

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: - (1979)
Heft: 1753

Artikel: Exactly 100 years later
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-690362>

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

APPOINTMENTS

The Swiss Volksbank and the Banque Populaire Suisse S.A. Luxembourg have appointed Mr. Roland E. Stähli as their Representative in the United Kingdom with effect from 1st March, 1979. Mr. Stanley A. Gunzi, formerly Senior Representative for the United Kingdom, becomes Adviser to both banks from the same date.

Miss Catherine Eckert, former Deputy Representative for the United Kingdom, resigned as at the 28th February, 1979.

SWISS CLUB MANCHESTER

The AGM of the Swiss Club Manchester was held on 1st March, 1979. The President opened the well-attended proceedings after an excellent buffet enjoyed by all.

Mr. F. Schaufelberger, the President, commenced his address with a short review of the club activities during the past year, and has expressed his satisfaction with the loyalty of the Manchester Swiss community reflected by the healthy attendance at club events.

Whilst dealing with the loss of members during the year Mr. F. Schaufelberger expressed his deep regret, reflected throughout the club, at the death of Mr. K. Messmer, Mr. Gysin, Mrs. Mueller and Mrs. Saunders.

In thanking his fellow officers for their help during his two years in office the President made special reference to the past Consul-General, Mr. H. Jaques and his wife, for their active participation in club events and welcomed the new Consul-General, Mr. Karli, and his wife.

With each new President, commenced Mr. Schaufelberger, comes a new era and he warmly welcomed his successor, Mr. H. P. Reisen, for his two-year office. Mrs. Themans was re-elected as Honorary Treasurer, and Mr. P. X. Neher Honorary Secretary. Other members of the new committee are Mrs. T. Bolliger, Mr. P. A. Senn, Mr. D. M. Salden and Mrs. S. Glauser. The Past President, Mr. F. Schaufel-

berger, will sit on the committee as Vice-President and Club Correspondent.

There is no doubt that the Swiss Club Manchester is in very good hands as we all noticed from the President's address outlining his programme for the coming year.

SCHWEIZERBUND – SWISS CLUB

CENTENARY DINNER

The world of 1879, the year of the Club's foundation, was very different to that of today. Queen Victoria was head of a vast Empire and had been made Empress of India two years earlier. Disraeli was Prime Minister and Churchill a little boy. In Vienna, Emperor Franz Joseph was on the throne, though his Empire showed signs of crumbling. Neighbouring Russia was full of unrest, and Tsar Alexander II was soon to be assassinated. Karl Marx was in exile in London. New nations were emerging: the German Reich was brought into being by Bismarck's skilful efforts.

At that time the streets of London were lit by gas. Thomas Edison invented the electric light bulb that very year. Albert Einstein was born, a man whose theory was later to define the universe and mark a new era.

At that time, Switzerland thought Britain was her best friend, even though there were instances when London did not agree with Swiss foreign policy, or, a few years later, Swiss public opinion passionately objected to British action against the Boers in South Africa.

British travellers figured prominently amongst early visitors to Switzerland, and British mountaineers, winter sports enthusiasts and writers were full of praise of Switzerland's beauties.

In 1879, there was a Swiss Consul-General in London, and it was not until 1891 that the Federal Council sent a fully-fledged diplomat to Britain. At that time, too, more and more Swiss came to the British Isles. Previously, they had mainly come from the *Suisse Romande*, but now they were arriving from all parts of Switzerland, and they came from all walks of life and had a variety of occupations and interests.

A hundred years ago, there already existed a number of Swiss organisations, the Swiss Church was over 100 years old then and Swiss Clubs in Liverpool and Manchester, some of them welfare societies, existed, as did the City Swiss Club, the Unione Ticinese and others. There was a Swiss Male Choir "Helvetia" in London, too, and in December 1878, 20 members walked out from a meeting because the committee had appointed

another singing teacher over their heads. These members felt insulted and decided to form their own society. This was the preliminary to the formation of the Schweizerbund.

The first official meeting took place at the Berwick Arms, at the corner of Berners Street and Castle Street, on 24th February at 10 p.m. 1879.

EXACTLY 100 YEARS LATER

100 people sat down to a celebration dinner at the Café Royal in Regent Street. It was a festive occasion, and the place well chosen, for the Café Royal, too, can look over 114 years. The Swissair Yodelling Group which had come over from Zürich at their own expense specially to entertain the party, was already in evidence at the reception prior to the dinner, when seven alphorn players performed in perfect harmony. The call to dinner was made by a *Büchel*, a small type of alphorn. There was no mistaking that it was a Swiss gathering; cantonal flags were displayed on the walls, red and white flowers and red candles in silver holders decorated the tables, and little Swiss flags were stuck in the white table napkins. After grace and again after the soup, 16 yodellers entertained the gathering.

