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the wife of a dentist in Konolfingen". Only my future husband and my father encouraged me to go ahead." Some 200 bold young Swiss girls applied for the four posts advertised, and those who got on to the short list had to write a curriculum vitae and pass what was termed a "test flight". "They packed four of us into a very small aircraft", relates Frau Bigler, "with Ernst Nyffenegger at the controls. He hoicked us steeply upwards, then kept on pulling the aeroplane about roughly or let it pancake unexpectedly. The point of all this was to find out whether we were up to the tasks ahead of us."

The miller's daughter from the Emmental passed the test with flying colours and immediately rose to the responsible position of chief stewardess.

Three other candidates also won their laurels in 1935 and the four of them sufficed for the time being to meet Swissair's requirements for female crew members. Training the four "flying angels" proved to be an utterly simple matter. Shortly before the first flight they were presented with a big wicker basket containing china, napkins, drinks, sandwiches and a few medicines. The DC-2, in those days extolled as a "wide-body aircraft", had 14 passenger seats and no kitchen. A single stewardess (it was only later that they became known as hostesses) attended to the guests' welfare by selling sandwiches and drinks.

Johanna Vögeli worked for three years on flights to Amsterdam, Berlin, Paris and London, until her future husband presented her with an ultimatum: "It's either me or Swissair". She decided in favour of marriage and has now been living in Konolfingen for over thirty years. But she still enjoys thumbing through her "log book", in which satisfied passengers wrote down their hymns of praise to Johanna Vögeli. For example:

*"The pilot knows his way,
But what is that to me?
The stewardess's hand so fair –
Nought fairer can there be."*

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CITY SWISS CLUB

This may be an exception confirming the rule, but for the past four years, the Annual General Meetings of the City Swiss Club have been among its liveliest and most entertaining yearly events.

This year was no exception as far as pleasure and conviviality were concerned. Members filled a horse-shoe table in the basement Stanhope suite where they had met on so many previous occasions. Dinner was not cheap (£3.60) but excellent and an assortment of Swiss wines (not cheap either) was at hand to accompany and enhance Mr. Kaufeler's cooking.

The President, Mr. Ernst E.

Tangemmann, introduced the proceedings of the evening and reported a number of apologies for absence, coming in particular from the Ambassador, Dr. Albert Weitnauer, who at the last moment had been compelled to carry out some "homework" for Berne. But he welcomed Dr. Jürg Iselin, Minister Plenipotentiary.

The Secretary, Mr. L. A. Simon, read the minutes of the last meeting (he was spared those of the last AGM by general consensus). He reported the apologies for absence "on business" of Father Bossard, the Swiss Catholic Chaplain. The Secretary's unexpected reference to "business" gave rise to a loud burst of laughter. Mr. Simon reported no new members for the Meeting.

Mr. Tangemmann then read his report. He viewed the past year with satisfaction and noted that attendances had been fair at the Club's monthly meetings with the exception of the Card Evenings. He referred to a very successful 108th Dinner and Dance, to a talk by the President of the Board of Directors of the Union Bank of Switzerland which had been attended by a distinguished audience.

The Treasurer, Mr. Franz Fraefel, surveyed the Accounts. They didn't present any salient features apart from the tremendous fall of the Club House Fund of which nearly £2,300 had been knocked off by the recent fall in share prices. As a meagre compensation, Mr. Fraefel noted a slight increase in the interest of the Fund. Club expenses had remained stationary apart from stationery, which had registered a marked increase representing an expenditure of about £2 per member. It was decided therefore to switch to more rudimentary ways of sending notices to members, such as photostat machines, instead of the printers that had been used hitherto. The Secretary later said that he had obtained quotes for two different kinds of production.

The accounts were stated as correct by Mr. Othar Brunner, one of the Auditors. Subscriptions for 1974-75 were kept at the same level, that is at £3.

Dr. Iselin was invited to serve as President pro tem. Following an introduction sprinkled with characteristic Basler humour, Dr. Iselin set about obtaining the re-election of the Committee, the Trustees, the Auditors and the Press Reporter. All existing officers were re-elected unanimously. The only newcomer, to the committee, was Mr. W. Eschle, who succeeds Mr. Eddy Tobler as organiser of the Annual Ball and Tombola. We were informed that Mr. Tobler would be leaving Britain for New Zealand. Several members took the opportunity to praise his contribution to the City Swiss Club.

Donations was the only matter that gave rise to some discussion, but much less so than at the three previous AGMs. As expected, a member considered that the £140 proposed as donations to the Swiss Benevolent Society and the three

NEWS FROM THE COLONY

Swiss parishes of London were not enough since the grand total was inferior to the proceeds of the 1973 Tombola and Banquet and interest from the Charity Fund Account. There was in fact an excess income of £80.52 which this member claimed should be distributed. Three figures were advanced: £140, £150, and £160. Among those that favoured a rise in donations, one said that it was pointless, given the circumstances, to build up capital, and that it was better therefore to give away our charity resources as they came. The other camp claimed that the four beneficiaries were entitled to a certain continuity in the donations sent to them. This continuity could not be guaranteed if the annual figure was based on the exceptionally high proceeds of one annual Tombola. It was better to stay on the safe side. This attitude was shared by the great majority of the attendance, as was proved by a show of hands.

