

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: 1639

Rubrik: Schweizerbund

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

SWISS ARCHITECTS VISIT BRITAIN

A reception was held at the Embassy on 9th May to welcome a team of Swiss architects on a study tour of Great Britain. All of them are members of the Federation of Independent Swiss Architects, and were in the middle of a ten day visit of the architectural sites of these islands. The same afternoon, they had visited the Pimlico Comprehensive School and a model of town planning at Thamesmead. The next day they were due to travel to Scotland, which has a few notable examples of model cities. Their reputation has long since reached Switzerland. Welwyn Garden City also figured in their programme.

Swiss architects have a considerable respect for the achievements of their British colleagues. One member of the study tour said they wouldn't be in London if this were not the case. In general, Swiss architects admire British town planning, a field which was pioneered in this country. The visiting team was impressed by what it saw at Thamesmead, but pointed out that similar schemes could not be realised in Switzerland in view of the completely different way new estates are financed there. In England, a new town will be paid for by a local authority, such as the GLC. In Switzerland, all people live in blocks of flats financed by private capital, even though there is a tendency (and plenty of pressure) towards state participation in cheap housing.

This respect is amply reciprocated by the British. A bearded gentleman at the reception who happened to be the President of the British Architects Association, expressed the greatest admiration for Swiss town planning realisations. He noted that the Swiss, having started later in this field, were in a position to draw on British experience. He had been greatly impressed by the new estates springing up on the outskirts of Berne. Many British architects present were also moved by the quality of finish of the new Embassy.

Our Ambassador, Dr. A. Weitnauer, interrupted the bustle of conversation and invited the attendance to a guided tour of the Embassy. The visit began with the Hall on the ground floor and a look at the model of the Embassy displayed there. A good fifty curious guests then moved on to the ultra-modern Chancery of the Consular wing of the Embassy-residence complex and then climbed five flights of stairs to admire the Ambassador's office and his truly gigantic old wooden desk, which is at least as large as a

billiard table. We moved to the roof of the building and saw the gleaming refectory enjoyed by Embassy staff.

Back on the ground floor, guests ended their tour by admiring the exquisitely furnished "Morning Room". It was unfortunately not possible to visit the Ambassador's apartment, known to be the most tastefully furnished part of the building. The Ambassador, whose personal responsibility in decorating the apartment will benefit generations of diplomats to come, said that it was too small to be visited by such a large gathering.

(PMB)

THE SCHWEIZERBUND

The Schweizerbund met for its AGM at the headquarters of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, in Moorgate, on Friday, 12th May. A handful of members were present for the proceedings, but many more turned up at the succeeding dinner.

With Mr. Virgil Berti in the Chair, the normal items of every AGM were carried out straightforwardly. Mr. F. Adams, who represented the Embassy, was invited to conduct the re-election of the Committee as President pro tem. Demonstrating outstanding qualities of efficiency, our Consul took exactly 38 seconds to perform this task. The Committee was re-elected en bloc by acclamation.

Dr. Berti raised the question of the club's future. He asked whether the time might not have come to reconsider the purpose of the Schweizerbund. We should ask each other, he added, whether we really needed to meet each other within the framework of a society registered under the Friendly Societies Act. Could we not meet in other Swiss functions?

I ought to point out that the President did not imply that the club should disappear. He merely wanted to probe the feelings of the meeting on the club's very existence, which, he said, had altered considerably since the disappearance of the Swiss Club in Charlotte Street. He also mentioned the rising cost of functions (remembering that the first club dinner outside the Swiss Club, 12 years ago, had cost only 12/6, as compared to over £2 for ordinary dinners today) and the non-realisation of the Swiss Forum. All these things had tended to weaken the strength of Swiss Colony life and, in particular, the activities of the Schweizerbund.

Mr. Adams and other members pointed out that, were it not for the framework of an organised society, the members of the Schweizerbund would

not come to meet at twice-yearly dinners. The Swiss Club was necessary to keep the functions and the sing-songs going, even if that meant supplying published accounts in accordance with the Friendly Societies Act.

Although the AGM touched on the possibility of co-operation with the other Swiss societies, it was generally felt that any sharing of activities went against the individuality and purpose of each organisation. The best way for securing increased attendance to various important functions (e.g. not have 25 people listening to a speaker who had come specially from Switzerland) was to inform members of other societies of one's own activities. It was generally felt that the "purpose" of the Schweizerbund was essentially social and that there was no reason at present to consider the dissolution of the club.

The AGM was followed by a reception with a good 30-35 people. Dinner was served in a vast hall with frescos and arches and topped by a cupola. It was excellent in quality and quantity. Mr. F. Delaloye offered the Toast to the Ladies. After a long dinner with excellent and cheap wine on offer, the President rose to say a few words of welcome, with particular reference to the members of the Embassy and the Consulate who were present. Consul Adams said a few words concluded by a good joke. The rest of the evening was devoted to conversation and singing.

Swiss Gastronomic Fortnight

Frederick's Restaurant, Camden Passage, London, N.1, opened their "Swiss Fortnight" on 10th May by inviting a small gathering from the Embassy, the Swiss National Tourist Office and the Press to an inaugural dinner.

