

Swiss Mercantile Society

Objekttyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1973)**

Heft 1655

PDF erstellt am: **27.04.2024**

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY

The Swiss Mercantile Society held its Annual Dinner and Dance on Saturday, 3rd February. As usual, the Orchid Suite at the Dorchester was neatly filled with members and guests, many of whom had probably been present at the same function ten or more years ago.

The usual Reception preceded Dinner. The Menu was up to the Dorchester's usual level, although the *Mousse de Haddock Fumée Mimosa* served as entrée was for many a distinctly new gastronomic experience. A second course consisting of veal, noodles and *petits pois St. Cloud* left just about enough room for a delicious vanilla ice cream with *vacherin fruitière*.

The general hum of conversation was interrupted by traditional toasts to *The Queen* and *Switzerland* proposed by Mr. A. Jaccard, the S.M.S. President.

Regular attendants at this function noticed that a new and highly efficient Master of Ceremonies, proudly displaying his war medals on his red frockcoat, had taken office. He told the guests that if they so wished, they were forthwith permitted to smoke, with admirable pomposity. His elocution need not have been any better had he been officiating at a presidential investiture.

The first cigarettes were two-thirds consumed when Mr. Jaccard, heralded by the Master of Ceremonies, rose to welcome us all and particularly the guests of the Society. He mentioned by name every guest, members of the Society's Committees and Staff, and made particular reference to the Swiss Bank Corporation (represented in the Orchid Suite by its Deputy Manager, Mr. Albert E. Wilkins) and its gift to the S.M.S. on the occasion of its own centenary last year.

Mr. Jaccard ended his address with a toast to the guests and the ladies.

Dr. Jüng Iselin, Plenipotentiary Minister (or the second in command) at the Swiss Embassy was then invited to reply to the President's welcoming address. He recalled that it was his third opportunity to be present on this "festive occasion" and joked that he would probably be watching "Match of the Day" had he remained at home. He conveyed the greetings of the Ambassador, Dr. Albert Weitnauer, who had been unable to attend, and paid tribute to the work of the Swiss Mercantile Society. He said that its students were the "real ambassadors of Switzerland" and expressed his pleasure to know that the S.M.S. School had managed to raise the funds to acquire the freehold of its Fitzroy Square premises and make arrangements for the modernisation.

It then became incumbent on Mr. Albert Wilkins, of the Swiss Bank Corporation, to reply for the guests. "I feel like a small man about to marry a

much-married film star — aware of my duties but uncertain of my performance". This opening quip set the tone to a fine example of after-dinner speaking, the idea of which is not to say anything meaningful but to entertain. The writer fails to remember how Mr. Wilkins married the purpose for which he had been asked to speak — "replying for the Guests" — and a scintillating dissertation on women studded with quotes from Goethe Plotinus and Keats, and three jokes.

Mr. Wilkins put the attendance in the right mood for dancing. Tables and chairs were moved so as to make room in the centre of the hall, and the orchestra made its appearance.

Dancing held sway uninterruptedly until the traditional ending of S.M.S. dinner dances: everybody linked hands round the President and Mrs. A. Jaccard and hoored them with a unanimous *Auld Lang Syne*.

SWISS CLUB MANCHESTER: SUCCESSFUL RACLETTE PARTY

To go or not to go . . . this was the dilemma which faced many of us when deciding to join the *Raclette-Party* which the Swiss Club of Manchester had arranged at the Cottons Hotel in Knutsford for Thursday, 18th January, 1973. As can so frequently happen in this particular period

of the year, fog and ice had descended upon us bringing in their wake uncertainty, road bottlenecks, chaos and accidents, if not worse. Phones were ringing, assurances and advice sought, eventually resulting in a good many people not attending. But in the end, a good 100 of our members and friends, many living near to the meeting-place, were able to defy those atrocious meteorological conditions — bravery indeed.

Again a very happy and lively party, as such functions usually are. Certainly the "Raclette-cheese" from the Goms Valley in the Valais was excellent and enjoyed by everyone. When provisions trickled out, our experienced "cooks" took off their aprons and joined in the dance which soon followed. Eventually, our President, Dr. H. R. Bolliger, called for attention, and everybody crowded into one room where a big surprise had been prepared for us to see. As Mr. B. Simon and his family were soon moving South, the members of the Club wished to show him their appreciation for the many years of hard work done for us all, always in a spirit of helpfulness and good cheer, and always ready to give good advice. Off went the cover and we all admired a beautiful set of tables, which were presented to him amidst the great applause of the attendance.

Evidently taken by surprise and deeply moved, Mr. B. Simon thanked our President for his friendly words and,



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