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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

GENERAL MEETINGS IN MANCHESTER

This year's General Meeting of the two Manchester Societies, the Swiss Club and the Swiss Relief Society, were held at the Grand Hotel, Aytoun Street, Manchester, on Monday the 9th March, 1970. This Hotel is well-known to some of our older members, because prior to World War II it was used as our Headquarters, before settling down at the Midland Hotel.

Again it was a complete break from long years of tradition when our General Meetings were preceded by a "Choucrout Lunch" usually well patronised and enjoyed by those who wanted to take part in it and perhaps now a cause of regret for the few stalwarts, who by the very fact that they were able to re-adjust themselves so easily to the new trends, prove again that age does not necessarily mean "stalemate", or incomprehensions for the new times, however good or bad they may be.

This most courageous and quite unusual deviation from established order however, went off quite well. Firstly because the Hotel had taken good care to reserve and prepare for us their lovely "Princess Room", with a very happy table-arrangement, bar, and excellent buffet service, so that everything worked in such a way to make these two General Meetings a most happy and congenial affair, combining pleasure and work.

This year the *Relief Society* (which always enjoys the generous hospitality of the Manchester Swiss Club) had the privilege and good fortune to be the first on the Agenda. The meeting was opened by the President, Mr. E. Berner, in the presence of thirteen members, at 18.00 hours. He referred briefly to the fact that 1969 had proved to be a peaceful, agreeable, and active year in all respects. The financial position had been strengthened and consolidated, thanks to a most generous response on the part of some Companies, both Swiss and British, and by the introduction of a seven year covenant scheme, thus opening additional and assured income for the Society. All this will be a great help in our endeavours to be more generous towards our old age pensioners, and encourage us in our efforts to be of assistance to any other cases or worthwhile causes brought to our attention. In conclusion Mr. Berner thanked our many friends and helpers, mentioning in particular, our Consul Mr. Born, Mr. Banderet and Dr. Bolliger, who are always behind us with their most active and generous help, and last—but not least—the Committee as a whole, a most devoted and loyal body. The re-

maining business was dealt with in an expeditious and efficient way, not wanting to encroach on the time set aside for the other activities of the evening, and in this we succeeded to a remarkable degree. The old Committee was re-elected "in corpore" and after a few discussions of a more administrative character the meeting was closed, everybody hoping that our good record will be maintained and even improved, in the year to come.

Gradually more members had flocked in and by now we were ready, and almost impatient, for our buffet-dinner, which proved to be a great success and was well appreciated by everybody present. It was a friendly and happy intermezzo, just the right thing to prepare us for the *Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Club, Manchester*, which was opened promptly at 20.00 hours by our Acting President, Mr. Bernard Simon, in the presence of 41 members.

After paying tribute to our old, faithful and well-liked member, Dr. C. A. Curtis, who passed away early in March, and after having signed the Minutes of the previous year, our Acting President welcomed Mr. Born, our Consul, and Madame Born, as well as Mr. P. M. Beguin, the Editor of the "Swiss Observer", in London. Looking back on the past year, he highlighted such events as the Annual General Meeting of the Federation of Swiss Societies in Great Britain, the Lands-gemeinde in Hebden Bridge, originally a joint effort of the Manchester and Yorkshire Swiss Clubs, whenever possible supported by other Northern Clubs, and last year most graciously patronised by our Ambassador in London, Dr. Rene Keller and Madame Keller, and to whom thanks were expressed by all present.

Other points discussed at some length were the final home to be given to some of the very old, interesting and perhaps important, Club's documents. This is a matter of great concern to the Club as a whole, and before deciding to part with them and send them abroad, even if it was to Bern, the whole question should be thoroughly discussed and every member given the chance of a say in the matter. The writer himself hopes that the time may arrive again when a Club of the importance and tradition of ours may be happy and proud to be in possession, not only of this type of record, but also of other items which in the course of time many of us have got to know and to love.

Mr. K. Messmer being the election president, the Committee for 1970, was elected as follows:

President: Mr. B. Simon

Vice President: Dr. H. R. Bolliger

Hon. Treasurer: Mrs. M. Themans

Hon. Secretary: Mr. P. X. Neher

The members present were well pleased with this choice and after the discussion and approval of the Budget Proposal for the Ensuing Year, our President enlarged on the following two proposals:

Firstly, the formation of a "Ladies Committee" for the organisation of a special programme for ladies only, the Swiss Club making funds available to help as and when necessary to keep costs within reasonable limits.

Secondly, the formation of a "Junior Committee", depending on finding sufficient young people willing to serve on it and work actively in the organisation of events specifically designed for young people. Also in this case the Club, within reason, may be willing to support such an effort. In this connection the position of normal members (paying members) and temporary members (non-paying members) was discussed and a solution sought for.

After this the members listened with great interest to the very clear and comprehensive report of Dr. R. Bolliger on the recent meeting of the A.S.K. and he conveyed to us the hearty greetings of Dr. Louis Guisan, Director Ney and Minister Jaccard. He pointed out also that the next meeting of the Swiss abroad would be held in Zofingen.

The President closed the meeting at 22.30 hours, after our Consul, Mr. Born, on behalf of all members present, had thanked the entire Committee for the work carried out on behalf of the Club.

