

# The "Swiss Observer" thirty years ago

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## THE "SWISS OBSERVER" THIRTY YEARS AGO

In the first issue in November 1937, we read that the British War Office had placed a large order for a new type of secret time-fuse for anti-aircraft shells with the Swiss firm of Tavano, Geneva. At Pagani's in London, the Swiss Rifle Team had offered a Farewell Dinner to Monsieur W. de Bourg, Counsellor of Legation. It was attended by 70 members and friends who wanted to pay tribute to a much-respected and revered friend (who, we are happy to say, is still amongst our faithful subscribers today).

The following issue carried the speech (in French) by the Federal President Motta at the Geneva Celebrations on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the birth of General Dufour. An announcement appeared with the news that "the most ambitious National Exhibition ever" would be held in Zurich in 1939.

On 20th November, one read that Prof. Paul Karrer of Zurich University had been awarded the 1937 Nobel Prize for Chemistry. Miss Ella Maillart, famous Swiss traveller and author, had given a fascinating lecture "From Peking to India by Caravan" at the Swiss Mercantile Society. The report of the N.S.H. Film Show "A travers la Suisse" was illustrated by some aerial views of Zurich and of Swissair's latest plane.

In the last number in November, there was a report on Switzerland's foreign trade; exports had fallen; England had been the best customer for boots and shoes. The distinguished Swiss surgeon, Prof. C. Henschen, had opened a week of lectures at the Medical School of Manchester University. The Nazis had expelled Mr. Hermann Boeschenstein ("Basler Nachrichten") from Berlin. (Mr. Boeschenstein later came to London and was at one time a member of the N.S.H. Council). Zurich had enrolled 350 women volunteers into its Air Defence Corps, the first Canton to have women in the forces. 700 French Royalists who had attended a reception by the Comte de Paris in Geneva, had been asked to leave the country by the Swiss police. Mr. J. Eusebio (S.O.'s own Poncione di Vespero of today) had given a talk on "A Few Ticinesi Worth Talking About" at the N.S.H., with special reference to famous architects and artists.

On 4th December, there were the results of the federal plebiscite on the proposed suppression of freemasonry and similar organisations. By a 2:1 majority, the proposal had been defeated. The President of the Board of Trade, Mr. Oliver Stanley, had received the Swiss delegation in order to negotiate a new trade agreement. During a raid on Madrid, the Swiss Legation had been bombed. Practically the whole of the issue was taken up with a detailed report on the City Swiss Club's Annual Banquet and Ball at Grosvenor House. Mr. P. F. Boehringer had been in the chair, and one of the guests was Monsieur W. Stucki, the Federal Council's Chief Trade Delegate. Speeches were reproduced *in extenso*, and complete lists of everybody present were given. There was a small corner only for the report of the Swiss Accordeon Club's First Concert and Dance.

On 11th December, we read that Romansh was now to be used in Parliament, too. Under "Personal", the engagement of the well-known Swiss journalist in London, Mr. Gottfried Keller to Miss Gertrud Ohr was announced. Some 500 words were published about the Gruetli Celebration (i.e. Annual Dinner and Dance) of the Swiss Club Manchester.

The next issue brought news of the appointment of Military Attachés to the Swiss Legations in Berlin, Paris

and Rome, to be followed later in London and Vienna. "Escalade de Londres" told of the traditional gathering of 37 Genevois to celebrate the 11th December. Another part in the serial on "Emigration of Swiss Industries" which had been started a few issues previously, was published.

On 25th December, the Editor, Mr. Fred Stauffer, published his "Christmas Thoughts". He said "*Although the world is still in a turmoil, and the cares and sorrows lie heavily on many shoulders, the spirit of Christmas is the same today as yesterday and will be forever. Its message will never grow old, nor can it be exhausted*". The "Old Folks" Christmas Luncheon had taken place at the Foyer Suisse in Upper Bedford Place; the Swiss Minister was present. On the next page, the photograph of a very young Chairman, Mr. Walter Meier, appeared with the report on the S.M.S. Students' Christmas Dinner and Ball at Prince's Galleries in Piccadilly. "*O Goldene Jugendzeit!*", the Editor had put at the top of the 5½ columns (twice today's size), no doubt referring to the mainly young participants in this very gay and happy social event, the last in the year 1937.

## A SWISS WINS THE JEWELLERY "OSCAR"

Started in London in 1954 by a big diamond company, the "Diamonds International Awards" may be considered the equivalent of an "Oscar" for jewellery. In May 1967, the jury were called on to examine over 2,400 drawings, entered by 600 jewellery designers from 31 countries . . . the highest figure ever recorded at this competition. Among the 30 prize-winning entries, one was a project by a Swiss, S. Julia-Plana, for a bracelet that was made from his design by a workshop in Berne. The same artist had previously won the German prize for "The Jewel of the Year" in 1962, three international awards in 1963 and another "Oscar" in 1965.

[O.S.E.C.]

