

Consul Ernst Hofstetter

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objekttyp: **Obituary**

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

Band (Jahr): **- (1978)**

Heft 1745

PDF erstellt am: **28.04.2024**

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OBITUARY

CONSUL ERNST HOFSTETTER

On 12th July, 1978 the sad news of the sudden death of Consul Ernst Hofstetter was announced from his home near Loch Lomond in Scotland. He was one of those rare, larger-than-life personalities who left an unforgettable impression on all who had the pleasure of meeting him and he will be missed by very many of his friends and compatriots who got to know, love and respect him.

Ernst Hofstetter was born on 8th August, 1896 in Oberuzwil SG, where he spent his school years. In 1913 he joined the Cantonal Technical College in Zürich where he obtained his diploma in chemistry before doing his military service. He then joined the dye-works of Heer & Co. as an assistant, where his father was dye-master.

He collected more experience working in the dye-works of Theodor Haase in Chemnitz. Later he got his most valuable experiences under the renowned Dr. Tagliani in the dye and printed textile laboratory of Sandoz in Basle. Though very tough and demanding, the three years with Sandoz were among the best in his life, both in professional experience and social and cultural activities. He was sent on study tours in Belgium, to Manchester and Bradford.

In order to satisfy his quest for knowledge and his urge to travel Ernst Hofstetter joined the dye-works of C.

Kuntz in Bruggen in 1922 and later the Weidmann Concern at their piece dye-works in Zürich as dye-master, enjoying ten of the most interesting and rewarding years of his life.

In July 1930 he married Anita Galli of Berne and they had a daughter and a son. Unfortunately she died in 1944 and could not participate for long in his life work and success.

As the Weidmann Concern was interested in opening a dye-works in Great Britain, which materialized in the participation with a Scottish firm, Mr Hofstetter joined this enterprise, taking along some twenty specialists, foremen and dyers from Switzerland to Balloch near Glasgow. Although he intended this to be a temporary arrangement he was soon absorbed in his new project and, charmed by Scotland, decided to bring his family over permanently.

After some initial difficulties with language, his new environment and adjusting and understanding the somewhat different Scottish working mentality, he soon brought his strong leadership influence to bear as director of the newly formed Swiss firm which handled silk and artificial silk for the most discerning quality market of the lingerie and clothing trade. During World War II the firm produced pure silk textile and parachutes and fine cotton weaves for balloon making.

Fortunately the Swiss workers and employees were allowed to remain on their jobs thus guaranteeing a smooth flow of production at the end of the hostilities when the works expanded by

NEWS FROM THE COLONY

the purchase of a textile-printing factory.

In 1934 Mr. Hofstetter was appointed Swiss Consular Agent in Scotland and was honoured, in 1952, with the personal title of Consul. He cared, often with considerable financial and personal engagement, for the welfare of his less fortunate compatriots and he supported and fostered the wellbeing, protection and co-operation between the members of the Swiss colony, as many of them suffered considerable hardship during the crisis and war years.

One still hears heartfelt words of praise, thankfulness and high respect from those Swiss remaining who benefitted by Mr. Hofstetter's decisive and effective support.

Mr. Hofstetter will be missed by his niece, his many friends and by the Swiss Colony in Scotland who owe him so much.



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