E. Berner

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"PARLIAMENT OF THE SWISS ABROAD"

A total of 50 Swiss made up of representatives from communities abroad and members from inside Switzerland met in Berne on Saturday, 7th March. The venue, as usual for the spring meeting, was the "Federal Palace", home of Government and Parliament, which gave the meeting once again a more solemn and dignified character than just any hall. The Commission's Chairman, Councillor of States Louis Guisan welcomed delegates from places as far apart as Spain and Sweden, Turkey and Argentina, Israel and Montreal. The Swiss community in Great Britain was represented by its regular delegates, Dr. H. R. Bolliger for the North and Mrs. Mariann Meier for the South.

Among the items on the agenda

was the adoption of the annual report and the accounts. After 24 years of devoted services as Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Emil R. Muery from Basle retired. Tribute was paid to him and a new Treasurer elected in the person of Mr. von Wyss, a former *Auslandschweizer* from Italy, a banker and well fitted for the task on account of six years in the same office with the Nouvelle Société Helvétique.

Swiss organisations in Tunisia and Libya were accepted as members of the ASO with representation on the Commission, and one member each from Thailand and Canada were co-opted.

Details of the coming Assembly of the Swiss Abroad at Zofingen at the last week-end in August were announced. (They will be given in a later issue, including details of the manner in which the subject "Total Revision of

the Federal Constitution" will be tackled). It was also announced that in 1972 there would be a special celebration in Berne lasting nearly a week, to mark the 50th Assembly.

After a lunch at the Bellevue Hotel, a large number of members of the Commission drove to Lenzburg, where they took part in a seminar organised by the Nouvelle Société Helvétique. It lasted until Sunday lunchtime, and the subject was "The Swiss Image Abroad". It was a most rewarding meeting at which several speakers from inside Switzerland as well as from abroad were asked to give a talk (including the delegate for Great Britain South), and the general discussion was extremely lively, factual and to the point. (*As soon as the report of the seminar is out, the S.O. will come back to it.*)

(MM)

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OMEGA

CHEAP HOLIDAYS IN SWITZERLAND

Some time ago a lady reader made the suggestion that I should write on the various possibilities of spending a cheap holiday in Switzerland. There were many elderly people with little means in the Colony and they would benefit from such information.

I will now report briefly on one possibility. There are of course dozens more, and I shall write on them when more information comes into my hands.

An interesting offer is the "Hotel Plan" packaged holiday. Hotel Plan is an international tourist organisation belonging to Migros. It has offices in England and organises trips to Switzerland and to other inviting places, such as the islands of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. Packaged holidays to Switzerland comprise a return plane journey from Gatwick Airport to Zurich, the return railway ticket to the elected resort, two weeks stay in a comfortable hotel and five excursion coupons. These coupons offer cheap journeys on the Swiss Federal Railways and this means that the journey to visit relatives in some other part of the country can be made a relatively little expense. There are off-season, mid-season and high-season holidays. The first are necessarily cheaper than the other two. I have only made enquiries into the off-season possibilities of Hotel Plan and have learnt that a package holiday will be organised in May and two others in

IN MEMORIAM

LEHNER ROBERT, F.H.C.I., F.C.F.A. St. Gall 1892. Zurich, Goring-by-Sea. 22nd April 1967 In special remembrance of his great sincerity, gay and happy personality. Deeply missed, Tonée.

September. The months in between are considered as in-season or precluding holidays. The resorts to which one can go are Wengen, Interlaken, Beckenried, Lugano, Davos and Lungern. Off and high season prices for two-week holidays to these resorts are: Wengen £75-£88, Interlaken £63-76, Beckenried £69-£76, Lugano £64-£69, Davos £59-£69 and Lungern £55-£75. Not every hotel is exactly of the same standard. I have been told privately that the Lugano hotel is particularly good. There are also some variations in costs depending, for example, on whether the room at the hotel has a balcony or not. The London agency that takes care of Hotel Plan is Ingham Travel, 26 Old Bond Street, W.1. Tel: 01 629 9885. They will have pleasure in sending you a brochure with all the appropriate information. There may even still be time for a trip to the Alps in May.

CITY SWISS CLUB

One of the most fascinating after-dinner talks, it has ever been my good fortune to hear, was given at the March meeting of the City Swiss Club by Dr. T. F. Gaskell, Scientific Adviser to the Information Department of the British Petroleum Company. The lecturer was no newcomer to the Club whose members he greatly entertained a year ago with a talk on the North Sea Gas prospects. With a rare combination of a profound mastery of the subject matter with humour and wit he delighted his hosts with the happy discovery that even the most serious theme can be presented most entertainingly to a lay audience.

This time Dr. Gaskell chose a subject of a wider general interest for his talk to the CSC—no less serious in content and thought provoking, yet once again interspersed with humorous similes and anecdotes that kept his audience in stitches. In the European Conservation Year it seemed most appropriate for a scientist to speak on "Pollution" in its many forms and alarming aspects for our own and future generations. Naturally he dealt in particular with the pollution of the air from the petrol fumes of lorries and cars, the pollution of the seas and rivers by oil from boats and the noise nuisance from aircraft engines, as well as with the growing problems of refuse disposal. Without in any way minimising the dangers and seriousness of these darker aspects of technical progress Dr. Gaskell confidently argued that the problems created by scientists can also be solved by them as they had proved time and time again. It was invariably only a question of time and money which latter would always be forthcoming when the situation became urgent enough. What a pity that a talk of this high quality did not attract a larger attendance of members of the CSC!

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