The President reported that total membership had increased from 211 to 213 during the past year. There were 147 active members and the rest were honorary members, passive members and foreign members. Three deaths had been deplored, those of Mr. Frank Conrad, R. de Watteville, and Paul Lehrian. A moment of silence was observed in memory of these former members.

ANGLO-SWISS SOCIETY

The Anglo-Swiss Society held a well-attended dinner at the Portman Hotel, Portman Square, on Thursday, 25th April. This was a première since the usual venue had been the Dorchester Hotel.

An excellent meal was offered by the Portman, part of Intercontinental Group of Hotels and managed by a Swiss, Mr. Michel Favre. It consisted of Pâté Maison en Croûte Sauce Cumberland, Rôtis de Porc à la Normande, Pommes Parmentier, Broccolis au Beurre Noisette; Tarte aux Pommes à la Mode; Café. The Suite where this food was being tasted differed by its modernity and stark appearance from the Orchid Suite which had seen so many Anglo-Swiss functions.

In the absence of Lord Selkirk, the Society's President, who was recovering from an illness, the gathering was

welcomed by Lord Sandford, Under-Secretary of State at The Department of Education and Science under the last Government. The speaker was Sir John Wolfenden, former Director of the British Museum, who had been invited to speak on the "British Image of Switzerland, Dream or Reality".

He began with a long preamble of exquisite post-prandial humour, during which Sir John invited the audience to "rest in the arms of Morpheus" if they so wished and promised that he would try to remain awake while delivering his address.

In a very succinct and well constructed exposé, Sir John, an ex-headmaster, separated his subject in four chapters: nature, people, international centre, and neutrality. Stressing that he was not entirely a "geographical determinist" he did point out the bearing of a mountainous and difficult environment on the "patriotic pride" of people. The speaker noted that several mountainous countries in which existence required a constant struggle stood out by their patriotism. Switzerland was one of them, Scotland another.

As a result of these geographical conditions, the Swiss developed a great "practical effectiveness" which was an essential aspect of their identity.

Sir John laid great emphasis on Switzerland's weight as an international financial centre. He said that behind the "Gnomes of Zurich" were highly professional, intelligent and reliable specialists who had built up a well

deserved reputation of efficient banking service.

Sir John said that it was essential for Switzerland to keep to her neutrality. He recognised that the concept lacked romanticism to young people. It was difficult to be "enthusiastic" about neutrality just as it was difficult to be "passionately moderate". Yet without neutrality, and the principle of non-partisanship which it implied, Switzerland could not play host to so many international organisations. Announcing that he would shortly be going to Geneva to attend a session of the "International Social Service", he said that such an organisation, and others like it concerned with supranational objectives would inevitably lose credibility if they were based in either New York or Moscow.

Sir John completed his talk with an anecdote on how he probably became the only Englishman inoculated against smallpox at Kloten Airport – and that at a quarter to eleven one winter evening.

Lord Sandford then thanked Sir John for his excellent talk and said the closing words of the official part of the evening.

P.M.B.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

CITY SWISS CLUB: Informal Dinner Dance scheduled for Friday, 21st June.

Friday, 17th May – Annual General Meeting of Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK.

Sunday, 26th May – ASSEMBLY OF THE SWISS CHURCH IN LONDON – 79 Endell Street, WC2 – 10.30 a.m. Annual General Meeting – 11.15 a.m. Divine Service, The Rev. M. Pradervand. This will be followed by a meal. (Please notify one of the Ministers).

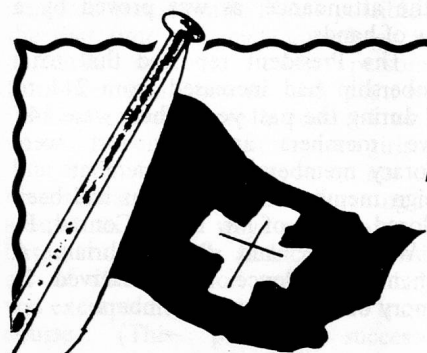
Sunday, 16th June – GOLDEN JUBILEE OF GERMAN-SPEAKING PARISH OF THE SWISS CHURCH IN LONDON – Family Outing to Ashburnham Place with a Service of Thanksgiving at the Chapel.

NFH: Open Meeting on Thursday, 16th May, 7 p.m. at the Swiss Embassy. Mr. Marcel Ney, Director of the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad, will give a talk on "Serious and amusing incidents from the history of the Swiss Abroad".

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