

Information for the novice in Switzerland

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SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

The Monthly Meeting of the Society, held at Swiss House on Wednesday, November 13th, was attended by a large number of members and friends, to whom the President, Mr. J. J. Boos, extended a hearty welcome.

The membership, which has shown a steady increase for some months, was further swelled by the election of six new members, viz. Messrs. D. F. G. Boeglin, H. O. Ernst, O. Lauper, H. Steinacher, C. Voegeli and Miss M. Perret.

There was one resignation, Mr. A. Kern, who is shortly leaving England for the States, and to whom the Chairman extended best wishes in his new sphere of activities.

A farewell message was received from Mr. J. E. Maeder, who recently returned to Switzerland in order to spend his last years of retirement in his native land. Mr. Maeder has been a member of the S.M.S. for well over five decades and the meeting decided to send him cordial greetings and very best wishes. *Ad multos annos.*

Yet another member took leave from the many friends he made at the S.M.S. during his comparatively short stay in England, Mr. R. Mordasini, Chancellor of Legation, who has been appointed Swiss Consul in Naples. In a few well chosen words, he expressed his pleasure at the happy hours he had spent in the midst of his compatriots in London. Our best wishes accompany him to his new field of activities in the "Sunny South."

Following the meeting, Mr. J. Davies, Public Relations Officer of the Southern Railway, delivered an extremely interesting lecture on

"THE LIBERATION OF EUROPE."

Mr. Davies, on the outbreak of war, was appointed to collect data for record purposes in connection with the Railway's part in the war effort. He told an amazing story of his activities behind the scenes, from the time of Dunkirk until the final liberation of the Continent. With a series of excellent slides from photographs, which were top secret at the time and many of which have never been published since, he illustrated the development of a gigantic traffic organisation, culminating in "Overlord" and "Neptune," by which codewords the might operations on land and on sea from D Day until VE Day were known. Southampton Docks and the Channel service, which are owned and operated by the Southern Railway, formed a vital role in these operations. Mr. Davies, in the course of his duties, visited ports, junctions, etc., and collected an amazing amount of data of bomb incidents, military, naval and air force traffic in the preparation for the great move. It was a remarkable account of a tremendous effort, of which we had previously had but little detailed knowledge.

In a cordial vote of thanks, ably proposed by Mr. W. Deutsch, the Society's appreciation was expressed to Mr. Davies and the Southern Railway for having given the members an opportunity of hearing the inside story. Thanks are also due to our member, Mr. K. E. Ammann, for having arranged the lecture.

The next Monthly Meeting will be held at Swiss House on Wednesday, December 11th, when our member, Mr. A. Tall, will give us a talk on his recent mountaineering experiences, illustrated with slides from his own photographs.

A Children's Christmas Party has been arranged by our Ladies' Group for Saturday, December 14th, at 2.30 p.m. at Swiss House. Mr. George King, whose conjuring feats many will remember from pre-war days, will entertain the party. There will be a number of surprises in store and a tea will be served. It will be greatly appreciated by the Ladies' Group if parents will let them know the age and number of children they intend to bring by Monday, December 9th, so that arrangements for catering and surprises can be made. Please advise Mrs. W. Meier, 53, Priory Road, N.W.6. 'Phone: Maida Vale 5360.

W.B.

INFORMATION FOR THE NOVICE IN SWITZERLAND.

The Swiss language is very easy to learn; in fact there is no uphill work about it. The only phrases you need bother about, express, with three exceptions, your desire to check the descent from those lofty heights.

We will first deal with the exceptions. These are *Hell*, *Dunkel* and *Kirsch*.

Hell means light beer;

Dunkel means dark beer.

Having drunk however deeply, you need not flatter or encourage yourself with the idea that either has gone to your legs. Nothing will make any difference to the latter after your skis are on.

Kirsch means *Kirsch*, and spells that pride which goes before a fall. It also goes to the head, giving Swiss courage, and accelerating descent down to a point (probably the point of someone else's ski-stick).

Achtung is an ejaculation meaning "Hi!", "Get out!", "Hell!!!" or "Oh, dear!!!!" according to the number of exclamation marks indicated by the intonation. It is used to express the fact that you are going faster than you can and that recumbent or more slowly-moving bodies must look out for themselves.

Achtung (archaic) means "Fore!" and is shouted arrogantly by those who are masters of their skis. Novices need not try to perfect this pronunciation.

Achtdamn (corruption of *Achtung*), used in prolonged emergencies.

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