

# Othmar Rohn

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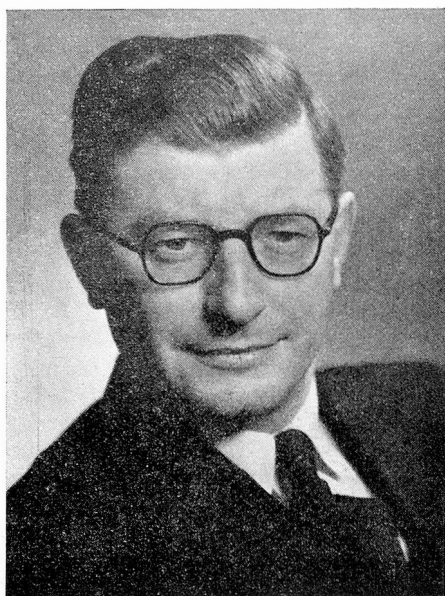
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**OTHMAR ROHN.**

We have much pleasure in reproducing herewith, by courtesy of the Editor, an article which appeared in the April issue of the "Goldsmiths Journal" about our compatriot.

"One might expect always to find a Briton elected chairman of the British Jewellers Association London Region. But this year the distinction went to a Swiss, Mr. Othmar Rohn — the first man of any nationality other than British to hold this office.

Mr. Rohn, smiling and genial, is, however, hardly a "foreigner". He came to England in 1929 to join the London branch of the Roamer Watch Co. and Medana Watches, Ltd., for a year in order to perfect his English. He liked the country and the people so much, he is still here! Languages were one of his earliest studies. Born in 1906 in Subingen, Soleure, Switzerland, he went to college at Fribourg to study them and commercial subjects after the usual primary and secondary schooling. At 18 he was indentured to the Roamer Watch Co. of Soleure as *commerçant-horloger*.

His training was not yet finished for, in the thorough way of his countrymen, he concluded with a Diploma of the Swiss Mercantile Society in collaboration with the Watchmakers' School of Soleure in practical subjects.

It was then that he came to England and, despite any disclaimers on his part, his command of the language after five months must have been exceptional, for a sample case was pressed into his hand and off he was sent on a tour of the company's distributors around the country.

Mr. Rohn is a man who does not trust to luck. He thinks out his course and skilfully navigates through the shallows of restrictions and the reefs of supply and demand, using the variable trade winds to his best advantage. So it was not surprising to find him alternate Director of the English company in 1934 and Managing Director in 1944.

The present office is not, of course, his first in the B.J.A. He was first Chairman of the Horological Section in London, which was the earliest to hold joint meetings with the London Wholesale Jewellers Association's watch and clock section, before the amal-

gamation. He has also been on the board of the Horological Trade Pool since 1951.

He maintains his present horological interests and in fact is proud of his craft membership of the British Horological Institute. Many of the Institute's Branches know him, for he has given lectures to them on the Horological Industry of Switzerland.

Mr. Rohn was married after he had been in England eight years. Two years ago he suffered the tragic loss of his only daughter at the age of 10. But he has a son, Timothy John — the apple of his father's eye — who, appropriately, has a horological nickname, Tim.

As relaxation from the intricate world of watches, Mr. Rohn likes "messaging about with boats", and with engines too, for one cannot subdue an intense mechanical interest. This love of mechanisms is allied to an artistic side in another of his outside pursuits — photography, especially *ciné* work.

When he first came to England, however, those 27 years ago, it was in the human, not the mechanical, propulsion of boats that his chief interest lay. He joined the Oxford House Rowing Club and was Treasurer as well as an active member for a number of years. Competitive rowing is a young man's sport and regretfully he has had to give it up. But he is still to be seen on the tow-path on special days, although now only as honorary Vice-President.

This, then is the man chosen by the B.J.A. London Region as their Chairman, and it is plain to see why they have great faith in the wisdom of their selection."

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