The menu started, naturally enough, with *Bündnerplatte*. Other possibilities offered in the first course included *Berner Goldhaefeli mit Gnagi* and *Raclette Valaisanne*. The main course included *Bratwurst Rosti*, *Zueri-Geschnaetzlets* and *Fillet the Porc Chateau Chillon*. Those who chose fish could have Rainbow Trout fried in butter with lemon and parsley. To finish with, there were assorted ices, *Gugelhupf Glace* and *Creme Caramel*. There was also the choice of a Banana Split, although this doesn't appear to be a particularly Swiss dessert. Admittedly, a famous chain of restaurants, represented at the Swiss Centre, are probably the European leaders in the confection of Banana Splits. Frederick's also offered a marvellous assort-

ment of Swiss pastries and Swiss wines, some of them (in particular the Dezaley "Les Embleyres" 1970) had never before been tasted in Britain.

Miss Islington, the local beauty queen, added charm to the atmosphere of this smart north London restaurant. A man in alpine garb played sweet central European melodies on a cithara. The waiters were dressed in Swiss costume, which had apparently been found in London without the assistance of the SNTO, one of whose most important tasks is to supply "Swiss do's" with the appropriate appurtenances. In this instance, it had supplied the Swiss flags.

Frederick's have had several previous similar national fortnights all with the same versatile chef. A British fortnight is planned next on the programme.

Literary prize to a compatriot

A large photograph of our compatriot, Mr. Pierre Savoie, appeared on the front page of the "Streatham News" of 5th May. Mr. Savoie, who has supplied many articles to "The Swiss Observer" and is currently writing our "Cathedral" series, won a literary prize for his "Sketch Map Book of the World's Great Religions". The award is the "Janay Literary Award for the best work of non-fiction" (educational and instructional) for 1971/72.

Born in 1890, the son of a pharmacist, Mr. Savoie was educated in Geneva but later trained in England, volunteering for service in the British Army in 1916. He was wounded in 1919.

In 1920, he joined the Pathe Films studio as a title artist and for eight years he held the position of arts director of this organisation in London. He was later put in charge of the arts department of British Instructional Films Ltd., a subsidiary of Pathe. Mr. Savoie left Pathe in 1951 to do freelance art work, mainly illustrating science and educational books.

Mr. Savoie has been a widower for ten years. He has two sons and three grandchildren.

The Janay awards were presented at the Annual Janay Authors' Convention on 3rd June at the Dolphin and Anchor Hotel, Chichester.

Now retired, Mr. Savoie writes because he finds it "a fascinating hobby and pastime". We should like to congratulate him most sincerely for this great achievement. Which writer has won a major literary distinction at 82 for a work written at 82?

Swiss writer speaks at the Embassy

An invited attendance heard a Swiss writer, Jean-Pierre Monnier, expound his views on "French-Swiss literature today" and his conception of the novel, on 3rd May at the Embassy. Mr. Monnier was born in 1921 at Saint-Imier and studied literature at Neuchatel, where he now teaches. He has published five novels, two of which ("La clarté de la nuit" and "L'arbre du jour") have been translated into German.

Consular promotion

A circular letter issued in April by the Swiss Consulate General of Manchester informed us that the hitherto Consulate of Manchester has been upgraded by the Federal Council "with the consent of Her Majesty's Government" to the status of Consulate General on 1st April. We should like to congratulate General Consul Ralph Born on his promotion.

Another consular promotion which was passed unmentioned in these columns is that of Mr. Th. Dudli, who was promoted from Vice-Consul to Consul last January. There are now two Consuls in London.

SWISS GIRLS STRANDED AT GATWICK

It is not often that the Swiss Embassy is mentioned in London's

evening papers. The two most notable cases in recent years arose when the Rev. Ian Paisley tried to storm the Embassy and later, when a 1,000 lb. unexploded bomb was found in the foundations of the old Legation. This time, the headlines referred to the Embassy in conjunction with the plight of two au pair girls freshly arrived in England during the first railway work-to-rule.

The two girls, German-speaking and on their way to a job at Windermere, in the Lake District, had just landed at Gatwick. They decided that they would hitch a ride to London because of the difficulties of transportation. They were by no means reckless or ignorant, and had carefully weighed up their decision. A Mini with three boys stopped by the kerb and offered to give them a lift. The girls stashed their luggage in the small vehicle and squeezed themselves inside.

Shortly thereafter, the Mini developed a fault and stopped. Everybody out and push. The girls wisely insisted on first putting their belongings on the roadside and then participating in reviving the Mini. Questioned on their excessive circumspection by the youngsters, the girls replied: "We don't know you. It's very easy for you to speed off with our luggage".

Having pushed the Mini a few dozen yards, the engine ignited again. The girls laboriously carried their luggage to the car and off they went. A short while later, the Mini stalled again and it was necessary to give it a second push. The two girls, probably believing by now that the car's troubles were real, agreed to step out and help start it up again.

Somehow, the girls managed to be the only ones outside the vehicle. No sooner had they begun to push it, than it zoomed away with a roar.

Our friends were left on the roadside deprived of their luggage, their clothes and their money. They were eventually driven to the Swiss Embassy with the help of the police and were greeted by the whole London Press. The Embassy notified their parents,

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