thanked at the meeting our auditors, *Mr. Bonnet* and *Mr. Rothlisberger*. *Mr. and Mrs. Bonnet* have sent apologies, but we welcome *Mr. Rothlisberger* as our guest and regret that *Mrs. Rothlisberger* is not well. We send her our good wishes for a prompt recovery.

I should also like to single out two old members whom we are very happy to have with us, *Mrs. Chapuis* and *Mrs. Weist*. *Mrs. Chapuis* is still a very active member, and I should like to express our sympathy to her in the recent loss of her brother-in-law *Carlo* who was a member of our society and a well-known personality in the Colony, just like *Mrs. Chapuis's* late husband *Louis*.

When we welcome *Mrs. Weist*, we also remember her late husband *Richard* who was an Hon. Treasurer of our society and also an indefatigable worker in the Colony.

Mr. Berti is a member of our Council, but I'd like to mention him as President of the "Schweizerbund" and the First of August Committee. We have close ties with many of our sister societies and we appreciate their interest.

As a past President, I welcome *Mr. Willy Renz*, accompanied by *Mrs. Renz*, and I am happy to have my fellow officers and their wives with me, *Mr. Baumann* (Vice-President), *Mr. Asch* (Hon. Treasurer) and *Mr. Bischof* (Hon. Secretary). What should I do without them? Thanks to their ever-ready help and reliability, I need not worry about the administrative side of the work.

Last but by no means least, I should like to welcome a new guest at our AGM, the Editor of the Swiss Ob-

server, *Mr. Pierre-Michel Béguin*. He is already a member in his own right, thus continuing an old tradition: Was not our immediate past President one of the first editors of the S.O.?, the great personalities amongst editors, the late *Fred Stauffer*, one of our valued members? and your President herself a former editor? I don't know how that augurs for *Pierre Béguin*, but anyway, we wish him success in his work and hope for continued harmony in our relationship.

There is another guest I want to mention, our retiring President, *Dr. H. W. Egli*. Unfortunately, *Mrs. Egli* was not well enough to come, and we ask him to convey our best wishes for a speedy recovery.

This is the bit I find most difficult, for I know I shall not be able to express adequately the thanks due to *Hans Egli* for all he has done for the Society in the 16 years of his presidency. I have had the privilege to work with him in various matters concerning the Colony over the past 35 years, and I know of no other person who has given such a measure of hard work, unselfish interest and unfailing devotion to the life of the Swiss community in this country. Coupled with the pride to have had him as our President, is our deep gratitude for all he has contributed. He is largely responsible for putting us on the map with the organisation of the Swiss Abroad in Berne. As your representative I attended a meeting of the Commission, our "Parliament" last week. One of our jobs was to accept the annual report of the organisation. In it the Swiss societies abroad were listed under the headings of "social", "cantonal", "linguistic" and "pastimes". That I was able to point out another and very important heading, that of "cultural", is to a large extent due to *Hans Egli* who has not only set a high standard for the Society, but done a great deal to foster the image of Switzerland in Great Britain. Our Mother Society at home organised a seminar last week on this very subject. I was asked to talk on how our country is judged in these isles. Much of what I had to say I was able to base on what I have learned from *Dr. Egli*. His perception and immense knowledge, but

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even more so his high ideals of true patriotism have enabled him to work for the creation of a Cultural Forum of Switzerland in London, a great scheme which is nearing fruition, and which will help to improve the image of our country.

I now have the honour and pleasure of presenting Dr. Egli with a small token of our gratitude. We asked him to make a choice, and he has done so in his usual unassuming modesty. (Presentation of book).

Above all, I have the privilege of announcing that the meeting earlier this evening has unanimously elected Hans Egli as *Honorary Vice-President* in recognition of his services.

Dr. Egli has retired both as President of the NSH and eminent correspondent of the *Neue Zuercher Zeitung*. He is still President of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the U.K. He will now devote his efforts even more to the Forum. But we hope that he will also be able to enjoy plenty of leisure, and we wish him and Mrs. Egli many more years of good health and happy togetherness.

Ladies and gentlemen — Your Honorary Vice-President — at multes annes! (*end of Mrs. Meier's address*).

The Ambassador, Monsieur René Keller, who had come for the reception with Madame Keller, rose to tell us of his first contact with NSH in war-time Prague, where he was a young vice-consul. In those days the "Nouvelle Société Helvétique", a rebirth of the historical "Société Helvétique", was not established as firmly as it is today, and certainly not in Prague. His job was to create a Prague NSH for the benefit of the handful of Swiss who were there. He acted as Treasurer, Secretary, Vice-President and public relations man for both this society and the Swiss community in Prague. As there was no Press reporter, his despatches to "Echo" were vetted by the Chairman and approved by the Consul. This gave a measure of the scope of his promotion as Honorary President of the London NSH!

