# Presidents' Assembly

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# NEWS FROM THE COLONY

## MARIA ADELAIDE JACOMELLI †

*" And all that mighty heart is lying still."*

We regret to announce that in the early hours of Saturday, 17th July last, Signora Maria Adelaide Jacomelli née Genoni passed suddenly away, aged 80 years, at No. 30 The Quadrant, Richmond, Greater London. Although her health of late had not always been good, the suddenness of the end came as a shock to her intimates and to her large circle of friends.

Signora Jacomelli, by her charm of manner and " joie de vivre ", immediately captivated all who came into contact with her.

She was brought to London when still a little girl by her family to the restaurant which her father managed in Wimbledon with his own father and brothers. Subsequently, the Genoni Brothers had opened the Café Royal at Croydon in conjunction with the Pazzi Brothers and later, when this company was dissolved, the Genonis opened a well-appointed restaurant at Plymouth, Devon.

In 1915, young Maria Adelaide married Mr. Aldo Jacomelli, who, like her, hailed from the village of Semione in the Valle di Blenio, Canton of Ticino. Fate robbed her, however, of her life companion after only nineteen years, some thirty years ago. Being left with young children, the enterprising Mrs. Jacomelli, bought in association with her brother, the late Carlo Genoni, " Valchera's Restaurant " at The Quadrant, Richmond. After the last war, during which both her sons had served in the Royal Air Force, she enjoyed their active assistance, and the restaurant was much improved and enlarged. In recent years, being the only wholly Ticinese owned establishment in the London area, " Valchera's " was often the venue of Ticinese suppers and meetings. Among the writer's recollections of this favourite venue there is one of June 1941, a " cena familiare " of " minestra " and " polenta ", during which he stilled proceedings so that all assembled could listen to one of those stirring war speeches of the late Sir Winston Churchill on the occasion of Hitler's invasion of Russia. Mrs. Jacomelli's eldest son Peter has ably presided over the Unione Ticinese uninterruptedly since 1954. Her other son Louis has at various times served on the Committee of the same society.

The Ticinese colony is therefore deeply indebted to the late Mrs. Jacomelli and shares in the grievous bereavement of her loved ones. The whole Swiss colony joins in the condolences of her sons Peter and Louis, to her daughters Elvezia and Aldina and to their respective families.

" Dear friend, you have now departed, but long will your memory live! " *J.E.*

## PERSONAL

We wish to congratulate one of our subscribers, an old friend of the Swiss community in London, the Rev. J. C. Stüssi, of rue Jordil 6, Fribourg, on his forthcoming marriage to Miss Veronika Dick. The wedding will take place at the Cathedral in Berne on Saturday, 21st August. We wish the young couple every happiness for the future.

* * *

We have just heard that two of our old friends have not been well. Mr. J. Dubs of 24D Maresfield Gardens, N.W.3, has been ill for several months, and Mr. W. B. Sigerist of 14 Downside Crescent, N.W.3, has had an operation. We are glad to hear that they are better and wish them a speedy recovery.

## PRESIDENTS' ASSEMBLY

The 38th Assembly of the Presidents of Swiss Societies in Great Britain was held at the Swiss Embassy on 28th June. The meeting was well attended and included representatives from Liverpool and Leeds, a fact very much appreciated considering that their attendance meant long journeys at the expense of the individual. This question of full representation and expense came up during the meeting, specially in connection with the representation of the Swiss community in Great Britain on the Commission of the Swiss Abroad. Although most of the societies contribute something towards sending two delegates twice a year, the problem is not yet solved and will have to be studied further when a new constitution is worked out.

The most important item on the agenda was the Swiss Centre in London. Dr. Speckert, who had been appointed to go into the problem of a Swiss Cultural and Social Centre reported on his rather negative findings. A new scheme was then brought to the notice of the Assembly which promises a good chance of success. A special committee was put in charge of negotiations, and it is hoped that after the holidays, a full and more definite report can be published. In the meantime, the building near Piccadilly Circus is nearing completion, and the plans by Swiss Fair Ltd. to have a real shop window for Switzerland are well advanced. Prof. Inebnit informed the Assembly of the proposed International Centre in Leeds.

The meeting next re-elected the delegates and their deputies to the Commission of the Swiss Abroad: Dr. H. B. Knuchel and Mr. J. P. Christen for the North and Mrs. M. Meier and Mr. E. Bonvin for the South. They will be in office for the next three years. Similarly, the delegate to the Solidarity Fund of the Swiss Abroad and her deputy were re-elected for the next four years, namely Mrs. M. Meier and Mr. L. S. R. Asch.

The Swiss Ambassador, as temporary Chairman, conducted the elections of the officers. According to the established rota the new President is Mr. O. Béguin (Consistoire of the Swiss Church), the Vice-President Mr. A. Jaccard (Swiss Mercantile Society) and the new Honorary Secretary Mr. E. Bonvin (City Swiss Club). A new office was created by the Assembly, that of Hon. Treasurer, and Mr. O. Grob (Swiss Catholics) was elected to it.

Thanks were expressed to Mr. V. Berti (Schweizerbund), the out-going Chairman, for the conscientious work he had done during his term of office.

The meeting ended on a note of concern as to the future of the Colony, and closer co-operation was urged. If the Swiss Centre is to become a living reality, much will depend on the efforts and teamwork of the various organisations for the benefit of our compatriots in this country.

*MM*

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