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OLD FRIENDS ARE NOT FORGOTTEN



P. SAVOIE

One of the features of the "Swiss Observer" in the past has been the publishing, from time to time, of biographical notes about some of our compatriots, who have in one way or another rendered services to our Colony, or have become known in their professional or cultural spheres.

There are, however, many who seldom, if ever, were mentioned in the columns of the Colony's official organ, partly due to a certain shyness and modesty at having their achievements made known, and to keep out of the limelight, and yet they are just as valuable to the community as those who occupy official positions in some of the Societies.

One of the "modest" ones is our old friend Pierre Savoie, at one time a collaborator of the "Swiss Observer", preparing for publication a series of all our cantonal escutcheons. He has also in the past taken a keen interest in the activities of the London Swiss Colony, as a committee member of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, Fête Suisse, and Swiss Sports, where his services were much appreciated.

* * *

Pierre Savoie was born in Porrentruy in 1890, the son of a pharmacist and grandson of a parson. He received his education at the "Ecole Cantonale" in Porrentruy, and at the "Ecole Professionnelle" in Geneva, where he spent most of his youth. Then followed three years training in land surveying in Zurich, and two years in Stuttgart

(Germany). He came to this country at the beginning of 1914 for further studies in landscape architecture, but his stay was cut short on his being called back in August of the same year for military duties at the outbreak of the first World War, serving for two years as a N.C.O. in the mountain infantry.

The year 1916 saw Mr. Savoie back in this country again, and he at once volunteered for service in the British army (Rifle Brigade), serving with the B.E.F. in Flanders. He was wounded at Paschendale, and consequently invalided out of the army in 1919. A year later, Mr. Savoie joined Pathé Pictures as a title artist in the days when, in the absence of sound, the dialogue of screen stars had to be provided by sub-titles. For eight years he held the position of Art Director of Pathé Film Studio in Wardour Street, and was later put in charge of the Art Department of British Instructional Films Ltd., one of Pathé's subsidiary companies.

It might also be mentioned that during the second World War, eager to do his bit for the country which gave him its hospitality, he served as a Training and Incident Officer and Post Warden in Streatham.

In 1951, after having worked in the film industry for 32 years, he left Associated British — Pathé for freelance art work, mainly illustrating science educational books. He is the author of many illustrated wall charts for schools, and "A Sketch Map Book of the Bible Lands", which has recently been published (Hutton Educational Publications, 4/9 case bound). This is a splendid and most interesting book to help older boys and girls to become more familiar with the geography and background of the Old and New Testaments.

Besides his professional work our friend is sharing a happy home life with a devoted and charming wife — a Swiss from the Jura Bernois — and two sons, the elder a chartered accountant (C.A.) and the younger a chartered civil engineer (B.Ss.(Eng.), A.C.G.I., D.T.C., A.M.I.C.E.).

Although a very busy man, Mr. Savoie has time to spare for a hobby; he is a great lover of the English countryside, and a passionate Rambler of the beautiful Kent and Surrey Downs. His happiest moments are when he is in the company of his three grand-children.

This, then, is the story of a man who by his personal charm and modesty has endeared himself to all who have come into contact with him, and we are delighted to pay him a small tribute for the many services he has rendered. Mr. Savoie can look back on a distinguished career, and our wish is that he will remain amongst his family and his friends for many years to come.

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OUR NEXT ISSUE

Our next issue will be published on Friday, 25th May 1962. We take this opportunity of thanking the following subscribers for their kind and helpful donations over and above their subscription: Miss H. Sidler, H. Humbel, G. A. Fuchs, R. Mathez, C. H. Willi, E. Hofstetter, E. Rietmann-Adams, E. J. Howell, P. Lequint, E. M. Huber, A. C. Stahelin, F. Heller, H. Schmid, M. A. Rothlisberger, J. Frei, J. Scheiwiler.