

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1945)

Heft: 1035

Artikel: Social activities of the Swiss Club, Manchester

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-689486>

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SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

The Society held its first evening meeting this year at Swiss House on Wednesday, April 11th. Mr. J. J. Boos presided and there was a fairly large attendance.

One new member, Mr. G. L. Wahl, was elected and one resignation accepted. The Chairman then read a letter from the Swiss Legation, giving particulars of the Wahlen Plan, and informed the members that illustrated literature of this great national effort of economic rehabilitation would be available at Swiss House. He also gave members information regarding the recent economic conference between Allied and Swiss representatives in Berne. In the absence of any Swiss papers arriving in this country, it was most interesting to hear the Swiss point of view on the outcome of this very important event for our country. The President was further able to enlighten the members on present economic conditions in Switzerland and the post-war plans for the creation of employment, etc., as foreseen by the authorities and trade organisations at home. The figures submitted proved how serious matters are both as regards food and raw materials.

The meeting learnt with pleasure that our Honorary Member and Trustee, Mr. E. Steiner, Manager of Volkart Brothers, recently celebrated his 50th anniversary of his association with this well-known Swiss firm. The President was charged to send congratulations to Mr. Steiner on this memorable event.

It was further decided to make the usual contribution of ten guineas towards the expenses in connection with the National Day celebrations, which this year will be held on Sunday, July 29th, at the Stoll Theatre, Kingsway, under the Chairmanship of Dr. Kullmann.

The evening classes have now started. Besides a French Circle, chiefly for members who wish to brush up their French, a well-attended Russian language course and classes in Elementary and Intermediate Italian are in progress.

Following the business part of the meeting, the members listened to a most interesting talk on "Indian Outcasts," by Dr. G. O. Taylor of the Nilgiri Medical Mission—South India. Although the subject matter was somewhat different from the topics usually discussed at Swiss House, all present followed the address with rapt attention and found it extremely instructive and informative. From the moving way in which the lecturer described the conditions under which these unfortunate people exist, one could feel that he had their spiritual and physical welfare at heart. Having spent many years as medical practitioner and missionary in India, Dr. Taylor was best qualified to make a stirring appeal for the mitigation of the sufferings of these outcasts. He said he was fully aware of the great work Switzerland was doing in the humanitarian field and felt sure that all in the audience who were able to support his cause in any way would not fail to do so, and that his words would not fall on deaf ears.

From the lecture and the ensuing discussion, in which a number of members took part, one really came to understand the caste system in India and the tremendous difficulties of breaking down the age old barriers existing among the natives of this great continent, and the great need for medical, spiritual and financial help for the betterment of the lot of these people. Although

no direct appeal was made, several members contributed towards the handsome sum which was handed to the lecturer for his great and unselfish work. In conclusion, Mr. Deutsch ably proposed a cordial vote of thanks to Dr. Taylor, which was warmly endorsed by all present.

Members and compatriots in general will be pleased to learn that by courtesy of the Swiss Legation, the latest available Swiss newspapers and periodicals, both in German and French, are put at the disposal of the Colony, and can be perused at the Member's Room at Swiss House.

Following the next Monthly Meeting, to be held at Swiss House on Wednesday, May 9th at 6.30 p.m., Monsieur E. de Graffenried, First Secretary of Legation and Commercial Attaché, will deliver a most interesting address, details of which will be communicated to the members in due course. The Committee, therefore, hopes that a large number of members and friends will be present.

WB.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES OF THE SWISS CLUB, MANCHESTER.

Whist drives have always been a popular feature in the social activities of the Manchester Club, but had to be restricted and finally stopped during the War; after a lapse of over two years the Committee considered the present time favourable for a renewal of this kind of intercourse among their friends and organized a Whist-drive, which proved very successful.

It was held on the 17th March at the Midland Hotel, Manchester, and was attended by over 40 people; it is noteworthy that exactly half the number of participants were non-members, which fact goes to show that the Swiss Club enjoys the friendship of a large circle in the district.

In view of the difficulty under the present conditions of procuring suitable prizes it had been suggested in the invitation that ingenious people make inexpensive objects from available materials suitable for prizes, the proceeds of which would go to a charitable fund. The response to the appeal was very gratifying and so many gifts were received that a raffle had to be organized at short notice after the distribution of the prizes to liquidate the surplus.

At the end of an enjoyable afternoon the players were happy to learn that the "Suter Fund" or the Fund for the Relief of war-hit Swiss Colonies had benefited by the substantial amount of £14.

It is almost a tradition with the Manchester Club to reserve Good Friday for a ramble; this year, in spite of the uncertain weather and the necessarily early start, 22 members and friends met at Whaley Bridge to walk to Buxton over the beautiful Goyt Valley in Derbyshire.

Although some of the participants had left their homes in heavy rain the weather had cleared by the time they all met and remained bright the whole day, so that there was no temptation at any time to bring out the Jass cards.

The walk, which led over very picturesque and ever-changing scenery, terminated after five hours with a well-deserved tea at a Swiss Cafe in Buxton, where seven more members, for whom the ramble appeared too strenuous, joined the hikers.

L.G.