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the *1st August* celebrations organised by the Swiss Club, Manchester. They will again be held at the Cotton Hotel in Knutsford and we hope that we may count on a good support from the Swiss beyond the Pennines.

E. Berner

Schweizerbund AGM

About twenty members of the Schweizerbund met for a friendly dinner at the Orpheus London Club, Eastcheap, London, on 9th February. This Dinner was held in the familiar dining room of these City premises, run by a compatriot, Mr. A. Gluck. We were treated to a regal meal for a minimum outlay. As usual, the atmosphere was extremely congenial: we were among old friends. Our President, Mr. Virgil Berti, regretted the absence of a number of faithful members prevented from coming by previous engagements or transport difficulties. He welcomed Mr. and Mrs. Reutlinger, of the Embassy, who had already assisted at one of the Club's previous gatherings at the Valcherra Restaurant, Richmond. These evenings usually wind up with a sing-song. Our Secretary, Mr. Jürg Schmid, had brought with him the traditional booklets but we were all carried away in conversation and tacitly opted against singing for this time. We also indulged in delightful gluttony as we nibbled on the delicious petits-fours supplied by Mr. Paul Gruhn, our Treasurer, whose father is a reputable pastry-cook.

Earlier, we were convened to the Annual General Meeting. This was held in another room of the Orpheus Club. Proceedings followed the normal AGM pattern. Mr. Schmid's Minutes were unanimously approved without comment. It was recalled that the previous AGM had concerned itself with the future of the Club and that it had been decided to continue its existence, if only for the enjoyable purpose of meeting from time to time. Commenting on the Treasurer's Report, which showed a deficit of £21.62 largely attributable to the purchase of a stock of small table flags, an indispensable decoration at Schweizerbund meetings, a member suggested that the small assets of the Club – an account of less than £200 at the Swiss Bank Corporation – should be invested so as to bring forth a small income which could conceivably pay for our bank charges. This idea was turned down as unrealisable. Another point emerging from the Income and Expenditure Account was that the Club had had to pay a Registration Fee of £2.50 under the Friendly Societies Act. As this was the first time that we had been "taxed", a member appropriately enough suggested that we de-register. The President pointed out that de-registration was a lengthy procedure requiring two general meetings and the endorsement of 75 per cent of members. So much effort was not worthwhile for an economy of £2.50. The President noted that the Club should nurse its reserve if there should still be something left by 1979, Centenery Year of its creation. Despite these losses, the Meeting generously voted to support the *Swiss Observer* with a £5 Annaul Donation. The Secretary pointed out that several subscriptions to the Club were still outstanding and that due payment would fill in the deficit. The Schweizerbund has at present 29 paid-up members and a good dozen more on its cards. The Secretary promised that the latter would shortly be receiving reminders.

The President and Committee were re-elected by acclamation.

P.M.B

LETTERS

Dear Sir,

Particularly after a friendly report of our "Escalade" reunion appeared a few weeks ago and as you yourself are a member (or should I say a former member?) of the *Cercle Genevois* de Londres, I was more than normally sorry to see that you ignored us completely in your article concerning activities of the Swiss Community in the United Kingdom in your special edition of 26th January.

We are a small and a loosely knit organisation, meeting for social purposes, often only once a year, but we wish to be stronger and a lack of publicity when the ideal opportunity occurs, gives us no help and little encouragement. I hesitate to classify ourselves with the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, but the Cercle Genevois was in fact formed in the United Kingdom before the larger Society extended its activities over here.

I am proud to be the only Briton (or should I say half-cast) to be invited to the meetings of the Swiss Organisations in the United Kingdom but I am saddened that the Cercle Genevois, now nearing its sixtieth year, should be ignored in your article, prior to the words "finally there is the Anglo-Swiss Society".

We may be small and weak and we may meet infrequently but we have existed for over half a century and the less publicity we receive the less I can do to keep our small organisation alive. I write as the *ad hoc* President, Secretary and Treasurer who is in fact the last remaining member of a properly constituted Committee and who is eager for support and help from your journal, and in particular from those Genevese living in the London area which read the articles which you publish.

Yours faithfully,

Michael Metford-Sewell (London)

Dear Mr. Béguin,

As one of the few Swiss journalists who were in London during World War 2, I remember the affair of the "London calling Switzerland" broadcasts which you mention in your 9th February issue very vividly.

They were certainly started with the full knowledge and connivance of the authorities of the then Swiss Legation. The Minister of Information at the time, then Mr. – later Lord – Brendan Bracken was extremely disappointed, not to say furious, when they were stopped after a number of protests from Mr. Pilet-Golaz through diplomatic channels. He made no secret of his disappointment in a long conversation with me, which anyway showed deep mistrust of the then Head of the Federal Political Department, Marcel Pilet-Golaz.

By the way: the Permanent Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office and subsequently Chief Diplomatic Advisor to H.M. Government was Sir *Robert* (not Roger) Vansittart, who later became Lord Vansittart. He was intensely anti-German and was demoted by Mr. Chamberlain to the above-mentioned advisory position because he was in the way of the then Prime Minister's appeasement policy. As Chief Diplomatic Advisor he was, as he told me himself, not once asked for advice. The appointment was just an elegant way of getting rid of him.

Yours sincerely,

Gottfried Keller (Küsnacht)

MR. H. O. ERNST

We have received the following reminiscences by a reader on Mr. Henry Ernst, who died last month.

The passing of Mr. Henry Ernst leaves a big gap in the lives of his many English friends. He had been here so long: for some of us he was the personnification of Switzerland in London.

In the mid-twenties, as a schoolgirl of fourteen, I stood outside the office of the Swiss Federal Railways in Lower Regent Street rattling my lunch money in my blazer pocket, wondering whether it would buy some of the tempting booklets and brochures displayed in the window. I tiptoed inside and had the good fortune of meeting Mr. Ernst: not only were the brochures free but I could have as many as I liked as often as I liked. That was the beginning: I was forever in the office and when the time came for my first trip to Switzerland it was Mr. Ernst who arranged it – and he continued to do so every year until he retired. When the war came he was a friend indeed. Swiss newspapers and magazines came my way when no one else could get them. Little bits of news from the beloved Alps were handed on and treasured during the weary months of the Blitz. For me, Mr. Ernst was nearly as important as Sir Winston Churchill in keeping up my spirits in the darkest days.

His crowning act of kindness and friendship came in the 1950s when he and his wife came to Canterbury Cathedral to represent Switzerland at the service at which my husband was consecrated Bishop of Leicester.

I could go on for pages and so could many others. We have lost someone very special, who is irreplaceable.

Mrs. R. R. Williams