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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

WINTER IN THE NORTH

As for many years past, also this year during these dark and sometimes dismal months of December and January, the Committees of our clubs put their heads together to arrange for a few socials towards which we are always looking forward with great expectation, the best way to keep our communities together, certainly cause for work and worry but also great satisfaction for work well done and I must say that our brave committee members do not lack in stamina and imagination.

It was for the *Swiss Club of Manchester* to make a good start. On Saturday, 11th December, 1971 we assembled for our customary Xmas-Tree-Party at the Midland Hotel in Manchester, a function specially arranged for our children and youngsters but usually well patronised by members in general. It is the most pleasant way to meet old friends again, have a good chat and at the same time admire "Young Switzerland" and their allies. Everybody was particularly pleased and honoured by the welcome presence of our Consul in Manchester and Madame Born.

An early start was made at 3 p.m., everybody taking their seats in the lovely Rotonda and enjoying a rich "Midland-high-tea" which consisted mainly of a good choice of sandwiches, cakes, pastries, jellies, sweets and a lot of other goodies well suited to the unspoiled taste of our children, finishing eventually with the traditional game of crackers—to the hilarity of the many. Mr. W. Berner then invited everybody to take their chairs and move to the little ballroom. There we were confronted with a lovely sight; a large Xmas Tree in all its glory of light and decorations solidly based in a little hill which consisted of the many individual presents for our children, later to be handed over to every one of them. I would say that this year's music

and singing performance was specially well arranged, thanks also to a gifted young lady pianist, and the children joining en bloc in this choir singing made the task for everybody so much easier.

A knock at the door and there he stood, our beloved Father Xmas, after so many wanderings a slightly tired looking saint but full of inside strength bestowed on him by the heavenly protection. He was greeted by a most sincere and thunderous applause and he had a good word for everybody, young and old, sitting in a large ring around the tree. The youngsters felt very much attracted towards him and earned with their solos, duettos, etc. each one a bag containing as usual sweets, fruits and other pleasant eatings. There was happiness all around and I was specially moved to watch the Simon youngster whose eyes were rivetted with such admiration and faith on this holy man. Alas, only too soon this pleasant part came to an end and the spontaneous and warm singing and applause followed him to the door, everyone wishing him a good journey.

The distribution of the individual gifts was taken most efficiently in hand by the ladies of our Committee, how much work and thought to assure the children would get their parcel, but Mrs. Martha Themans made it quite sure that no hitch would occur and so it was. The opening of the parcels was a quick affair and everybody got acquainted with his or her gift and I felt that there was satisfaction all around.

Soon this afternoon came to an early close, the room thinned out and so everybody, after many goodbyes and au-revoirs, were on their way home, enriched by pleasant and lasting memories.

On Tuesday, 4th January, 1972 it was the turn of the *Yorkshire Swiss Club* to gather at the Leeds Council House, Social Centre for their New

Year Swiss Supper. Also this year with a total presence of well over 72 people it was an outstanding success. This time our members and friends had the pleasure to get acquainted with our Vice-Consul, Mr. Leuenberger, a name which once cropped up in the early Swiss history. He stayed at the Griffin Hotel overnight and his presence amongst us was greatly appreciated. As star entertainer we were fortunate to obtain the help of our compatriot "Hans of Switzerland" whose wonderful concertina playing and lovely folk songs contributed in no small degree to the good success of the evening. He looked slightly worried because he expected any time to hear from home to have become the father of a boy or a girl, and so he had to leave earlier, accompanied by our most sincere good wishes for his wife.

At the beginning, our President Prof. J. P. Inebnit stood up extending to us a warm welcome and wishing everybody a happy and prosperous New Year, informing us at the same time of some plans to organise a window display in the Kramgasse Bern on the occasion of the 50th Auslandschweizer-Tagung 1972, perhaps exhibiting a "maquette" with the motif "Langgemeinde Hebden Bridge". This was interesting news and we wish him well, knowing that under his leadership success will not be waiting. Mr. Leuenberger forwarded to us the greetings and good wishes of our Consul and Madame Born who this time were unable to be with us.

This evening and its organisation was really the work of our ladies, and in particular of our two Secretaries, Mrs. Edith Lerch and Mrs. Ruth Leathly, actively helped along by some other ladies. Everybody was most generous and as complete families flocked in, all laden with all kinds of eatables, the large buffet table filled with sausages, salads, cakes, pastries, biscuits, meats and cheeses—all in such profusion of quality and variety that even

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the most difficult gourmand would have felt at home. All this in the framework of a pleasant table arrangement enriched by tastefully applied patriotic decorations. In the true sense of the word it was the effort of everybody and all this augurs well for the future of our club, and will certainly encourage its members to further efforts.

We endeavour to make this type of function or social self-supporting and I feel that our worthy treasurer, Mr. K. Kaegi must have been well pleased with the financial aspects of the affair, so more that a "chocolate Father Xmas" put up for auction fetched over £3—quite a price for every bite of it!