Monsieur Keller reminded us that another step had been officially taken in this direction by replacing "ministers" by ambassadors. Monsieur de Torrenté, who was Minister when Monsieur Keller first came to London in 1954, very much enjoyed the former title, even though it involved persistent enquiries on his denomination.

Monsieur Keller ended his address by reading out the "Tages Anzeiger" report of Mrs. Meier's speech at the assembly of the Swiss abroad at Lenzburg. He praised the tremendous effort of the London NSH towards the realisation of the Swiss Forum and proposed a toast to Dr. Egli.

(PMB)

COMMUNICATIONS

Mrs. C. Voegli, of 21 Seidenstr. 8400 Winterthur, has asked us to thank all those who have sent her letters of sympathy following the death of her late husband, Charles Voegli, for their kindness and regrets that she has not been able to thank each one of them individually.

Mrs. M. K. Harper has drawn our attention on the **National Model Railway Exhibition** which will be held at the Central Hall, Westminster, from 31st March to 4th April. As usual, Mr. M. K. Harper will be exhibiting models of Swiss locomotives and rolling stock. He has, this year, won the Model Railway Club's Vice-Chairman's Trophy with a 1/26 scale model of a Berne-Neuchatel coach.

PAUL LERCH, 70

Mr. Paul Lerch, one of the pillars of the Yorkshire Swiss Club, will be 70 on April 2nd. He is the husband of the Secretary of the Yorkshire Swiss Club and both have done a great deal for this Society over a period of many years. Mr. Lerch was born in Brittnau (Ag) and was one of a family of ten children. He made a locksmith's apprenticeship, spent the first world war in the fortress artillery of the Gothard and then went to work for Sulzer Brothers. Specialising in marine engines, his work led him to such far away places as the West Indies, Japan and South America. He eventually became a foreman at the Leeds Sulzer works and a machine assembler with very high responsibilities. He spent the war repairing damaged allied merchant ships. He has now retired and lives in Leeds. We congratulate him for this anniversary and wish him many more long years.

(PMB)

OTHER CELEBRATIONS

Mrs. Nina Pfaendler will be 82 on 29th March. On March 30th, Mr. and Mrs. Kriesi will be celebrating their 52nd wedding anniversary. Mr. Jules F. J. Amman will be 84 on 30th March and Mr. F. E. Brunner will be 78 on the 31st. Mrs. Marie Rose Lang will be 81 on 1st April and Mr. Fred Streit 72 on the 2nd. That same day, Mr. and Mrs. Gottfried Keller will be celebrating 32 years of marriage. On 11th April, Mrs. Ch. Rabes will be having her birthday, age not disclosed! To these and other readers who will be celebrating an important day very shortly we send our warmest congratulations.

OBITUARY

We regret to announce the passing away of Mr. Freddy Mermoud, at Montbrillant, 1815 Baugy (Vd) at the age of 77. He died on January 22nd. He had lived in London for many years and had retired in Switzerland four years ago.

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 Y.M.C.A. Building, Gt. Russell Street, W.C.1.

Secours Mutuels des Suisses a Londres. Monthly Meetings every first Wednesday of the month at 34 Fitzroy Sq., W.1., 7 p.m.

APRIL

Friday 3rd. Swiss Church, Endell St., 18th Century music for strings and harpsichord by the Frenkendorf Ensemble under the patron of the N.H.S., 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 8th, Swiss Mercantile Society Monthly Meeting. (No talk on the "History of the Thames" as indicated in the last issue. This talk took place in the March meeting) 35 Fitzroy Sq., W.1.

Sunday 12th. Annual General Meeting of the Committee of Swiss Catholics at 48 Gt. Peter St., S.W.1 at 7.30 p.m. Before this, at 6.30 p.m. there will be a traditional Easter Service at St. Ann's Church.

Tuesday 14th. Swiss Club Edinburgh. 7.25 p.m. at 187 Canongate or 7.30 p.m. at Sheep's Head Inn, Duddington, for the Skittle Evening and the Edinburgh-Dunfermline match.

Sunday 26th. Swiss Rifle Association, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Siberia range at Bisley.

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 Messenger"

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

REUNION DE COUTURE: le 2^e 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.

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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

CHURCH and SERVICE: St. Ann's Catholic Church, Abbey Orchard Street (off No. 25 Victoria Street), S.W.1.

SUNDAYS: Holy Mass at 9 and 11 a.m. in English. At 6.30 p.m. for the Swiss community with regard to the different language groups.

HOLIDAYS of obligation: Holy Mass at 7.30 and 9 a.m., 1 p.m. and 5.45 p.m.

WEDNESDAYS and THURSDAYS: Holy Mass at 1 p.m. afterwards time for consultations.

CONFESSIONS: German, French, Italian and English:

Sundays: one hour before Evening Mass.

Saturdays: 11 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and from 5 to 7 p.m. or by appointment.

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.