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NEWS from the COLONY

THE "SCHWEIZERBUND" AT HATFIELD HOUSE

On Friday, 16th November, 1973, some 20 members and friends of the "Schweizerbund" Swiss Club gathered at the Old Palace, Hatfield Park, Herts, for an informal Dinner. And what a Dinner it was! It is rare nowadays to find good English food, at reasonable cost, served by charming and friendly waitresses. Yet these were the criteria that prevailed during this memorable evening.

The manor of Hatfield was given to the church of Ely by the Anglo-Saxon King Edgar, and the Old Palace of Hatfield was built by Bishop John Morton between about 1480 and 1497 as a residence for the Bishops of Ely. Morton's Palace was one of the first substantial buildings in England to be constructed entirely of brick. The surviving west wing is dominated by the Great Hall, remarkable for its splendid late mediaeval timber roof of chestnut and oak. King Henry VIII was a regular visitor to Hatfield and took such a liking to the Palace that in 1538 he acquired it from Bishop Thomas Goodrick of Ely. Henry VIII used the Palace as a nursery for his children, Mary, Edward and Elizabeth, but it is with Elizabeth that Hatfield is particularly associated. She passed much of her childhood here, and during Queen Mary's reign she was virtually a prisoner at Hatfield. She is said to have been sitting reading under an oak tree in the Park when in 1558 the news of Queen Mary's death was brought to her from London.

Elizabeth held her first Council meeting in the Great Hall, at which she appointed William Cecil, later Lord Burghley, to be her Principal Secretary (Prime Minister). William Cecil remained Elizabeth's chief minister for forty years until his death. His son Robert, 1st Earl of Salisbury, was equally gifted and became Principal Secretary and Lord Treasurer to King James I. In 1607 the King granted him Hatfield in exchange for his house at Theobalds. Robert immediately began building his splendid mansion, Hatfield House, making use of bricks from three sides of the Palace, which he pulled down. The remaining wing contained the Great Hall, which has survived to this day. Hatfield House, completed a short time after Robert Cecil's death in 1612, is still the residence of his descendant, the Marquess of Salisbury.

The Committee of the "Schweizerbund" hopes to organise another Dinner at Hatfield House next summer, when the beauty of the Manor and its surrounding park can best be enjoyed.

J.S.

SWISS CLUB, MANCHESTER

On Thursday, 25th October, 1973, Members and Friends assembled in the Personnel Restaurant of Messrs. Ciba-Geigy (UK), Simonsway, Heald Green, at 19.00 for what was to be a most interesting Photo Competition. This event was well-prepared in advance, the three judges appointed being Messrs. R. Mueller, G. Thorp and D. Andrew, all of them connoisseurs in the art of photography.

Our President, Mr. Peter Senn, opened the proceedings by welcoming everybody present, in particular our Consul-General and Madame Born, and the three judges — one of them being Mr. Richard Mueller, a member of both the Northern Swiss Clubs, and he explained to us the workings of this type of competition. He thanked our hosts for their friendly hospitality, which by now has become something of a tradition with us.

The exhibits comprised colour slides and prints covering such classes as landscapes, family scenes, not forgetting the humorous types. Fixing priorities from such a great array of high class photos must have been a most difficult task and taxed the imaginations of our good judges to breaking point. They could, however, be assured of a sporting and friendly acceptance of their judgement from the competitors, as not all their hopes could be fulfilled.

The buffet and drinks were of the usual high standard and helped greatly to create a happy and friendly social atmosphere, well-suited to lively and amicable discussion and interchange of ideas.

One of the highlights of the evening was undoubtedly the showing of a most interesting film entitled *Smithfield Market, Manchester* today already of an eminently historical value. The producer of this work — a young Swiss — can be proud of such a documentary effort, full of vitality, human interest and artistic conception, accompanied by a well-chosen commentary and imaginative music. It was a real treat for everybody present and our young compatriot deserves the highest praise for it.

Our Committee can be satisfied with the outcome of the evening and by the response received from the auditorium take stimulus for further action in that direction.

E. Berner

SWISS OF THE NORTH

A fair number of members and friends of the Yorkshire Swiss Club assembled on Friday, 2nd November, 1973, in the premises of the Foreign Club at 10 Eldon Place, Bradford. This meeting was ably conducted by Mr. Jack

Lowe in the absence of the President who, through illness, was prevented from attending.

Mr. Richard Mueller gave us a most interesting talk illustrated by beautiful slides, starting with the smoke covered Bradford, as he saw it when he first came to England 35 years ago. He conducted us on his many camping expeditions, through changing seasons, to the Lake District and Scotland, giving us also glimpses of Switzerland and the little village where he was born. We could admire the wonderful variety of alpine flowers and animals still to be found in the higher places concluding with a "Berg-Tour" in the Monte Roas Group made with a guide.

It was indeed an enjoyment to listen to his clear and lively commentary which greatly enhanced this show and at the end of it the warm and sincere applause was the only way he could be thanked.

The usual coffee and a friendly chat concluded this very pleasant evening, gladly to be remembered by all of us.

E. B.

SWISS FIRM IN BRITAIN SELLS EQUIPMENT TO THE RAF

Rolba Limited, of Charlwoods Road, East Grinstead, have recently made a major breakthrough on the British market by delivering twelve highly efficient "R-400" motorised snowploughs to the RAF and taking orders for another twelve. Rolba Limited are the British concessionaires of Rolba AG in Switzerland, whose plant is in Wetzikon. A leading specialist in snow-moving equipment, Rolba has sold machines to hundreds of users in Switzerland. They can be seen busily shifting mountains of snow from roads and railway lines all over the country on any February day. But they have also been used for the past twenty years by British local authorities. The model selected by the RAF will be used for clearing runways. It is capable of cutting and ejecting up to 800 tons of snow an hour. This mass of snow can either be ejected through a loading chute on to a vehicle next to the snowplough or be expelled at distances of 60 to 130 feet. The machine bought (after extensive testing) by the RAF is thus able to clear runways 260 feet wide. A distinctive feature of the "R-400" and the larger or smaller machines of the new Rolba range is their simplicity of handling. Any inexperienced driver can sit in their silent and heated cab to get the rated performance of the machine thanks to a hydraulic transmission which simplifies manoeuvring enormously. Rolba snowploughs work on a rotary principle. They consist of a system of open helical cutter blades rotating on an axle which is