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Obituaries

Ralph Ernst Maag

IT is with deep regret we announce the sudden death of Ralph Maag.

Rudolph was born at Bachenbuelach near Zurich on February 17 1913, the eldest of four brothers.

He had his commercial training and first employment with the ironmongers' firm of Pestalozzi & Co in Zurich. At 24, he moved to Lausanne where he spent a year with the André Company which sent him to their subsidiary in London in 1938.

He remained with European Grain Agency, later known as European Grain and Shipping, for the rest of his professional life.

His conscientious work brought him advancement to the board of the company which was greatly concerned with nutritional problems during and after the war.

He remained devoted to the firm and its head company in Lausanne until he retired prematurely in 1970.

During the war he continued his studies of the English language and took part as an actor in a repertory company.

His pleasant manners and kind heart as well as his ability to adapt himself made him many friends among the British as well as the Swiss.

He was a member of the City Swiss Club, the Swiss Mercantile Society and the New Helvetic Society and took an interest in colony affairs. For a time, he was a member of the committee of the Swiss Welfare Office.

After a serious car accident, he found the climate in Greece suitable for his health, and in 1982

he moved there for good, having already spent a great deal of time in Athens.

He underwent a hip operation in Zurich in the autumn of last year.

His sudden death came as a great surprise. He was buried in Geneva in the grave of his brother Werner who died in 1971.

His many friends will remember him with great affection and express their deep condolences to his family in Zurich.

The address of his brother Mr Willy Maag-Eckert is Wiesliacher 7, 8053 Zurich.

Mariann Meier

Béat de Fischer

THE death on August 22 of Béat de Fischer, Swiss Ambassador in London from 1964-66, prompted the following letter from West Country reader Edith Grout.

IN 1980, my Swiss family offered me a superb birthday present, the fascinating work of Béat de Fischer, "2,000 Ans De Presence Suisse En Angleterre".

Ever since then, this book has been a great companion and a source of infinite enjoyment. Whenever I pick it up, I find something new, something exciting.

It was with interest I read the pages on the de Grandison Family and, when discovering a slight error of facts on the life of John de Grandison, Bishop of Exeter, I wrote to the publishers, pointing out the mistake.

You can imagine my surprise

and delight when, soon after, I received a long letter from Béat de Fischer himself congratulating me on my research at the Exeter Cathedral Library.

He asked me to send him all I could find on Bishop John de Grandison. From that moment, and for the last four years, a pen friendship of an infinitely rare quality of cordiality blossomed.

For years, in his quest for information on John de Grandison and his sister Catherine, Countess of Salisbury, Béat de Fischer hoped to find portraits of these two famous people, but in vain.

It was therefore with great pleasure that I sent him pictures which I discovered at Exeter Cathedral and Ottery St Mary Church. His last letter, in May, expressed his gratitude for a photo of my last discovery.

"Je viens de recevoir la magnifique photographie représentant le visage charmant de Lady Salisbury, née Catherine de Grandison, et je tiens à vous remercier de tout coeur. C'est un document extrêmement précieux et je le garderai avec beaucoup de soin dans mes archives."

En ce moment je l'ai prêté au musée des Suisses à l'étranger au Château de Penthes, sur Genève afin qu'il puisse être exposé dans la vitrine consacrée aux femmes suisses célèbres à l'étranger.

La découverte de ce portrait de notre compatriote dans la Chapelle de la Vierge Marie en l'église Collégiale d'Ottery St Mary est de votre mérite dont nous ne pouvons être assez reconnaissants.

Avec mes cordiaux souvenirs et compliments.

Beat de Fischer".

Following lectures I have given on the Grandison Saga, I was asked to organise an outing to Grandison Castle, and Béat de Fischer was looking forward to welcoming us to Berne. He wrote:

"Je vous félicite d'organiser

une excursion des amis de la Cathédrale d'Exeter au Château de Grandison et nous espérons vous y revoir. Faites-nous connaître à temps les dates prévues".

It was therefore with great sorrow and sadness that I read the announcement of the death of Henry-Béat de Fischer-Reichenbach.

I will be one among his many faithful friends in Britain who will mourn his death very deeply. His great loss cannot be expressed in words, he will be greatly missed.

E.M.L. Grout

Elisabetta Brentini

MRS Elisabetta Pia Brentini, née Ferrazzini of Lugano-Gentilino, died earlier this year in her 90th year.

She married John Brentini in Lugano in 1914, and has lived there ever since.

John Brentini was a Post Office research engineer who studied at Zürich Polytechnic and did not follow his parents Luigi and Giuseppina - both Leventinesi from Faido and Chiggiogna - in the restaurant business they had established in London in the second half of the 19th century.

Tebaldo Pagani, founder of Pagani's restaurant in Gt. Portland Street was her uncle. So was Agostino Nizzola, pioneer of electrification in the Ticino.

Giovanni Nizzola, her grandfather, has a monument in Lugano and was noted in education.

There are still dozens of relatives on both sides in Ticino and elsewhere. Every single one was in touch when Mrs E.P.B. died. Much more could be written about her.

She was my mother.

Terence Brentini