The excellent meal over, the President, Mr. Virgil Berti, welcomed the guests, first and foremost the Swiss Minister and Madame Karl Fritschi representing the Swiss Ambassador and Madame Thalmann who were unfortunately prevented from coming due to the Ambassador's illness. The President greeted the representatives of other Swiss societies strictly in order of seniority of their organisations. The oldest institutions in the Colony are the Swiss Churches in London, and they were represented by Father Bossard. The Vice-President of the City Swiss Club (formed in 1856), and Mrs. Henry Jauslin were followed by the President of the Swiss Benevolent Society (1872), Mr. Mario Schneebeli. Mr. Peter Jacomelli, President of the Unione Ticinese (1874) preceded Mr. & Mrs. Walter Burren, Secretary of the Swiss Mercantile Society (1888), its President and Mrs. Hausermann being unable to attend. That led in to this century, so to speak, when the London Group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique was founded in 1961; it was represented by its President, Mrs. Mariann Meier, a member of the Swiss Club for over 20 years. She was followed by the President of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK, and Mrs. Bernard Simon.

Mr. Berti then welcomed some old friends of the Club, such as the Delaloye Family and the former

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Vice-Consul and Mrs. Werner Reutlinger who had specially come over from Basle. Next he thanked the anonymous donors who had given Swiss handkerchiefs for all present and a specially engraved glass tumbler to all the men and one lady, Mrs. Mariann Meier.

Mr. Berti went on to give a short historic survey of how the Club was founded exactly 100 years ago, not only to the day, but very much to the hour. At that time, 26 people were present under the chairmanship of one Henry Maag. They made a collection to give the Club a financial start — £1/12/10½d. Meetings usually began at 10 p.m. and ended at midnight, and the rent for the premises was £2 p.a. payable "as and when the Club could afford it".

It is recorded that the old Choral Society merged with the Club and a limited company was formed on 6th May, 1887, called Schweizerbund (Swiss Club). Soon it was to be wound up again, but some friends came forward to save it, and the Club was registered as a Friendly Society which it still is. Old records show that it prospered, and that there were years when the purchase of Swiss wines amounted to £1,500 a month, a bottle being sold at 1s 3d. Whisky was sold at 2d, brandy at 4d and Kirsch at 3d per glass. Frequent outings by train or horse tram were organised, and social evenings, with ladies present, were held quarterly.

As far as can be gathered from the beautifully handwritten books, the Club moved to 74 Charlotte Street in about December 1886.

From then onwards, the history was one of ups and downs, but still it survived its various crises. The premises were renovated in Swiss style with panelling and wrought iron fittings. Receptions, meetings and dances could be held in the spacious ballroom. On 3rd December, 1948, the Club premises were re-opened and the event celebrated at the 70th anniversary dinner under the chairmanship of Mr. E. Siegrist and in the presence of the Swiss Minister and Madame de Torrenté. Most Swiss societies had been invited, including at least five that no longer exist.

Yet the Colony did not really give enough support to the Schweizerbund's activities, and when the lease came up for renewal in 1961, the Club sadly had to leave its premises after 75 years.

The President ended his speech by drawing attention to the display of silver cups and other bits and pieces collected over a century, including an unusual pewter tankard.

The Swiss Minister then addressed the meeting. He repeated all the fascinating historical data mentioned above, and he ended his interesting speech by mentioning

another name, that of the Swiss writer Gottfried Keller who was at his best when the Club was born. He quoted the poem in which Keller compared the Swiss Confederation to a diamond. He said that that precious stone had been in safe custody ever since thanks to the Swiss not only at home but also abroad. "The Schweizerbund", too, said Monsieur Fritschi, "has helped to preserve that precious gem". He commended the way the Club had coped with varying fortunes. He thanked the President for his excellent chairmanship over many years and expressed gratitude to all those who had helped to make the centenary celebration such a success.

The third speaker was the President of the Federation. Mr. Simon, in his inimitable Bâlois manner, replied for the guests. He

also mentioned that 1879 had produced a particularly fine *vin d'Aigle*, and referred to a few other events of that time. He finished with a congratulatory verse in Basle dialect.

The Yodellers and alphorn players gave some more much appreciated entertainment. Their President made a little speech and presented Mr. Juerg Schmid, the SNTO's Publicity Manager, with a Kloten stained glass panel in recognition of all the work he had done to make the evening such a success.

It was indeed a most pleasant event, which took place in an atmosphere of harmony and comradeship, both of which have been the hallmark of the Schweizerbund's social events of the past few years. Congratulations and best wishes!

MM

SCOTLAND'S FRIENDLIEST SMALL HOTEL

— UNDER SWISS MANAGEMENT

At the beginning of this year the owners of the ALBANY Hotel in Edinburgh, Patrick Maridor (born and bred in Geneva) and his wife Pauline (from the Isle of Skye) received the award "Hotel of the Year" by the Scottish Tourist Board, in spite of the lack of a restaurant and a bar.

When Patrick and Pauline Maridor took over the Albany three years ago, they initially offered lunch and dinner but found that too few guests dined in to make it worthwhile. So they concentrated on bed and breakfast only, but with a difference: Strong emphasis on personal service ("We like to make our guests feel that they are more

than just room numbers"), e.g. they compiled their own guide to Edinburgh's restaurants, night-spots and places of interest for their guests and the Albany has — according to a poll among guests — a very high standard of cleanliness and attention to detail.

At present the Albany has only ten rooms (all with private facilities including bathroom), but the Maridors have plans of expanding in order to provide eight more rooms and a snack-bar.

We congratulate Patrick Maridor (who is also Vice-President of the Swiss Club Edinburgh) and his wife — if a little late — to their success.



Patrick and Pauline Maridor