Everybody will agree with me that it was a most happy and congenial affair and so more it was regretted by us that the time had come to return to our homes but this was made so much easier knowing that we shall meet again, shortly, under similar circumstances. It was sheer pleasure for all of us, but hard work, at the beginning and at the end, for the few selected ones and to those the warmest thanks of the Club.

(Ermanno Berner)

CHARLES H. WILLI, A PIONEER PLASTIC SURGEON

As we announced previously, Charles H. Willi died on 27th January at Aigle, where he has had a home for the last few years. He was cremated at Vevey and will eventually be buried in Brigue, where the last of the Willis are now living.

Karl Heinrich Willi was born on 22nd June, 1883 in Lucerne, the son of Johann Willi, engineer of the Jura-Simplon Railway. Their family goes back to 1445, and their ancestral home is Willidorf at Oberkirsch-Sursee, Lucerne.

Charles had his schooling in Lucerne, and at 18 he went to the USA to study medicine, specialising in plastic surgery. After four years he returned to Europe and started practising. At that time, it was quite revolutionary and daring, as it was medically not accepted. He was first in Germany, then in Paris, and in November 1910, the year of Edward VII's funeral, he arrived in London.

Charles Willi had very little money but a lot of self-confidence. He started work in earnest, and he was enormously successful as a pioneer in his field. He was the first and foremost exponent in the art of aesthetic plastic surgery, used not only for facial rejuvenation, but also for restoring faces ravaged by accidents and war wounds, and for correcting malformations.

He practised in London until 1963, performing about 16,000 operations on kings, princes, statesmen, artists and society people, as well as thousands of ordinary men and women

who have reason to be grateful to him.

Many books have been written on his work, and he himself was the author of several publications. Apart from his American M.D., he had several distinctions. He was a member of a French medical academy, a F.R.S.A. and President of the International Society for Plastic Surgery.

He loved his lawn and his beautiful roses in Hampstead's Eton Avenue. He was a keen sportsman, an amateur jockey in his youth, a champion racing cyclist, an excellent horseman, tennis player and swimmer and he was second in the Swiss Figure Skating Championships about 1922.

He was a member of many Swiss societies in London, notably the Swiss Rifle Association and the City Swiss Club. In 1911, he "called" for his childhood sweetheart, also from Lucerne, Mrs. Marie Willi died some years ago and it is to their daughter Margrit who lives abroad, that our sympathy goes in her bereavement.

(MM)

PERSONAL

It is with great pleasure that we announce the marriage of Miss Heidi J. Meier to Mr. Manfred E. Buechele. Miss Meier is the eldest daughter of the late Mr. Walter and Mrs. Mariann Meier. The wedding took place in Switzerland on 12th February and we sent the young couple congratulations and best wishes for the future.

* * *

With equal pleasure we announce the wedding of Miss Rachel Nicod to Mr. Luciano Varesco. Miss Nicod is the eldest daughter of the Rev. A. Nicod, Minister of the French-speaking Swiss Church in London. The wedding ceremony took place on 12th February at Endell Street before a large congregation. Pastor Nicod who had the rare privilege of wedding his own children, delivered a beautiful sermon in Italian, studded with allegories drawn from nature to describe the Christian married state. We wish Rachel and Luciano every happiness in the future.

We wish to congratulate the pianist Mr. Lennart Rabes on his recent great success at a special Schubert Concert in Vienna, when he played the Wanderer Fantasy with the Viennese Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Rabes is the organist at the German-speaking Swiss Church and we wish him many more similar successes in his career.

* * *

Miss Paula Marguerite Haberstick, daughter of Mr. Paul B. Haberstick, a nurse with the rank equivalent of Major in the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmens' Families Association (S.S.A.F.A.) has left for Singapore on 15th February, where she will be posted for the next two years. Miss Haberstick has worked for the past eleven years with the S.S.A.F.A. nursing services in Osnabruck, Antwerp, Fontainebleau, Cologne and Dusseldorf. We wish her a most rewarding time for the years that she will spend "East of Suez".

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SWISS CLUB EDINBURGH. Tuesday, 28th March. Wuerstliabig, chat and sing-song at 8 p.m. 112 Hanover Street.

SWISS CLUB MANCHESTER. Friday, 24th March. Film show at Ciba-Geigy (U.K.), Heald Green.

LONDON SWISS PHILATELIC SOCIETY. Convention of the Middlesex Philatelic Federation. Saturday, 8th April at the Polytechnic of London, New Cavendish Street, W.1.

CITY SWISS CLUB. Friday, 24th March, Soirée Familiale at the Belair Swiss Restaurant, Rickmansworth Road, Northwood, Middlesex. 7.15 for 8 p.m. Price £2.50 per person (exclusive of drinks). Dress informal.

ANGLO-SWISS SOCIETY. Tuesday, 14th March at the Orchid Suite, Dorchester Hotel, 7.30 for 8 p.m. Sir John Pope-Hennessy, C.B.E., Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum will speak on "Does the modern world need museums".

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