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Success of joint venture

THE wish for closer co-operation within the Swiss community has been expressed more and more forcefully, and with justification. Many active Swiss are members of several societies, and if they like to conscientiously support them all it is often difficult to fit in all the meetings. This never more so than just before Christmas.

This was just one of the reasons why the Nouvelle Société Helvétique invited the Swiss Mercantile Society and the Unione Ticinese to join in their Christmas gathering. The other two societies agreed, and a joint Christmas event was organised by

the NSH at the Swiss Church on December 17.

The evening was a great success, with 115 people attending the supper provided by Swiss Centre Restaurants. The church looked very homely and the many tables were decorated with fir, candles, tangerines and Christmas goodies. The large Christmas tree added greatly to the festive atmosphere, as did recorded Christmas music.

After supper the president of the NSH, Mrs Mariann Meier, welcomed the party, in particular the Minister at the Swiss Embassy and Madame Fritschi. She

regretted that it was their last appearance in the community, as Monsieur Fritschi would shortly be taking up his new post as Swiss Ambassador in Moscow.

The Cultural Counsellor and Madame Indermuehle likewise were leaving London, taking up new duties in Berne. With these two couples, the three societies were going to lose good friends and the NSH a valuable council member in the person of Monsieur Indermuehle. The president expressed gratitude and good wishes.

But Mrs Meier was able to welcome many more friends from the Embassy, including the two Consuls General, Keller and Glauser. She then mentioned other distinguished members, such as the vice-president, Dr. H.W. Egli, and the Rev. and Mrs Steiner.

On behalf of all present the president thanked the two organisers, Mrs Margrit Lyster and Mrs Lisa Hall, their husbands and other helpers for doing such an expert and splendid job. For the first time, she said, she could really enjoy the Christmas gathering because she was no longer in charge of it, now that the council had begun to share out the work in order to ease the president's burden.

The presidents of the other two societies, Mr Franz Hausermann and Mr Peter Jacomelli, also spoke in support of co-operation, and the last speaker was Minister Fritschi, who brought greetings from the Ambassador and Madame Caillat.

It was a very happy evening

despite rather inclement weather, but as the president of the NSH said when quoting Sir Walter Scott's verse of 200 years ago: "Heap on more wood, the wind is chill; but let it whistle as it will, we'll keep our Christmas merry still."

Mariann Meier

Celebration in Scotland

EDINBURGH'S Albany hotel is to be the venue for the dinner dance of the Swiss Club of Edinburgh, Dunfermline and Glasgow, to be held on Saturday, February 13. Traditional and Swiss food specialities will be served.

The cost will be £9.50, and reservations can be made through the Albany hotel (tel: 031-556 0397).

For those wishing to stay overnight the hotel is offering a special rate of £20, which includes a full breakfast.

Solidarity fund

THE head of the Berne-based Solidarity Fund for the Swiss Abroad, Mr Benito Invernizzi, will be giving two talks about the fund when he visits Britain next month.

On Wednesday, March 10, he will be speaking at the AGM and annual dinner of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique in London, and on Thursday, March 11, he will be attending the AGM of Manchester Swiss Club.

Obituary: Ambassador Egbert von Graffenried

IT is with deep regret that we announce the unexpected death of the former Ambassador, Monsieur Egbert von Graffenried. He died in Berne on November 14 at the age of 72.

He had spent 40 years in the service of the Swiss Confederation, and although he had retired in 1974 he was still very active. He was president of the Wilton Park Committee, a post-war creation of the British Foreign Office to further inter-European understanding and co-operation.

He was also a member of the Council of the Solidarity Fund for Swiss Abroad. It was at the last assembly in Solothurn at the end of August that many of his friends from many parts of the world were able to meet him, not least the British contingent.

Many of us remember him and Madame von Graffenried from their years spent in London where he was First Counsellor of Legation for a few years up to 1950. They were difficult post-war years for the Swiss, and good diplomats were essential.

In 1954 Monsieur de Graffenried became the youngest aide to Federal Councillor Petitpierre, and 1955/56 he held the post of head of delegation in Korea. Then followed several posts in the Middle East and the first ambassadorial mission to Sweden in 1960.

Later he became Ambassador to Australia and New Zealand,

and his last post was Greece, a difficult task under the military dictatorship of Colonel Papadopoulos.

We who remember Monsieur and Madame von Graffenried, their keen interest in the Swiss community in England and their generous hospitality in their house in Bushey during the years of austerity deeply regret the loss of a genial Bernese patrician and diplomat of the old school.

But above all we sympathise with Madame von Graffenried and their family in their great sorrow, and we send them our heartfelt wishes.

● Madame von Graffenried's address is Luternauweg 21, 3000 Berne.

Mariann Meier

THE ARTS

Erich Schmid conducts the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in the following concerts:

Thursday, February 18, 7.30pm, Birmingham Town Hall (works by Busoni, Mendelssohn and Berlioz).

Saturday, February 20, 7.30pm, Birmingham Town Hall (works by Beethoven).

Tuesday, February 23,

7.30pm, Birmingham Town Hall (works by Mozart, Bach and Bruckner).

Wednesday, February 24, 7.30pm, Derby Assembly Rooms (works by Beethoven).

Thursday, February 25, 7.30pm, Aberystwyth University Great Hall (works by Schubert and Bruckner).

Heinz Holliger, oboe and **Ursula Holliger**, harp, are the

soloists in a concert with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

Thursday, February 4, 7.30pm, Birmingham Town Hall (works by Haydn, Strauss, Lutoslawski and Beethoven).

Exhibition, "Paris sans fin". Lithographs by Alberto Giacometti:

January 23 to February 13, Printmakers Workshops, Edinburgh.