

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: - (1972)
Heft: 1630

Artikel: Life of a leading Swiss in Scotland
Autor: Hartmann, M.O.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-686333>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 25.12.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Residence block

The ground floor of the residence block is entered from Bryanston Square. It has a large hall, a morning room and lecture theatre. These rooms can be opened up by the use of sliding doors to form a room of about nine metres in width by 31 metres in length.

On the first floor is a large dining room and three salons and at the rear a kitchen servery.

The Ambassador's private rooms are on the second floor, together with accommodation for guests.

On the top floor of the residence is a staff canteen, a kitchen and maids' rooms.

THE SWISS OF DUNFERMLINE

Feeling that far too little was said in these columns about the Swiss of Scotland, we asked Mrs. F. Adams-Keller, Honorary Secretary of the Swiss Club of Dunfermline, to tell us how the Swiss were faring in that northerly town. The following is her reply.

You would like to know how we, of the Swiss Club, are here in Dunfermline. Alas, we don't escape the fate of everyone else, we are getting old, we and the Club with us. Past are the days when we could boast over 75 members. Our dramatists don't produce plays anymore—some lasted over three hours!—and our male choir with its lovely voices has become quiet.

The first of our compatriots came over here in the winter of 1925 and the Swiss Club was founded in the 30's. Of the three factories which they established as the centre of the silk industry in Dunfermline two have been closed. When, at the last closure (of the Winterthur Silks), several of our male members lost their jobs we felt very much for them, especially for Mr. Tanner who was approaching retiring age. He was our treasurer, both he and his wife were active members, much liked by everybody and a great loss to the club. When he and a younger man found good jobs in Switzerland we were

glad, yet it was mingled with some envy and "Heimweh".

We had always met in the canteen of the "Winterthur Silks". Finally we found a room in a Co-op building where we could brew ourselves a cup of tea. Lovely, we thought—but had not realised that after all those years we have not become acclimatised to one aspect of British life: Those who sat near the fire got roasted and those in the corner of the room shivered, wrapped in their coat. Still, it accounted for more volunteers than dishes for washing up!

When, a day before a meeting we were told that we could not have the room this time because of a wedding party, we took refuge in an inn. The room was so cosy, the publican so friendly . . . Some of our ladies found the friendliness a bit overwhelming, especially when the friendly backslapping tended to go a bit low down. At the second meeting the gentlemen were themselves overwhelmed by the complication of the bill for the drinks and the demands made on them to pay a second time for the food!

Meanwhile one of our members moved to a house with a large lounge and dining room and this is where we now meet. So that's one problem solved satisfactorily.

What do we do in our sedate way? We have film evenings, play jazz and dominoes, meet occasionally with the Edinburgh Club for a skittles contest, visit a play, pantomime or opera together, have an outing for the 1st of August, and a lovely pre-Christmas meeting in Advent's time. We used to invite the Edinburgh Swiss to an evening with all sorts of entertainment. The last one took place just in time before the "Winterthur Silks" closed.

Nowadays we have only ordinary members and a few honorary ones, 37 in all. In the old days we had a great number of passive members, which was a misnomer really as they were the most active ones of all. We rectified their status some years ago, even before it was done in Switzerland: Their passivity referred to the vote only—

they were women.

We are a very cheerful little group, happy to meet regularly. Any Swiss visiting us can be sure of a warm-hearted welcome and agreeable memories of this friendly old town.

LIFE OF A LEADING SWISS IN SCOTLAND

Mr. Walter O. Bosshardt, who died suddenly at Edinburgh at the age of 71, was a great promoter of Swiss life in Scotland. The following is a short biography sent to us by Mr. M. O. Hartmann, Swiss Vice-Consul for Scotland and President of the Edinburgh Swiss Club.

Walter O. Bosshardt
Late of Dunfermline and Edinburgh,
Scotland

It is my sad duty to say goodbye to a prominent and influential member of the Swiss Community in Scotland—Walter O. Bosshardt. How can this short message do credit to the achievements of such a great man?

Let me talk about him:

Walter Otto Bosshardt was the son of Jakob Heinrich and Lina Bosshardt-Ehrensberger, and was born in Höngg, Kanton Zurich, on 28th April, 1900.

At an early age he went on climbing expeditions with his father, who was a Webermeister in a silk factory in Wädenswil, where he learned the beginnings of the trade. He also attended Technical College and his training in mechanics was done in Rüti Machinery Works.

His first venture to instal a factory to weave silk was in Rovereto in Northern Italy, and from there he went to Milan and Lyons to gain further experience.

Then came the depression in industry and a Swiss manufacturer was looking for a suitable factory in Britain to weave, silk and he and his father were appointed to advise in this matter. Dunfermline was chosen, and he

THESE VEHICLES



TRAVEL TWICE MONTHLY TO AND FROM SWITZERLAND AND ENGLAND

Providing DOOR TO DOOR SERVICES
with vans specially equipped to carry

- Household Removals.
- Exhibition Goods.
- Works of Art.
- Machinery.

For full information contact

In Switzerland

Kehrli + Oeler,
3001 Berne,
Nachf. A. Oeler,
Bubenberplatz 9.

In England

Neale & Wilkinson Ltd.,
1 and 2 Rangoon Street,
London, E.C.3.

Tel. 031 22 00 22. Tel. 01-480 6351. Ext. 54 or 58

installed the first silk weaving factory there and procured permits to bring over Swiss people who had some experience in the trade and they instructed trainees. Soon there was a Swiss Community and a Swiss Club was formed. They had a Golf Club, and frequent social evening including fellow workers and friends when they enjoyed music, singing and dancing, film shows which he projected, usually showing the beauties of Switzerland and ski films. The English language did not seem much of a problem and many happy evenings were spent. They also had special outings by bus and cars to get to know Scotland.

