

Swiss Club Manchester

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authorities of this great and hospitable nation. New and important tasks lie before us. They must be confronted in the same spirit of solidarity and responsibility towards, in particular, the young and old amongst us. But above all, let us unfurl and gather round the flag of our dear fatherland, which shall lead us to new horizons, and rejoice on this day of common patriotic elation."

When the applause had died down, Mr. Jacomelli, Vice-Chairman of the Organising Committee, announced the Choir of the Swiss Mercantile Society's College. Under the direction of Miss Harrison and Mr. D. Bonsall, a strong mixed choir sang songs in English as well as in "Schwyzerdütsch" and French. Their performance was excellent, and both students and masters can be congratulated on a handsome contribution towards the evening's success.

The colour film which followed was rather too corny for my liking; Switzerland was being "sold" in grand American style; nevertheless it had its good points and the audience appreciated them. The first-class yodelling and "Ländlermusik" which it contained were particularly apt for the occasion.

The true Anglo-Swiss friendship was demonstrated not only by the Swiss choir singing English songs, but also by an English accordionist, Miss Phyllis Gillingham, who played Swiss songs and "Ländler", a most creditable effort by a great artist on her instrument — Miss Gillingham is Winner of the All British Virtuoso Accordion Championship, and her playing added special lustre to the programme.

The last item on the programme was the never disappointing Corale dell'Unione Ticinese. As usual their Conductor, Mr. Luigi Bruni, led the thirty singers in a series of attractive songs from the Ticino, he himself as well as two other players accompanying the choir on the accordion. The violinist was absent, but the pianist was in her usual place, and it was with particular pleasure that we noted two small boys in the choir for the first time.

In the past it may occasionally have surprised our British friends when they heard "Rufst Du mein Vaterland" to the same tune as their own National Anthem, but it was certainly better than the "Schweizerpsalm" which has been decreed our new National Hymn on a trial basis. I doubt if it will survive; it is difficult to sing well, and the words are not only hard to memorise because all verses are too much alike, but also far too pretentious. The organisers were aware that only a few people knew the words and they wisely had them printed on the programme. Together with the two choirs and full organ accompaniment, the audience managed the best rendering of the "Schweizerpsalm" that I have heard for a long time. It rounded off a very successful programme. The Chairman, Mr. F. Streit, introduced His Worship the Mayor, who was happy to welcome us on behalf of the Borough of Wimbledon and expressed appreciation of the bonds of friendship between Great Britain and Switzerland.

The second part of the evening was given over to dancing to Harry Vardon's Band, and it was a lively and pleasant dance, with hundreds of young and quite a fair number of not so young compatriots and friends obviously enjoying themselves.

Mariann.

SWISS CLUB MANCHESTER

The Swiss Club Manchester met under beautiful sunshine in order to celebrate the 772nd anniversary of the birth of our Confederation. Joyful faces everywhere were the proof that all were happy to be reunited again for this

solemn yet heartwarming event. Almost 120 persons partook of the tasty supper and ate with relish the "Schüblig" and delicious strawberry tarts decorated with the Swiss Cross and kindly offered by Mr. Schoms, whose absence was regretted by all.

After supper the Club gathered round the lusty blaze of the traditional bonfire. Mr. Simon, President of the Club, read the message of the President of the Confederation, and then invited Mr. Rosset, Consul-General at Manchester, to address the assembly. Mr. Rosset spoke of the unity of the Swiss nation, a unity that existed and thrived despite the linguistic barriers. He then spoke of the Swiss National Exhibition which will be held at Lausanne next year and which will mirror Swiss achievements and hopes. Speaking then in English, Mr. Rosset commented on certain passages of the President of the Confederation's message, namely the ones dealing with two crucial problems facing Switzerland: neutrality and the European Economic Community.

Illuminated by the blaze of the bonfire the assembly sang patriotic songs, ending with our national Hymn. Then began a display of fireworks, which unfortunately could not be brought to its climax because of the danger of fire spreading.

The company started to separate, and compatriots and friends took leave with a last look at the bonfire, a living symbol of our homeland and all it means to the Swiss living abroad.

B.B.

THE YORKSHIRE SWISS CLUB

As last year, The Yorkshire Swiss Club celebrated the First of August at the fringe of Ilkley Moor high above the green valley of the Wharfe.

About seventy members and friends gathered at Overdale, the home of Mr. and Mrs. R. Müller. The evening was warm and beautifully clear.

Mr. Müller, who is the President of the Club, greeted the guests. He then read a telegram from the Consul, Mr. C. E. Rosset, who sent his best wishes and patriotic greetings. He also read a message from the Ambassador, Mr. Daeniker.

Mr. Müller then reminded the gathering that there was a constant close contact between the Consulate at Manchester and the Club, and that on the occasion of the first of August, when relatively many Swiss are assembled who might not always be easily reached, there were a number of points which Mr. Rosset wished him to make known.

One of these points concerned the advantages granted to Swiss from abroad visiting the forthcoming National Exhibition at Lausanne.

Dr. A. U. Obrist then gave a short address, starting by reminding his compatriots of the historical origin of Switzerland in 1291, and of its long and arduous development to become the Swiss Confederation which we know today. The Swiss democracy is in many ways unique. The institution of Initiative and Referendum gives the citizen of Switzerland more power of expressing his wish than anywhere else, but this also demands a greater awareness of his duties towards the State.

The Swiss abroad — Dr. Obrist went on to say — although prevented from exercising their political rights are not exempt from their duties towards their native country.

They fulfil an important task in maintaining the connection and in forging a link between Switzerland and the world that surrounds it; they help to build an image in the eyes of the world of the Swiss and Switzerland.