

Swiss national day celebration

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UNIONE TICINESE

Thé-Dansant

*"On with the dance,
Let joy be unconfined!"*

It was Sunday, the 6th May, 1945, and there was a feeling of exuberance and happy anticipation everywhere. The war news was excellent: any moment now the victory bells would peal out, proclaiming their joyful message to the world, and the most terrible struggle in history would be at an end as far as the liberation of Europe was concerned. Little wonder, therefore, that eyes shone and hearts were gay and it seemed a happy augury that, on the eve of victory, the Unione Ticinese should have arranged one of its popular Thé-Dansants at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane. Our beloved Switzerland has always been the symbol of peace and concord among the nations and, in the annals of its history, has always striven for its ideals.

The Dance began at 3 and ended at 9 p.m. and over four hundred people attended. It was a very friendly and sociable gathering, as these and similar occasions are made the opportunity for our compatriots to reunite and exchange personal views and news, so that one could scarcely walk far without being greeted by a friendly voice. There were eager, animated groups of people all around the spacious dance floor, but "when music arose with its voluptuous swell" most of these dispersed and the hall was filled with happy, dancing couples, twisting and twirling to the rhythm of the band. There were old dances and new dances, quick dances and slow dances: dances for the young and for the young-in-heart, and this amazing variety of music was provided by the now well-known "Spitfire Radio Dance Band" who gave us of their best. Indeed, members of this talented and versatile Band also contributed to the cabaret and caused uproarious mirth by their comical songs and antics.

The Elite Trio also took part in the cabaret and gave a wonderful display of acrobatic dancing, so perfect in its precision, that the audience was held spellbound and one could almost have heard the proverbial pin drop. Gasps of astonishment were followed by a tremendous ovation.

Mr. Carlos Valchera favoured us with songs from his repertoire and we are all justly proud of his fine, rich voice.

But perhaps the high spot of the evening was provided by the Unione Ticinese Mixed Corale, under the very capable and expert direction of Mr. Carlos Valchera, and accompanied on the accordion by Mr. Willy Ring, who also played some solo pieces which were much appreciated. The gay, colourful costumes of the Corale and their sympathetic rendering of our beloved Ticinese canzonette, so dear to the hearts of us all, touched some inner chord, and I should like to suggest, in all sincerity, that every opportunity should be given for these traditional songs to be sung as often as possible—there is a magic in the nostalgic beauty of them that serves to bind us all together in a closer and more lasting kinship.

There were spot prizes and raffles too for all sorts of wartime luxuries, and a little Swiss miss of six years old drew the numbers amidst breathless excitement.

We are also happy to record here that among the many guests present was Mr. R. Mordasini, our new Chancellor and Vice-Consul at the Swiss Legation, who is, we are proud to say, a Ticinese. He provided one of the memorable moments of the evening when, in a few well chosen words, he expressed his immense pleasure at seeing so many Ticinese gathered together enjoying themselves in the gay, light-hearted and infectious manner which is so typically one of the characteristics of the Southern Swiss. He said that he was extremely pleased to know that there existed such an active Ticinese colony in London and he looked forward to participating in many such functions as the present. Was it perhaps something more than the Goddess of Chance which, as some small measure of appreciation and gratitude for Mr. Mordasini's delightful speech, enticed a winning number for him out of the hat and secured for him one of the raffle prizes of—dinner for two at the Piccadilly?

The Thé-Dansant was certainly a most successful affair, and the organisers are to be congratulated on the results of their efforts, for I think one may say, in the time-honoured phrase that "a good time was had by all."

N.P.

SWISS NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION.

The end of hostilities in Europe not only makes it possible for the Swiss Colony once more to gather and celebrate this year the traditional FIRST of AUGUST, our SWISS NATIONAL DAY, but calls us together as perhaps never before for such an occasion.

The First of August Committee, representative of the Swiss Churches and of all the Swiss Societies in London, have much pleasure, therefore, in inviting all Swiss and their families to this year's reunion, details of which will be found on page 3597.

In order to give equal facilities to all within the limits of what is possible and thus avoid disappointments, all admissions will be by tickets only; these will be entirely FREE OF CHARGE and must be applied for in advance.

The SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY have kindly consented to attend to the distribution of the tickets. These will be available as from the 20th June and are to be obtained at the office of the Swiss Benevolent Society, 31 CONWAY STREET, FITZROY SQUARE, W.1. either by a personal call on weekdays between 2 and 4 p.m. (Saturday excepted) or by post on condition THAT A 2½d. STAMPED AND ADDRESSED ENVELOPE IS ENCLOSED, but no correspondence can be entertained. In either case the names of all the intending participants must be stated.

Attention is drawn to the fact that the number of tickets available for distribution is limited to the seating capacity of the theatre. When all the seats (about 2,200) have been allocated, no more tickets can be issued. Early application is therefore advisable and any unwanted tickets should be returned at once to the above address.

It is hoped that as many visitors as possible will wear national costume.

THE COMMITTEE.