

Theatres in the "Underworld"

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PEARLIES IN BASLE

The Pearly King and Queen of Hampstead, London — Rose and George Matthews — have been invited to Basle, Switzerland, where they attended the opening of an English pub “The Nelson” on Thursday, 13th February. At the official opening of “The Nelson”, which has been thoughtfully designed to combine the true impression of an English pub, together with the atmosphere of an old ship, Rose and George played an English barrel organ and sang the “oldies” for the guests.

During the remainder of their visit of one week, the pearlies will devote their time to their traditional role of collecting for charity. The Basle Tourist Office have arranged a programme for them, including playing the barrel organ in the market square and in the streets of Basle. The funds collected will be divided between two charitable organisations: “Alpine Sun for British Children” and “Denk an Mich” (Think of me).

Alpine Sun for British Children

This charitable organisation was established in 1956 to provide sick British children with three to six months of convalescence in the Swiss Alps. Selected children, suffering from asthma, bronchial and similar complaints, who have failed to respond to treatment are taken to a convalescent home in Arosa.

The 191 children who have so far been to Arosa have gained immeasurable benefit, many being completely cured.

“Denk an Mich” (Think of me)

Swiss Radio, Television and Press have recently launched an appeal for the benefit of mentally and physically handicapped children.

The aim is to advise people on how to behave in the company of a handicapped child and therefore enabling them to live as much as possible a normal life without sensing that they are different from others, and to encourage youth as well as adults to collect funds for providing enjoyable holidays in special centres for the children, where expert care and encouragement will be given the children to participate and compete in activities with other handicapped youngsters.

SENIOR PEARLY FAMILY OF LONDON

The History of My Family

By ROSE MATTHEWS, Pearly Queen of Hampstead

My parents first started their wonderful work for charity in the year of 1902. They were boy and girl sweethearts aged 15 and 16 years old.

Their first appearance was at the Hampstead Bonfire Club carnival on 5th of November, where they arrived in a little donkey cart, dressed in pearl button costumes. They collected £3.0.0, which was a lot of money in those days, for the local hospitals. Sunday was their only day off, they would travel all over to help any needy causes giving their services without payment.

My brother, sister and I were the first children to wear suits covered with buttons and we still have the original costumes. My parents travelled to Holland accompanied by my sister and myself, to collect for “The Queen Wilhelmina Cancer Fund”. Then a goodwill tour of America for the British Travel Association. No journey was too far, or too tiring for them. They collected a quarter of a million pounds in 67 years.

My dear Mum died in 1963 after 61 years of devoting her life to helping the Blind, Spastics, Animals, Red Cross

and many charities. My dad who is in his 85th year, still goes out with me to help any needy causes.

I became Queen after Mother died, and my husband George is Prince Consort. In 1964 we toured the middle west states of U.S.A. for the B.T.A. and Pan American Airways on a “Come to Britain” tour. Our next trip to Denmark for the Board of Trade meeting H.R.H. Princess Margaret and Danish princesses; on to Sydney and Melbourne, Australia, Goodwill Tour, Singapore to meet our soldier boys. Norway to help the Red Cross and meeting our dear Prince Philip. Canada, for the Export Trade, Toronto, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina. Italy for “Settimana Britannica”, America again to New York, New Haven, Albany and Chicago for Macy’s Festival of Britain, and Dublin, Ireland for the Board of Trade. We love doing this work for our country and have had such wonderful receptions everywhere. We are looking forward so much to Basle and knowing we are going to help the little children and at last meeting the wonderful people of Switzerland. We can hardly wait for 11th February.

THEATRES IN THE “UNDERWORLD”

In the Kramgasse, in the Old City of Berne, there are the three real cellar theatres of the Swiss federal capital. They are the home of cabaret, vaudeville, song and *avant-garde* theatre. They are real because both stage and auditorium are in real cellars where pipes may be steaming under vaulted ceilings, where the spectators sit very close to one another and where one can comfortably stretch one’s legs and put them on the stage if one sits in the first row. The *Kleintheater* (Little Theatre) regularly stages its own productions, some of which are performed more than 100 times. The Students’ Stage and Dialect Company “Chäller-Kumedi” (“Cellar Comedy”) makes its home at the “Theater am Zytglogge” (“Theatre at the Clock Tower”) and occasionally also presents jazz and lyrical evenings and guest performances. The “Rampe” (“the Ramp”) already enjoys an international reputation due to its *avant-garde* theatre and its guest performances of well known songsters and cabaret artists as well as some who are about to become famous. The fourth among these theatres is the “Theater am Käfigturm” (Theatre at the Cage Tower”) which is regarded as the most beautiful and most modern of the cellar theatres. In addition to Swiss and foreign cabaret artists, pantomime, ballet and theatrical companies, jazz and chamber music groups give guest performances down here. The “Theatre at the Cage Tower” in the course of its season presents a remarkable novelty: whoever buys a ticket in advance, may at the same time order a parking space and a baby sitter, the theatre making arrangements for both services free of charge. Students of both sexes act as baby sitters. Should this new idea prove successful, it will be developed further.

[S.N.T.O.]

NEW ART GALLERY IN GENEVA

A new gallery, the “Petit Palais”, was opened in Geneva at the end of the year by a foreign art lover living in Geneva, to exhibit and house the wonderful collections of paintings he has built up. On a number of floors, specially designed for the purpose, works from Renoir to Chagall are at present exhibited under the title “The Dawn of the 20th Century”. These collections will be renewed from time to time. The “Petit Palais” also contains halls for concerts and lectures or artistic and literary meetings.

[O.S.E.C.]