In 1932 another silk factory (formerly linen) was promoted in Dunfermline, and again he was appointed as Managing Director to have it installed and to employ the right people for the job. Quite a number of employees followed to join the new establishment. It was in this factory that during the Second World War years they were able to keep the flour mills supplied with bolting cloth, the first to be woven in Scotland, and of course parachute silk for the Royal Air Force and later material for the Royal Family. It gave him great pleasure to be given the order to weave the wedding gown material for HRH Princess Elizabeth, surrounded by the necessary secrecy and excitement. When this honour could be revealed, his advice was much sought after in the trade. He was commanded to inspect factories in Germany after the war as a Colonel in H.M. Forces.

His activities were many. He was a member of the Chamber of Commerce and of the Advisory Council for Youth Employment.

A keen gymnast, he joined the Carnegie Club when he first came to Dunfermline. After the war he visited Switzerland frequently on business and for pleasure. He enjoyed ski-ing in Arosa every year until osteoarthritis made him unfit for this pursuit. He attended the celebrations of the Alpine Club and this year he became a veteran member of 50 years' standing and was presented with the gold badge and pewter wine jug which he felt to be a great honour.

In 1946 he was awarded the Dunfermline Swiss Club Silver Golf Trophy, having won three events. He was a keen angler and enjoyed shooting and stalking.

His hobby was propagating species of geranium, his favourite pastime, and he had also been successful in growing grapes and peaches and other hothouse plants.

Walter O. Bosshardt has been a good, loyal friend and a guide to many; his vitality, optimism and the courage with which he led his life is an inspiration to all who knew him.

(M. O. Hartmann,
Swiss Vice-Consul for Scotland)

THE SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY TO BUY SWISS HOUSE

Wednesday, December 15th, was a red-letter day in the annals of the Society. An Extraordinary General Meeting of the members had been convened to pass a resolution empowering the Council to raise the necessary funds for the purpose of acquiring the freehold of Swiss House.

In opening the proceedings, the Chairman, Mr. A. Jaccard, welcomed the presence of the two Swiss Consuls, Monsieur F. Adams and Monsieur T. Dudli, which testified to the interest the Embassy took in the activities of our Society. He was particularly pleased to announce that the SKV had deputed Mr. E. Ruchti, Central Secretary in charge of commercial education, to come over from Zurich for the occasion, thereby emphasising the importance they were attaching to the steps contemplated by the London Section of the association, which might well prove vital for the continuity of the College, founded in 1923.

The Chairman further welcomed the Society's solicitor, Mr. W. S. Gibson, who had been entrusted with the negotiations connected with the purchase of the premises.

Dealing with the background of events which had led to the members being called to take what might well prove the most momentous decision in the history of the Society, the Chairman stated that various factors had prompted the measures taken in an endeavour to secure the freehold of the premises. Having been in constant occupation of Swiss House for close on 45 years as leaseholders, the Society had long been anxious to become the owners of the buildings, but various attempts in the past had proved abortive, either through lack of funds or the unwillingness of the owners to part with their properties.

The matter had again come to the fore when major alterations and renewals at Swiss House were contemplated. These included the installation of a central heating system, electrical rewiring, redecoration, and the building of an extension at the rear of the premises to help overcome the lack of space.

It was, however, deemed that the expenditure involved could not be justified in premises not belonging to the Society and with a lease of short duration which could only be renewed at a highly increased rental. New moves were consequently initiated to acquire the freehold of Swiss House. After somewhat protracted negotiations, this initiative ultimately bore fruit. The Landlords' agreement to sell the properties having been obtained, efforts were made to raise the necessary capital in Switzerland. The Chairman went on to state that, thanks to the unstinted help of the SKV, the promised assistance of the Federal Government

and of private sources, including banking, industry and trade, and the society's own contribution, the required funds would in due course become available. In this connection, grateful thanks were expressed to the SKV as well as to the members of a committee formed in Switzerland to sponsor a general appeal, on which some eminent and leading personalities in all walks of life had agreed to serve.

After members had been given an opportunity to put their questions, the extraordinary resolution was put to the vote and passed unanimously.

Thanks were expressed to the Chairman for his untiring efforts in the matter. In his turn he declared his appreciation of the confidence shown by the members in the Council and assured those present that everything would be done to bring the project to a successful conclusion, whereupon the proceedings terminated.

The evening was rounded off with a film show by courtesy of the Swiss National Tourist Office, which was greatly enjoyed and much appreciated by all present and included the following films:

Switzerland—A Study in Contrast.
Ski for you.
Saas Fee—Village of Glaciers.
The Appenzell.

STAUNCHLY SWISS AFTER 56 YEARS!

The July 29th issue of the magazine "*Caterer and Hotelkeeper*" reports on a gathering of 94 of the longest serving colleagues of the catering magnate Sir Charles Forte at the Louis Room of the Cafe Royal. These 94 veterans were presented with gold watches inscribed with their names and diplomas of thanks for their contribution to the Forte's business.

Mr. L. Portman, a Swiss and a reader of our paper, was among the 94. Aged 78, he has been in the service of the Forte's for 20 years and is still employed as Cellar Manager at the Cockney Pride. He is the second oldest active employee of the group.

Mr. Portmann wrote to us saying that, although he had come to this country in 1915, he had never relinquished a Swiss nationality of which he was "justly proud", despite the fact that it had often prevented him from obtaining positions open to him if he had become a naturalised British.

WELFARE OFFICE
for
SWISS GIRLS IN GREAT BRITAIN
(For Information, Advice or Help)
31 Conway Street, London, W.1
(Nearest Underground Station:
Warren Street)
Telephone: 01-387 3608
RECEPTION HOURS
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
2 p.m. to 5 p.m. or by appointment
